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“Sure It’s Foreign Music, but It’s Not Foreign to Me” Understanding

K-Pop’s Popularity in the U.S. Using Q Sort

Janice Kim Cho

A thesis submitted to the faculty of
Brigham Young University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

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ABSTRACT

“Sure It’s Foreign Music, but It’s Not Foreign to Me” Understanding K-Pop’s Popularity in the U.S. Using Q Sort

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Korea has become a strong influencer of global popular culture. With a handful of Korean celebrities entering mainstream U.S. pop music, Hallyu, the Korean Wave, has been growing tremendously in popularity. Following this global trend, American audiences are increasingly tuning into K-pop. The current study uses Q-sort methodology to investigate the motives, opinions, and attitudes of American fans of K-pop, specifically to find what drives people to seek music whose roots lie in an unfamiliar cultural landscape. Study results show that non-Korean K-pop fans in the United States fall into three distinct groups: the human lovers (“Honey honey, how you thrill me”), the product and production appreciators (“Music is my life”), and the social connectors (“With a little help from my friends”). Although the music appreciators and the socializers have been identified in previous K-pop research, the “Honey honey” group is a new category in K-pop culture research.

Keywords: K-pop, communications, fandom, popular culture, globalization, Q methodology

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Transnationalism is becoming mainstream in popular culture. Transnationalism is a social phenomenon where economic, social and physical boundaries across nations and cultures recede due to increased interconnectivity over various media platforms. These traditional boundaries can no longer limit the spread of culture nor exchanges between countries. With the advent of the Internet, Eastern countries can easily access Western culture and vice versa. Now culture can spread rapidly, no longer confined to its country of origin.

Because transnationalism is a recent occurrence, there are many questions to consider as cultures become more global. What is it about people who enjoy the popular culture of another country? Why do they log into YouTube to watch artists sing in an incomprehensible language? Why do they check their Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter accounts to see whether there are updates about their favorite foreign artist? What compels fans to play a foreign song repeatedly until they reach the stage of mimicking the sounds of the lyrics? In short, what makes them connect with an unfamiliar culture, craving music and television from a country they have never visited?

Certainly, some fans are motivated by being different, separating themselves culturally from their native citizens. Others become acquainted with an exotic and mysterious culture quite by accident, such as by following website links that pop up as they surf the Internet. Others still simply follow their personal tastes in music and lifestyle. The growth of borderless culture sharing, regardless of its intentions, is a phenomenon that deserves deeper investigative research.

Such a study is the purpose of this paper. K-pop is a shortened form of the term Korean pop, whose artists consist, not surprisingly, of Koreans or those of similar ethnicities (some originate from other Asian countries, such as China and Japan), and who sing and dance to Korean lyrics. K-pop has gained popularity in Peru, Mexico, the Philippines,

Malaysia, China, the U.K., France, Australia, and many other countries (Do, 2012, p. 31; KOCIS 2011a, p. 48-50; KOCIS 2011b, p. 16-20). Though having enjoyed great popularity for years in many countries, only after Psy's "Gangnam Style" became a huge hit in 2012 was it introduced to U.S. mass audiences. Before then, K-pop was considered a minority pop niche, of interest to only a few American fans (Austin, 2013, p.14). Whether Psy caused American interest in K-pop or simply encouraged existing fans to declare their interest is unclear; however, there is no doubt that K-pop's popularity is growing in the U.S. and is likely to integrate into American mainstream musical culture in the very near future (Google Trend, 2016).

According to Times (2014), North Americans partake in Japanese culture, from what they eat (i.e., sushi, sake) to what they watch (i.e., Japanese anime) and what they do (i.e., Judo). It is not a recent phenomenon, as Bennetts' NY Times article (1982) addresses the heavy influence of Japanese culture in the United States. Aligning with what Times (2014) wrote, "Japan's influence has even affected what people eat; the number of Japanese restaurants in New York has more than tripled in the last five years, and hostesses are serving sushi to guests who not so long ago would have muttered unflattering asides about raw fish" ("Culture of Japan," 1982). Bennetts (1982) writes that ideas from Japan are flourishing in the United States, and 1982's New York was heavily influenced Japanese themes as three series, and two commercial films played in the city. The emergence of Japanese culture popularity might be due to James Clavell's "Shogun," Bennetts writes.

It is not a surprise that many people in the United States consider Japanese culture as a representation of Asian culture; due to the widespread of Japanese ideas and cultural elements integrated into North Americans' everyday life. Therefore, the study hopes to reintroduce the Asian culture in the United States and increase awareness of Korean culture's rapid growth post its emergence.

So, what attracts North Americans to listen to K-pop? To understand the question and the phenomenon, the attitudes and motivations of U.S. K-pop fans were analyzed using the Q-sort methodology with two theories: uses and gratification and mood management.

Chapter 2: Context and Historical Overview

Cultural studies provide the tools needed to understand and interpret cultures (Kellner, 2011), and such studies show how the media portrays “dominant values, political ideologies, and social developments and novelties of the era” (Kellner, 1995; 2010, p. 8). With K-pop being a relatively new musical genre, especially in the West, comprehensive research on the subject has thus far been limited. Even with existing K-pop research, the focus has been on defining what K-pop is rather than on revealing why fans like it. While there is limited information on the reasons behind its popularity with foreign audiences, there is sufficient information to offer a brief overview of K-pop and perhaps to hazard an account for its popularity, as well as to explore why K-pop set a precedent as a successful Korean cultural export.

Defining Popular Music

Popular music, also known as ‘pop music’ or simply ‘pop,’ is a contemporary musical genre that distinguishes itself from classical and folk music. Sometimes pop refers to Western music, if only because Western popular music evolved into its modern form in Western countries. The term, ‘pop music’ does not indicate a specific genre, sound or country of origin. Indeed, it may include elements of rock, dance, R&B, hip-hop, rap, jazz, electronic music and bossa nova, among other genres. If pop music generally refers to a contemporary Western music, without certain line drawing limitation of the genre, how can the term, popular culture, actually be conceptually defined? According to Kidd (2014):

The word popular is from the Latin *populus*, meaning “the people.” Historically, both in Roman times and in other societies, “the people” referred not to all people, but rather to a very specific and very large mass of poor and working people. It excluded a tiny group of ruling elites, who were associated with a very different kind of culture privileged set of cultural goods like paintings, classical music, literature, and other

forms of creative expression—that we now refer to as high culture. Everyone else had what we now call folk culture—local music, crafts, oral traditions, morality plays, and many other types of expression. If popular means the people, then popular culture could be associated with this folk culture, and many analyses of popular culture do focus on it (p. 5).

As Kidd (2014) explains, popular culture was a local folk culture that was largely consumed by working class people rather than minor elites. Popular culture was an easily accessible product that represented the civilization of everyday lives of common people. According to Kidd (2014), elite culture products such as classical music and literature differed from popular culture, which were more inclusive of crafts and oral traditions. The majority of expressions were both created and consumed by commoners, making the folk culture a representative cultural expression. This led folk culture to form itself as popular culture, eventually becoming an inclusive term of high elite products as well. Therefore, it must be understood that “culture is much broader than just high culture and much bigger than just the sacred” (Kidd, 2014, p. 6).

An object or a product can become a cultural object if it qualifies five dimensions that lead to potency: retrievability, rhetorical force, resonance, institutional retention, and resolution (Schudson, 1989, p. 160). Retrievability means whether the general public can obtain the content. Rhetorical force asks whether the content is powerful, with resonance referring to its familiarity to the public. It is seen to have institutional retention if it has the ability to become the norm and understood to have a resolution if it calls for action (Kidd, 2014; Schudson, 1989). Therefore, culture is not only inclusive of high culture and has sacred values, but also an ordinary, everyday product that can provide an institutional retention (Kidd, 2014; Williams, 2011). Moreover, music, being a most common form of cultural expression, is understood as a product that partakes in the largest proportion of culture.

American Pop: The History

In the 20th century, American music played a significant role in establishing the dominance of American culture and in advancing social change (English, 2014). Before then, many American popular songs were imported from England (or based on English models), as they were during the colonial, revolutionary, and federal periods (American Popular Song, n.d.). By the beginning of the 17th century, however, people started to emigrate to the U.S. from places other than the U.K., such from Spain and France and later Ireland and Germany, among other countries. Although these new immigrants brought new styles and instruments with them (Introduction to America's Music, p. 1), some researchers site the origins of American pop culture starting during the late 18th century during the Industrial Revolution, when people migrated en masse to major cities (McAdams, 2014). Still, although it is impossible to identify the precise moment when a clearly identifiable American music genre appeared, it can be said that American music is an amalgam of many musical styles and forms. This "cross cultural hybridization [which] has flourished (in) American popular music" is what constitutes American popular music today (Introduction to America's Music, n.d., p. 1).

In other words, American pop music cannot be categorized as a single musical genre. It embraces most musical styles that listeners are familiar with, but is unique because it is constantly evolving and changing, creating new genres along the way. For instance, the Civil War was a pivotal time for American music since people from many regions met and traded musical styles and practices. In the 1920s, the migration of African-Americans brought jazz to cities such as Chicago and New York, and by the 1930s, swing jazz was popular with African-American blues morphing into gospel music. Similarly, country and western developed in the early 20th century by white working-class Americans, and in the 1950s, rock 'n' roll and R&B (rhythm and blues) arrived, emerging from earlier musical styles such as country and gospel (Introduction to America's Music, pp. 1-3). In fact, American music is still evolving, shaped

and influenced by social and artistic elements too numerous to mention.

The meaning of pop may differ depending on the time and the location of its composition. For instance, pop music in the 1920s to the 1950s was widely understood to mean jazz, whereas rock and R&B emerged after the Second World War (Pop music, 2012), displacing jazz as the leading form of popular music.

According to Kallen, Jerry Wexler, the Billboard magazine record journalist, first came up with the term rhythm and blues in 1947. Wexler's job was tracking weekly sales of pop music when he coined the name for the particular genre. Kallen also adds that the term was frequently used to describe the wide range of musical sounds (2014). After Billboard created the R&B genre chart in 1949, many songs were categorized as R&B. However, the sounds of the songs widely varied, only sharing some common characteristics. Kallen writes:

First, all the songs were created by African Americans, who employed various vocal techniques such as raw shouts, excited emotional pleas, and sweet harmonies. Second, the majority of the lyrics about drinking, loving, and rocking and rolling were considered controversial by mainstream America. And third, whether the song was slow and sweet or fast and gritty, nearly every early R&B hit featured two common musical elements that originated in blues music: strong backbeats and melodies based on the twelve bar blues progression (2014, p. 12).

Kelley argues that “rap/hip hop, the post-civil rights, a postmodern continuation of African American musical forms, a direct descendant of the soul, R&B, gospel, and blues” (2005, p.9) are an outcome of “America’s urban Bantustans [Black states]” (Kelley, 2005, p.9). Contemporary music is thus rooted heavily in African American’s culture that became a vital part of America. In addition, as Harvard University Business School’s researchers suggested in 1972, any music form does not stay static:

“Soul music is one of the very few basic art forms which is indigenous to America,

although its own roots may be traced to Africa. It has been and probably will continue to be a vital and influential force on contemporary music. And Soul is by no means a static music form. It too will change” (Kelley, 2002, p. 9).

Music eventually evolves into the new musical genre, and with no surprise, R&B opened up a new genre of music: rock ‘n’ roll. According to Altschuler, teenagers of the 1960s were “unwilling to be policed or patronized” (2003, p. 186), and rock ‘n’ roll was perfect for to reclaim their stance while blurring and redefining “racial, sexual, and generation boundaries” (p. 161). Alschuler (2003) adds:

In the ensuing decades, rock ‘n’ roll demonstrated its persistent power and its pre-teen appeal. Rock ‘n’ roll was present at the creation of the 1960s, when “the shook-up generation” transformed an inchoate sense of disaffection and dissatisfaction into a political and cultural movement. Indeed, it is impossible to imagine the ‘60s in the United States without rock ‘n’ roll. The music and now the lyrics were sometimes the backdrop but often the inspiration as well for love-ins, sit-ins, demonstrations, the destruction of draft cards, tuning in, turning on, and taking off. Somehow, through music and other stimulants to the soul, young people sought to bring together, “right now,” a nation dived by race and class, and by regional and local values (p. 186).

From mellow melody music that sang about love to loud shouts about sex and rebellions, popular music of America changed within the short time. The popular music in the 50s was R&B, whereas the 60’s were a haven for rock ‘n’ roll. Therefore, popular music is a genre that people like listening to, so pop music is simply music that people enjoy listening to at the present time (Moore, 2003). After an unspecified interval, popular music passes into history as, say, the ‘classic rock’ has, and, although it is still enjoyed by many, it is by no means a current mainstream taste. This means any musical genre that the public enjoys during the particular time will become the popular music that represents that era.

American Pop: Influence on the World Music

To describe “the escapist quality of Hollywood cinema and television, to the childlike innocence as embodied by Disney, and to the refreshing taste of Coca-Cola, the metaphor of American pop culture as a wave that ‘washes over you and makes you feel good’” is commonly used (Kooijman, 2008, p. 22). Whether American pop culture gained popularity globally because it “washes over you and makes you feel good”, or because the individual values of Americanism were attractive, that is yet unknown. However, it is clear that Americanization is happening on a global level. Kooijman argues that “rather than transforming the world into another USA, thereby replacing national, local, and regional cultures, American pop culture presents itself” (2008, p. 39). American pop culture presenting itself does not necessarily mean that it is uninfluential in the other nations’ popular culture contents. Kooijman is rather arguing that American popular culture is not taking over the global cultural product and making it homogeneous; instead, it is spreading among nations, diffusing its influence and assisting the formulation of new cultural content. The combination of Americanism and local, regional culture is thus anticipated to create a new cultural product. In other words, through musical globalization, the boundaries between cultures are becoming gray (Guilbault, 1993).

The concept of globalization divides into two perspectives: globalization and glocalization. Globalization refers to cultural homogeneity (Ritzer, 2003), and glocalization means the opposite, global heterogeneity (Robertsons, 1995). In short, Ritzer argues that the worldwide market that consume similar products in an alike environment is an result of American style capitalism (2003). This, however, is contradictory to Robertsons that “global consumer products are not consumed passively, but translated into local context and idioms [...] reflecting experiences of local cultures” (Kooijman, 2008, p. 12). Both Ritzer and Robertons have valid arguments, but one may hold more relevant perceptions depending what cultural product is being discussed.

When music industry is the subject, Robertsons and his global heterogeneity globalization hold explanation that is more valid. Current music industry operates with the hybrid local-and-global structure allowing regional artists to be more accessible on a global level (Dolfsma, 2000). The need for local singers to defy geographic boundaries and target international market would have helplessly failed if the music industry had been already Americanized. The influence of American popular music is undeniable at a global level, with the prevalent ideology of being American equaling universal. Regardless of American music's effect on multi-nation music industry growth, each country embraced the Americanism and integrated it with their unique culture sense. Globalization in this sense, after all, "is a process of interdependence and mutual awareness" (Guillen, 2001, p. 4; Morris, 2014) and as well as "a process of societies adapting, reinterpreting, and responding to Western cultures as making Western ideologies applicable in one's unique culture" (Morris, 2014, p.244; Ustuner & Holt, 2010).

Teen Pop Music and Its Consumers

As the age of rock 'n' roll slowly faded, a new genre titled "teen pop" took its place and became a major music genre for adolescents and pre-adolescents. Teen pop is a form of "commercial music written for and consumed mostly" by young teens (Denisoff, 1975; Vannini & Myers, 2002, para.1). Teenagers relate and identify the music genre with themselves particularly because of the lyrics. After all, music creates a feeling of personal and social identity (Mulder et al., 2009) and works as a status symbol within the peer culture (Brown & O'Leary, 1971; Mulder et al., 2009). To maintain their position in the social circle, the adolescence tries to increase their knowledge about the songs and singers over time. After all, musical choice determines who the individual are within the peer culture; the selected musical taste define constructing inner self-meaning and form reality (Grossberg, 1986; Vannini & Myers, 2002). However, teen pop is not an exclusive musical genre only open to teenagers.

More so, adults also develop an interest in the music and style. The teen pop consumption within adults may be demonstrated as a way to refuse social aging (Thornton, 1995; Vroomen, 2004) or a “lifelong struggle for peer recognition” (Frith, 1996; Mulder et al., 2009, p.3). Also, it is important to acknowledge that music not only provides a sense of identity and social belonging, but it is also understood as most preferred indoor activity (North et al., 2000).

The celebrity of those who create teen pop music also plays a role in its popularity. Celebrities become social mentors in a social context. People strive to dress and behave how the celebrities are represented in media. As Goodin-Smith cites Sternheimer,

“We see celebrities as role models— often we love judging and condemning them, as much as, if not more than, aspiring to be like them...Rather than just having personal influence over individual behavior, talk about celebrities reveals central sociological issues within American society” (Sternheimer, 2011; Goodin-Smith, 2014, p. 27).

This phenomenon is sometimes negatively evaluated in the sense that people lose their individual uniqueness during the process of mimicking after a certain celebrity, but it certainly does have some positive effects that cannot be ignored. For instance, Disney stars encouraged many children to start caring for the planet after they themselves demonstrated the need (Ryan & Edmunds, 2010). Blue quotes Gary Marsh, the President of Disney Channels Worldwide, and argues that Disney aims to produce a star celebrity through its competitive and systemized star manufacturing steps:

“For most people who act, getting a television show is the end product . . . For us, it’s the launch pad” (qtd. in Rose “Disney Channel’s”). His job is not to produce programs, “it’s to build franchises and stars” (qtd. in Rose “Disney Channel’s”). The commercial imperative is clear in Marsh’s perspective that the network is not just creating exceptional content. Disney Channel is nurturing aspirational stars via transmedia franchises designed to provide multiple, related revenue streams (Blue, 2013, p. 260).

Therefore, Disney production strives to fulfill the musical needs of teen pop consumers, while creating idealistic stars who can mentor through parasocial lives and make a profit through the successful manufacturing system. The buying power of teen pop consumers has constantly increased, allowing the genre to be “commercially successful enough to be featured on the Billboard Top 200” (Vannini & Myers, 2002, para. 15). Wright also noted that teenagers became the largest music and music-related product consumer in 1995, resulting in twelve billion dollar sales (1997). In addition, the older fans play a huge role in increasing live music and concert events’ revenue because they can afford to access music through those venues (Lamont et al., 2003). So, if both teens and adults support teen pop, which gender does it target more?

Goodin-Smith questions why male Disney stars such as Ryan Gosling, Justin Timberlake, and Zac Efron made a safe and successful transition from Disney star to mature careers, whereas female Disney heroines such as Britney Spears, Lindsay Lohan, and Miley Cyrus faced hardships during the same transitional process (2014). It is undeniable that people innately have unconscious sexism (Bem & Bem, 1970) and believe men are valued more than women (Rudman, 2004). Previously Goldberg (1968) proved that “women consider themselves inferior to men, and think men are better at everything” (p.30) through his gender perception research. His research suggested that women valued articles written by male professions more positively than the same articles that were said to be written by female professionals.

The replicated study by Levenson, Burford, Bonno, and Davis revealed that females over-evaluated female professional’s essay more positively than male, suggesting the perception of women changed during the women’s movement (1975). However, many current-day scholars argue women still see themselves as less than men and prefer selecting an authoritative male to their same gender. Therefore, it is easier for the enterprising male celebrities to win the public hearts, whereas the female celebrities are expected to “maintain

their ‘good girl’ status by doing as they are told without pushback, assuming more docile roles by playing nice and executing domestic tasks” (Goodin-Smith, 2014, p.2). Goodin-Smith refers to what Bell cited from Brian Atebery that “heroes are male because that has been the considered choice, the norm, for American self-hood. Woman is the exception; man is the default setting” (Bell, 1995; Goodin-Smith, 2014, p.2). Because women traditionally and subconsciously believe that they are inferior to men, and understand their duty is to assist the main male character in life, women generally lean positively and heavily on men’s presence. The society, thus, allows wider bandwidth to male stars than female celebrities. This bandwidth difference may cause male celebrities to be more resilient after major mistakes whereas it may be difficult for female stars to resume their position even after minor faulty actions. This may be one reason why male Disney stars’ transition to the mature phase in celebrity life faced fewer bumps than their fellow female Disney stars. Moreover, because the opposite sex attracts the other, the entertainment industry composed heavily of successful male celebrities draw females in more than male.

Although it is incorrect to say that male stars outnumber female artists, it is true that women are significantly underrepresented than the opposite gender through sexual objectification, stereotypes, or underrepresentation (Jarman-Ivens, 2013). Not only females dominate in supplemental roles in media, but even number also under-represents them. Lauzen (2008) argues that only 37 percent of prime time television had female characters in it, and Jarman-Ivens suggests that only 39.4 percent of roles on prime time were played by females (2013). Therefore, it may be incorrect to say there are more male celebrities than female stars. On the other hand, it is correct to argue that females are significantly underrepresented, making the industry look male oriented. Another explanation for male success in the entertainment industry is the different consumption tendency among gender. Lamont, Hargreaves, Marshall, and Tarrant suggest that:

Listening was confined largely to popular styles of music (pop, dance, rock, R&B): only around 10 percent of the sample as a whole reported listening to classical or jazz music, and this figure decreased across the year groups. Girls were more likely than boys to report listening to pop and R&B music, whilst boys were more likely to report listening to rock music (2013, p. 237)

First, the consumption of pop music is increasing, whereas the elitist musical genre as classic is decreasing. Secondly, even within the increased pop music consumption, girls are the main consumers of pop. Because people have innate sexist behavior (Bem & Bem, 1970) and socially believe that men are more valuable than women (Rudman, 2004), it is assumable that girls prefer listening to male singers and fantasize over male stars. Therefore, mainly female consumers compose the entertainment industry, especially in the teen pop music genre.

Korean Popular Culture

In Korea, popular music started to develop in 1910, when the country lost its sovereignty to Japan. Although the cultural and musical adaptation began then, it continued until Korea's independence and Japan's defeat in the Second World War. For Korea, the critical period of musical culture is said to be around 1925-1945, when Korean popular music started to show its commercial elements. Korea was developing a unique flavor of popular music known as "taejung kayo" as early as 1935 (Lee, 2006).

The history of *taejung kayo* occurred in four stages. First, Korean lyrics were added to foreign melodies, initially in 1905 while under Japan's control. Mostly the songs talked about sentiments of love, emptiness and natural beauty. The second step for Korean popular music was when Korean composers started to create their original music. Third, new folk songs took the central stage (*t'urot'u*), and fourth, the years during colonial rule added in new and unique elements to Korean sentiments (Lee, 2006).

Taejung kayo cannot be defined simply as 'commercial production' or 'mass

music,' elements of which have roots in traditional genres such as *p'ansori* (epic storytelling through song), *minyo* (folk songs), and *chapka* (professional folk songs) (Lee, 2006). All the traditional genres are categorized as *kugak*, which means national music. *Kugak* was the traditional sound that represented Korea until Westernization seeped in towards the end of Chosun Dynasty (Lie, 2014).

Unlike traditional genres with Korean roots, *Taejung kayo* was developed under the influence of Japan's culture, and despite the unfamiliarity and differences with traditional songs [*kugak*], young Koreans quickly adapted to the new style. Although *taejung kayo* has its base in Japan, it contains the cries of a colonized country, separating itself from any other musical sounds. With popular music embodying the experience and desire of the suppressed masses, *taejung kayo* continues to be popular with many Koreans, throughout the generations. However, it is salient to note that contemporary Korean music is nothing like current or traditional Japanese pop. Although *taejung kayo* did form under Japan's influence, the musical genre was created with Western influence, not necessarily only with traditional Japan's musical elements.

Although Japan played a significant role in spreading and cultivating the *taejung kayo*, musical influences on Korea were not limited to one country. America's presence was the most important influence, particularly during the post-Japanese colonial period. Japan was fast in adopting Western culture around the late 1880s. It is important to understand that Japan was already westernized before colonizing Korea. As Japan won the war against China and Russia, the nation took control of a small peninsula country, Korea, which is located between them and China in early 1900. As Japan started to control Korea, the Japanese were intolerant of differences and prohibited any Korean-ness, even within Korea. Japan enforced Koreans to change their names into Japanese, controlled the government and the politics, and monitored the language, culture, and music as well (Lie, 2014). Not only that,

Koreans had to worship the Japanese emperor and pledge loyalty to the Japanese imperialism (Sung, 2008). The Koreans were also banned from expressing sadness and crying in lyrics due to Japanese government's fear in what emotions it may stir (Lee, 2006).

This implementation forcefully ripped the Korean national music, *kugak*, out of Korea and planted Japan's understanding of westernized sounds instead. Japan adopted western elements because "western choral music was not only a mark of modernization useful for catching up with and, ultimately, overtaking the west, but also a means of shaping ethical, loyal subjects" (Lie, 2014, p.13). That is why Japan was so interested in Western music, rather than teaching Japan's traditional music form to Koreans. They wanted a modern, westernized, but a loyal "Japanistic" dependent state and control over music was the way to achieve it.

Lie also argues that no historical records show when exactly western elements first arrived in Korea without Japan introducing them. However, the records do prove that Western Christianity and missionaries had already arrived in Korea around the late 1880s, when Japan, as well, was familiarizing itself with the foreign culture. After Korea emancipated in 1945, European music became more prevalent through vigorous Christian missionary works (2004). Therefore, to young Koreans, America was the symbol of modernity. It was a symbol of freedom, as well as a refusal on Japan's restriction on music and culture. The entrance of Hollywood movies and jazz captivated urban youths as well as intellectuals after the emancipation, and America became the standard for Korean cultural legitimacy. After the Second World War, new features of American pop culture, such as jazz and ballroom dancing, began to reform Japanese urban customs, which quickly spread to current Korea's popular culture (Chua & Cho, 2012).

Therefore, Korean pop culture is neither antithetical to nor reproductive of American pop. The popular culture "has historically been open to influences outside the

region, and indeed outside the continent” (Chua & Cho, 2012, p.492). With adaptive influences from many countries, Korea “finally cemented its distinctive style and was ready to move on to the global stage with popular songs, *taejung kayo*, that were a blend of established Korean practice and a contemporary Western language” (Lee, 2006, p. 8).

Current day “K-pop” is thus an outcome created during colonization, honed through the Christianity movement, elaborated during industrialization and Westernization, and completed through globalization. Through this process, K-pop placed itself as music genre that represents hope and freedom of the Koreans. As Fuhr argues:

K-pop is mainstream music in South Korea. Initially modeled for the teenager market, this music of the country’s youth has become the most pervasive music in Korea, effectively shaping the sonic public sphere, the musical tastes among different generations, and the imaginative worlds of its consumers and producers (2015, p. 3).

K-pop is not just a song, but it is a genre that “fulfills both the eyes and ears, like a musical production” (Kang, 2010; Fuhr, 2015, p. 82). Moreover, similar to European music that represented freedom to previous Koreans; contemporary Korean music now works as a symbol of democratization to North Koreans. K-pop signals freedom to the restrained North Koreans. Therefore, the Korean government knowingly and purposefully blasts K-pop music towards North Korea to stimulate interest (Lee, 2016).

Modern Day K-pop: Outsourcing

The new generation of Korean songwriters and producers learned from the global music industry and incorporated those lessons into Korean music. This eventually led to the creation of appealing sounds that differentiated Korean music from other pop songs. In other words, K-pop became a product of cross-pollination and “cultural hybridity” (Oh & Park, 2013, p. 12).

According to Oh and Park, like many large corporations, K-pop companies outsource

Western composers to “combine Swedish and English melodies, English lyrics and percussion styles, and U.S. beats and lyrics” (2013, p.9). The stylistic aspects are borrowed from many countries along with their best pop-song structures, and sometimes even the producers themselves are hired from the global music industry. For example, SM Entertainment works with Teddy Riley and Polow da Don. YG Entertainment and JYP Entertainment work with will.i.am and Rodney “Darkchild” Jerkins, and Nick Cannon, respectively. SM Entertainment contracted with Busbee, Alex James, Kalle Engstrom, Tomas Troelsen and many other prominent composers, and YG and JYP work with Daishi Dance and Claude Kelly, respectively. Not only are producers and composers hired from a global pool, but their choreographers have also been acknowledged as worldwide professionals: Nick Bass works for SM and Jonte for JYP (Do, 2012, p.33; Oh & Park, 2013, p.6). The collaborations of Korean entertainment companies and foreign composers and producers led to huge successes. According to Fuhr (2015):

Most recent hit singles (released between 2009 and 2014) were among Girls Generation’s “Genie,” “Run Devil Run,” “Hoot,” and “I Got a Boy”; BoA’s “Eat You Up,” “Copy and Paste,” and “Hurricane Venus” SHINee’s “Juliette” and f(x)’s “New ABO”; EXO’s “Wolf”; Super Junior’s “Candy”; and Red Velvet’s “Happiness.” They were all co-written by songwriter teams from Sweden, Norway, and Denmark. The latest K-Pop songs in collaboration with U.S. producers and artists include JYJ’s “Ayyy Girl” by Kanye West, Rihanna’s “Dr. Feelgood,” “Girls Generation’s “The Boys,” and Super Junior’s “Mamacita” by Teddy Riley, Se7en’s “Girls” with Lil’ Kim, and 2nel’s collaboration with will.i.am from The Black Eyed Peas on “Take the World On” and “Gettin’ Dumb” (p. 83).

Moreover, the joint work between foreign music producers and K-Pop entertainment showed forty percent increase (from 10% to 50%), and one out of twelve K-Pop songs was

stated to be written by an overseas composer in 2011 (Fuhr, 2015; Oh, 2011). Do states that, in 2012, due to imported Western talent, K-pop is more global and westernized with its own flavor of “Pop Asianism” (p. 4; p.12). In other words, K-pop has musical elements that can attract diverse audiences.

Modern Day K-pop: English

English, to be sure, plays a considerable role in the Korean music industry. Most of the idol groups have English names, their individual names are usually in English, and the artists speak fluent English. K-pop is majorly written in Korean lyrics – unless the producers intentionally create an English, Chinese, or Japanese version of the song – but some English are added to the Korean versions to make them appealing to the international audiences (Leung, 2012). In addition, as Fuhr adds, not only is English widely used in group names and individual artists’ performance pseudonyms, English is frequently used in song titles (2015). Distinct Asian features of the artists and the “Asian-ness” are married to a Western-like sound, allowing Korea to fill a marketing gap between Western and East-Asian music industries (Oh & Park, 2013). Moreover, Fuhr argues, “English successfully constructs such a sophisticated image of K-Pop and builds a linguistic gateway through which international fans can easily connect with the songs” (2015, p. 66). This means that English works as a linguistic bond between the international audience and the Korean singers, especially in K-pop. Not only does English effectively establishes a common ground between the providers and the listeners, but English also conveys a different meaning, as Fuhr wrote in 2015:

Similarly, Jamie Shinhee Lee (2004) argued in her socio-linguistic study of K-Pop lyrics that English is used to express positions of asserted and liberated self and unsettled identities (i.e., sexual desire, self-indulgence, and resistance to the prevailing social norms and values), “whereas Korean lyrics (in the same song) represent a reserved, wholesome, and introspective conformist’s view” (Lee, 2004, p. 446).

Beyond this dichotomy of discursive functions, in which English is used to convey a sense of globality, modernity, or Westernness and Korean is used to represent locality, conservatism, or Easternness, the forms and functions of English-mixing, as Lee stated, are more heterogeneous (p. 65).

However, mixing English in Korean broadcasting was rather uncommon in the early 1990s, and the rare phenomena of mixing Korean and English in Korean songs gained rapid growth starting mid-1990s (Jin & Ryoo, 2014). Although the Korean language composes the major part in K-pop and English is only integrated to create a catchy phrase or a section, the phenomena of mixing two languages persist today (Fuhr, 2015).

Modern Day K-pop: Idolism

The source of K-pop's popularity lies with idol groups. The "idol" culture is prominent in Korea, and major entertainment companies like SM, JYP, YG, Woollim, Cube Entertainment, select and train teenagers to debut in groups rather than as individual artists. From casting to debut, the entertainment industry perfects its young acts, applying a paternalistic system that disciplines its stars, encourages them to get along, steers them clear of drinking and driving, and censures drug-use and scandals (Ahn, 2011; Ono & Kwon, 2013). As a result, K-pop training is a holistic education that treats the whole person, inculcating values and etiquette as well as performance techniques in the young artists (Hong, 2014). Teenage trainees spend five to 10 years preparing to become singers, a regimen that includes not only singing and dancing but also acting and personal development (Ono & Kwon, 2013; Seo, 2012).

Not only must the individual band members have excellent singing or rapping skills, but their appearance must also be polished — to attract fans of the opposite gender. The word "group" cannot be detached from K-pop because, while few Western bands have more than five members, K-pop groups usually have much more, sometimes as many as 13

(Hogarth, 2013). In an interview conducted by Hogarth (2013), when he asked a manager of a large music shop why Koreans go for groups rather than solo artists, he was told: “Individual performers look shabby and lonely whereas groups are fun. You see, the more, the merrier!” (p. 145). Indeed, the Asian value of collectivism and ‘groupism’ is integrated into the industry’s soul, which prefers large groups to single artists, and this alone separates K-pop from Western music. Furthermore, groups are created strategically with each member assigned according to his or her strengths (e.g., singer, dancer, and rapper), and the music is designed to integrate with and accentuate the multiple roles and styles of individual group members (Lee, Choi, Hu & Downie, 2013). Because of a focus on appearance and choreography, K-pop boy bands are often misunderstood as imitations of American male groups, such as Backstreet Boys and ‘N Sync (Anderson, 2014). Relatively, “New Kids on the Block, for example, is not entirely synchronized in their choreography. Even in Justin Timberlake’s performances, the dancers are a bit off. The United States does not have singers who dance really well, and J-pop bands don’t dance well either; they don’t practice,” says Shin, according to Hong (2014, p. 130).

However, dancing well enough is not good enough for K-pop bands. Every move is timed to the split-second, and the synchronization is flawless. Moreover, K-pop groups are differentiated from other groups by representing specific cultures and using group concepts that generalize Asian cultures. More importantly, they use a binary vocabulary to describe their members as ‘cute’ and ‘pretty,’ or ‘beastly’ and ‘aggressive,’ to appeal to young audiences (Anderson, 2014). Indeed, not only do individual members acquire such epithets, the group itself is divided into “flower” or “animal” categories, and girl groups assigned to either “cute” or “sexy.” What is more, individual singers must abide by the group’s concept and act or speak to satisfy the needs of fans. Within the category, each member of a K-pop boy group is given an idealistic personality that many girls desire – a

sensitive and gentle man, or one who is masculine and forceful, or something in between. The more members the group has, the more likely it can embody the desires of its fans, a philosophy that applies to girl groups as well, which are designed to appeal to idealized male fantasies.

Most important of all, the idols must personify the “chakhan” kid, which is an honest, principled youth, implying innocence. *Chakhan* is a more subtle concept than simply being “good”; it has spiritual and metaphysical overtones and embodies respect for and conformity to traditional social values (Hong, 2014). In fact, Koreans position themselves as either ‘good boy’ or ‘good girl,’ so that the value of *chakhan* is an onerous image to live up to. Once a K-pop idol breaks the implied boundaries of *chakhan*, he or she is no longer welcome in the group. However, since the stars prepare from a young age, it is rare to find rebellious idols in the K-pop world. Every idol has his or her talents, appealing personality, interesting stories, and matinee looks — enough to position themselves as plausible fantasies in the frenetic world of K-pop stardom. Indeed, not only are they called K-pop “idols,” their fans revere them and worship like idols, with their fans showing little tolerance for defamation and heresy (Shim et al., 2013). As the group grows in popularity, the fans’ obsession deepens, so that:

The most popular K-pop groups make repeated rounds of TV appearances not only on the music shows but also on the weekend game and variety shows. Retail stores display life-size cutouts of the idols, and their photos appear on product advertisements, and even on the products themselves. They are cast as actors and actresses in dramas and selected by government agencies to represent Korea as “cultural” or “PR ambassadors” (Shin & Kim, 2013, p. 256).

Therefore, the idols became the essential part of media studies of stars as they take a role in film and television productions (Dyer, 1979). Thus, the term “idol” became

interchangeable with the terminology; “star.” Koojiman writes (2008):

Stars are the products of the culture industry, a marketing tool to sell films, television shows, pop songs, and, in extension, soft drinks, fashion, and other consumer products to a large market. [...] Star image contains a wide range of meanings, which can include conflicting values and fantasies. Stars are constructed as being both ordinary, enabling fans to identify with them, and extraordinary, enabling fans to admire them (p. 27).

Modern Day K-pop: Fandom

Loyalty to a specific group or singer plays a significant role in K-pop culture. The term “fan,” derived from ‘fanatic,’ is used to define anyone “who is an enthusiastic, ardent, and loyal admirer of an artist” (Reysen & Branscombe, 2010, p.177). “Fanship” is an indication of a fan’s interest and is identified with other fans (fandom), entitativity, and collective happiness – that is, fanship means an individual’s personal connection with the idol singers. Moreover, it implies the reference of an individual’s connection with other fans who share their reasons for fanship (Reysen & Branscombe, 2010).

Fanship has also been defined as “an affiliation in which a great deal of emotional significance and value are derived from group membership” (Hirt et al., 1992, p. 725; Jacobson, 1979). Fandom forms “one of the principal media of collective identification in modern society and has become a principal source of meaning in life for many fans” (Adler & Clark, 2007, p. 280; Dunning et al., 1986, p. 222). Being a K-Pop fan, particularly, means creating one’s own personal brand. By identifying as a K-pop fan, the fan takes on a “certain preconceived identity, adding to or subtracting from the K-pop fan stereotype” (Chan, 2014, p.121). Indeed, avid hardcore K-pop fans may devote considerable time to the K-pop singers or groups they follow, showing intense interest in their fanship and sharing emotions within the fandom, unlike casual K-pop listeners who may enjoy the song but

show little interest in the K-pop idol.

The fanatic K-pop fans expressed their support for their particular idol through “organized fan chants, rhythmic waving of colored balloons, banners, light sticks, and other fan paraphernalia” (Fuhr, 2015, p.2) not to mention uncontrolled screaming during the performances. The chants, the color of the balloons and the organization of fan paraphernalia are systematically decided by the idol’s fan clubs as a competition to other idol’s fan clubs. Moreover, this is possible because each pop stars of certain popularity are usually entitled with their own fan clubs (Fuhr, 2015).

Modern Day K-pop: Social Media

K-pop, once a relatively obscure genre outside of Korea is now appreciated in many countries, thanks to easy media access through websites such as YouTube (Lee, Choi, Hu & Downie, 2013). YouTube has certainly encouraged K-pop, a fact illustrated in Ono and Kwon’s article (2013):

YouTube itself is very friendly towards K-pop. They created a K-pop genre in the music category, which only consists of genres such as pop, rock, R&B, rap, folk, and Latin. K-pop is the first genre to be created for a particular country (p. 207).

With media websites like YouTube paving the way for K-pop, the genre is becoming widely popular among music lovers around the globe. From user-generated content Websites to peer-to-peer networks, channels such as Facebook and Twitter takes a primary role to disseminate global contents. Indeed, they have recently become the fastest growing media platforms to advertise global cultural products (Jin, 2012; Jung, 2011).

Newspaper reports attribute K-pop’s global popularity to its being “less foreign than Japanese or Western music,” suggesting a “cultural proximity” between them (Pease, 2006, p. 176). Pease also notes that global K-pop has no explicit Korean flavor, but is

considered “culturally odorless” or as “Asianized Western” models of pan-regional modernity (p. 176). The “Korean national flavor” is possibly eliminated because most songs feature English phrases either in the title or rap verses, most of the band names are in English, and the music genre is a mixture of R&B and hip-hop. Regardless of its lack of Koreanness, K-pop has distinctive high-quality audio and visual production values, which distinguishes it from many other forms of pop music. Moreover, the lyrics are unique, since they rarely exceed a yearning for freedom, even at their most rebelliousness (Pease, 2006). K-pop, in short, does not have the “smell of Korea” that international audiences find hard to like, nor does it have explicit sexual or rebellious lyrics that make listeners uncomfortable. Its production values elicit a sense of collective pleasure, even of awe, and ease of access has opened its artistry to a global audience.

As we have seen, social media, such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, play a significant role in spreading K-pop to overseas markets. Twitter is well known for its easy, brief entries due to the 140 character limit. Furthermore, it has a strong diffusion effect, communicates in real time, and transmits faster than other messaging tools. Twitter has, in addition, many celebrities with active accounts, and where celebrities go, fans often follow (Choi, Meza, & Park, 2014). In sum, Twitter works like an instant messaging technology tool for fans to follow their K-pop idols without geographical limitations.

Without this “technology or real-time streaming and new digital media, K-pop recognition would not be possible” (Oh & Park, 2013, p. 12). Global fans and audiences are informed continuously about events and song releases with the ease of accessibility of SNS. Korean entertainment agencies use the tools to reach hard-to-access international markets, such as the United States and Europe, but have made considerable progress (Kong, 2016).

YouTube classifies K-pop as a music genre—the first time this has happened to any country (Do, 2012). According to Hermes, K-pop music videos were viewed 842,062,689 times

on YouTube from January 1 to May 1, 2011. The United States ranked second after Korea with 93,600,032 views (Hermes, 2015). In 2012, Tuk reported that K-pop videos on YouTube had been viewed 2.3 billion times up until 2011. Again, the United States had the second highest views with 240 million, and Thailand in third place had 224 million views for K-pop videos. Moreover, there were 249 countries in 2015 and K-pop has been viewed in 235 of them up until 2011 (Tuk, 2012, pp. 20-21). However, following Psy's "Gangnam Style" boom in America in July 2013, which had 2,489,717,135 YouTube views (data collected on January 3, 2015), the popularity for K-pop global views is expected to rise significantly.

Modern Day K-pop: Profitable Industry

According to "Music Export/Import Statistics," provided by the South Korea Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, K-pop exports have grown significantly. In 2003, exports were \$11.1 million, but by 2013 they were \$231.1 million, almost a 2000% increase within a decade. Similarly, the Korea Music Content Industry Association released Music Export/Import statistics. Exports of Korean music for 2010 were \$199 million, \$235 million in 2011 and \$277 million in 2012. Imported music was \$12.5 billion in 2010, \$12.993 billion in 2011, and \$12.961 billion in 2012, showing that the export rate between 2010 and 2012 rose by an average of 18.9% each year, while imported music was relatively stable, increasing by just 1.7% per year.

Exports of K-pop to other countries can be categorized as direct and indirect. Shows, events, and online sales are considered as direct exports. The use of domestic agents and overseas agents are counted as indirect exports. Comparing data from 2011 to 2013, the increase of shows held overseas, overseas online sales, and the use of foreign agents has risen by 1.5%, 1.1%, and 0.8%, respectively (KMCI Archive, 2014).

From the data provided by KMCI, music exports to North America (74.45%) showed the highest increase compared to China, Japan, Southeastern Asia, and Europe. Exports to

North America were \$587,000 in 2010, \$857,000 in 2011, and \$1,024, 000 in 2012. The export growth is larger than that of China (49%), Southeastern Asia (48.56%), Japan (40.39%), and Europe (4.21%), indicating that K-pop's popularity in North America is increasing. It also suggests the importance of studying the North America audience.

Reverse Influence: K-pop in the World

K-pop's popularity began in the early 1990s, but it was then a regional phenomenon limited to Asia. Global popularity began a decade later, emerging partly due to Korea's rapid economic growth, the emigration of Koreans to other countries such as Japan, the U.S., and Western Europe, "participation and global growth of Korean companies, and participation in the global division of labor in the music industry in both manufacturing and distribution" (Oh, 2013, p.8).

As K-pop gained in global popularity, the connotation of the term became more than just a musical genre derived from a small Asian peninsula. It is now identified as part of Brand (South) Korea, a globally competitive product unfettered by its colonial past (Lie, 2012). K-pop is said to be a "representative national culture and industry," (Lie, 2012, p.359) indicating that the genre plays an integral role in introducing Korea to music fans. K-pop thus works as an ambassador for South Korea. Numerous researchers have recognized the global popularity of K-pop, as Lie writes in 2014, "I saw that K-pop had become a global phenomenon. But a scan of the media, print as well as social, soon revealed that my discovery was far from exclusive" (p. 2). With the Asianness combined with a culture that is neither directly from America nor Europe (Kim, 2011), "production companies in South Korea that started to expand their target markets beyond national borders in the mid-1990s" (Fuhr, 2015, p. 59). Fuhr includes that:

The recent increase of K-Pop idols on international stages has created more scholarly attention and resulted in articles, special issues of academic journals, and edited

volumes dedicated to the K-Pop phenomenon (2015, p. 12).

The share of K-pop on an international level should not only receive attention as a musical genre, but it should also receive a positive light as a mean that widens global fans' lenses to view the world. After all, "music constructs our sense of identity through the direct experiences it offers of the body, time and sociability, experiences which enable us to place ourselves in imaginative cultural narratives" (Frith, 1996, p. 124).

K-pop in U.S.A.: Korean Celebrities

In Asia, the movement is known as Hallyu, but in the West, it is known as the Korean Wave. Wonder Girls, a K-pop group, performed as stage openers for the 2009 Jonas Brothers Concert and were featured in 13 concerts in 7 locations (Yi, 2009). Girls Generation debuted in the U.S. on "The Late Show with David Letterman" (Jan. 31, 2012) and appeared on "Live! With Kelly" on February 1, 2012 (Benjamin, 2012). Also, Microsoft Surface Pro 3's new advertisement released in 2014 incorporated the female K-pop group 2NE1's song "I am the best." A side-by-side advertisement with MacBook Air and Microsoft's Surface Pro aired in the United States with a Korean song (Benjamin, 2014).

The United States has become a popular tour destination for major K-pop artists. Rain presented two shows in the U.S. in 2006, and both sold out. This success eventually led him to appear in *Ninja Assassin*, a film, in 2009. The same year, 2NE1 featured in will.i.am's solo album, *#willpower* (Hong; Austin, 2013, p.13). In addition, an American producer, famous for his collaboration with Usher, M.I.A., and Beyoncé, worked with G-Dragon and Top, both from the group Big Bang, on their single "Knock Out" (All K-pop; Austin, 2013, p. 13).

Korean celebrities certainly want to enter the charts in the United States. Psy (Gangnam Style), Lee Byung-hun (starred in *G.I. Joe*, 2009 and 2013 and *Red 2*, 2013), Daniel Henney (Voice in *Big Hero 6*, 2014), and Soohyeon (starred in *Avengers*, 2015) – all successfully expanded beyond Asia and into the American market. Especially the "viral explosion of

“Gangnam Style” (Psy’s song) in 2012 of refuted the canard that South Korean popular music would never make it in the United States” (Lie, 2014, p. 8).

K-pop in U.S.A.: Google Trend

Google trend is a tracking service provided by Google, allowing users to see how often certain keywords, subjects, and phrases were searched over a specified time (Darcy, 2013). According to Google, the trend graph searched with the keyword “K-pop” by the researcher shows that interest within North America grew significantly since 2011, starting in California. In fact, the trend graph for “K-pop” showed a steep increase since 2011, with the rise beginning in 2010 and steeping in 2011 (December 2015). When the Google trend graph had two keywords, “K-pop” and “Pop music,” the shape of the slopes were almost identical, leading to the conclusion that K-pop is one of the most popular global pop music searches (December 2015). Even Fuhr mentions the keyword-search-increase phenomenon in Google trend with K-pop:

A short look at Google statistics on the keyword K-Pop and its variant “K-pop” (conducted in October 2014) reveals that the search volume for both terms has risen exponentially since 2009. The regional interest breakdown shows that the nine countries with the highest number of search queries were in Southeast and East Asia, led by Indonesia, Malaysia, Vietnam, Singapore, and the Philippines (2015, p. 61).

Because K-pop’s popularity in East Asia is high, this has led to the growing popularity in Korean fashion, style, products, and even the Korean language. However, K-pop’s fame in the East should not surprise us, since people of a similar race tend to adapt more easily to each other’s customs and practices. As R.B. Cialdini says in *Influence*, it is natural and self-explanatory that people tend to create a bond with those who are visually and culturally similar to them (Cialdini, 1987). This paper, though, analyzes the counter-intuitive fact of why people with no particular bond become attached to a foreign culture.

K-pop in U.S.A.: North American Tour

Every year, several K-pop idols tour the world to provide overseas fans with a personal experience of K-pop. Not only do they visit Europe, Japan, China, Southeast Asia, and South America, they visit America particularly. According to billboard.com, a minimum of four festivals and concerts were dedicated to Korean pop culture in the U.S. and Canada this year, making 2016 the busiest year for K-pop fans and artists.

In January 2016, one K-pop blogger (Nutty Nomad) posted the upcoming K-pop concert lineup in the United States, starting with Apink (three concerts) and Infinite and EXO (four). Baek Z Young has one, TeenTop has three, SHINee has one, and AOMG has eight planned. In addition to these groups, Day 6, BAP, YB, VIXX, Got7, and Dean are expected to visit the United States in 2016. Also, the 14th Music Festival with Wheesung, AOA, Drunken Tiger and more singers was held on May 2016, and the Annual K-con sponsored by Mnet and CJ E&M will start in July. Currently, 17 K-pop groups have confirmed their participation in the annual K-con. As time passes, more and more K-pop singers are entering the U.S. market, driving export sales, which according to data provided by KMCA and the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, indicate the inexorable rise of K-pop within the United States.

Chapter 3: Theoretical Overview

Uses and Gratification

Uses and gratification theory, proposed by Katz, is an approach to understand why and how people actively seek out specific media to satisfy needs. Lin said in 1996:

The primary strength of U&G theory is its ability to permit researchers to investigate mediated communication situations via a single or multiple sets of psychological needs, psychological motives, communication channels, communication content, and psychological gratifications within a particular or cross-cultural context (Ruggiero, 2000, p. 28; p. 574).

Uses and gratification theory addresses the motivations behind certain usages and determines the satisfactory effect created by the media uses (Joinson, 2008; Robinson et al., 2017). The uses and gratification for Internet users can generalize into three concepts: (1) the media consumers may feel fulfillment through the content (content gratification), (2) the consumers may feel gratified by the media consuming process itself (process gratification), and (3) gratification may be felt through the social surroundings which is applicable to popular culture content consumption. (Robinson et al, 2017; Stafford, Stafford, & Schkade, 2004).

The psychological need is the main basis for the uses and gratification theory. The need of K-pop fans is a non-deficiency need, which is a higher-level need than a deficiency one. Within five sub categories of non-deficiency needs — cognitive, affective, integrative, contact, tension release (Oh, & Jung, 2013) — K-pop is considered to gratify tension release needs.

Relaxation, escape from reality, and the need for comradeship may be an emotional motivation for consuming K-pop. Through the activity of intentionality (resolving stress), selectivity (selecting the genre K-pop), and involvement (active searching and identifying

oneself as a K-pop fan), international fans obtain the gratification they seek. With uses and gratification theory, this study can address the popularity of K-pop and why its fans enjoy consuming the content – which is assumed to satisfy deprived psychological needs while the subject is immersed in K-pop.

Mood Management Theory

Similar to uses and gratification theory, Mood Management theory effectively explains why K-pop fans display continuous attraction to the genre. Mood Management theory was proposed by Zillmann to describe the “consumption of messages, particularly entertaining messages, which are capable of altering prevailing mood states, and that the selection of specific messages for consumption often serve to regulate those moods” (Khanson, 2012, p.173; Zillmann, 1988). Message-consumers reject anything that does not conform to their preferences, and they search for content they think feels right. K-pop, in this case, contains mood-influencing characteristics and the consumer gets sufficient emotional gratification to eventually lift the mood they have at the current moment.

Although extensive research has been conducted on cultural and ethnic studies, researching a new and immersive musical genre such as K-pop still needs to be done. This study is guided by two research questions, based on a review of the existing literature and theories. The goal of this study is to understand U.S. K-pop fans and the reason for its appeal. Rather than analyzing fans’ perception of the musical genre, this study seeks to clarify the unique personalities and to ask:

RQ1. What types of people enjoy K-pop?

RQ2. What are the attitudes, motivations, and opinions of people who like K-pop?

Chapter 4: Method

Q methodology is a behavioral research approach integrating a mixed methodology to reveal a “feeling state” (Stephenson, 2011, p. 217). William Stephenson introduced the methodology in 1953 as a “foundation for the systematic study of subjectivity” (Brown, 1993, p. 93). Q methodology assists understanding any given situation as the factor analysis measure and uncover the subjectivity.

Q-sort technique is the measurement for the methodology. Q sort, the instrumental basis, involves individuals to subjectively rank order a given set of statements from “most agree” to “most disagree” (Brown, 1980). Usually, the statements are taken from interviews and thus are grounded in personal experience (Brown, 1996).

The ranked Q-sorts are then factor analyzed and grouped together into specific factors/categories. Each factor represents a unique set-group of people who have similar attitudes and perceptions about the study topic (i.e., Facebook, K-pop). After the factor formation, the researcher interprets the outcomes in detail, giving them factor-specific names for the comparison stage. Post to the subjective statement cards rank sorting, one-to-one interviews with the researcher are conducted with each subjects to add explanatory depth to the factors and explain the reasoning behind each factors’ attitudes.

For this study, the statements that best represented why individuals enjoy K-pop were gathered from online blogs, comments, and online news forums. Then two professors from Brigham Young University (Provo, the School of Communications) reviewed the statements and revisions were made accordingly. Among the 40 statements (see Appendix B), 26 were positive, and 14 contained either negative vocabulary or negative connotations.

Q methodology allows having small number of participants because the individuals are treated as unique variables rather than as a population sample (Robinson et al, 2017). Thus, the study consisted of 39 young adults with no preference for gender or age. Brown

(1980) explains, “All that is required is enough subjects to establish the existence of a factor for the purposes of comparing one factor with another” when selecting study participants (p. 192). Additionally, a group of researchers who studied the motivational behaviors behind Facebook usage also uses Brown’s quote to further explain the Q sort instrument:

It is rarely necessary in work of this kind to obtain large numbers of each type; five or six persons loaded significantly on a factor are normally sufficient to produce highly reliable factor scores, and it is in terms of the relationships among the factor scores that general statements about an attitude are made. Increasing the number of persons on a factor merely fills up factor space, but has very little impact on the scores (Brown, 1980, p. 67; Robinson et al, 2017, p. 51).

To ensure that the results of this study were representative of the typical K-pop fan, both genders were included during the sampling procedure (2 males and 37 females). Also, due to the nature of the topic, typical target-market age range were set as between 16 and 45. Usually, the subjects for the Q-study are not limited to a certain gender and age. However, the participant pool was narrowed down to fit the purpose of this study. First, the descendants of Korean ethnicity were eliminated. This was employed to prevent social and language bias altering the data results. Second, the participants had to reside within the territorial boundaries of the United States. Third, the participants had to identify themselves as U.S. citizens and to have lived in the U.S. for more than half of their lives. Lastly, all participants were required to speak fluent English since both stages of the methodology, the statement cards and the interviews, were conducted in one language.

The study’s subjects were collected in three different areas: in L.A., BYU Provo Campus, and from numerous K-pop Facebook fan pages. The L.A. subjects were fans of a K-pop group named Infinite, which hosted their second world tour, Infinite Effect, at L.A.

Microsoft Center on January 10, 2016: thirteen subjects participated in the study from that location. Twelve subjects were gathered by recruiting students from Korean language and culture classes offered at BYU, but they were required to have no previous experience of Korea or Korean, including, but not limited to, LDS Church missionary services or by participating in overseas student programs in Korea. In addition, they had to be non-Korean. The remainder of the participants were found through Facebook K-pop fan pages, the principal ones being “K-pop Dallas,” “Kcon,” “K-pop Me,” and “K-pop fans of Utah.” Besides the K-pop Facebook fan pages, the researcher contacted a K-pop Facebook blogger, Mina Beebe, who posted the participant recruiting message on her “M-Nope” page. The page was created in 2015 and currently has over 5,700 likes (May 21, 2016).

Subjects found at the Microsoft Center, L.A., and on BYU campus were asked to participate in the study face-to-face with the researcher, while online fans were asked to conduct the research themselves via Qualtrics (See Appendix C). Among online respondents, those who said they liked K-pop for reasons other than its music were deleted, and those who completed the survey too quickly (less than 15 minutes) were removed from the base. Responses from the participants who claimed their ethnicity as Korean were deleted from the study. Participant responses indicating citizenship other than U.S. were omitted as well. Lastly, responses of participants who said to have never lived in the U.S. were omitted as well.

Anyone younger than 16 years was required to fill out youth and parental consent forms. If parents were not on site to complete the parental consent form, participation was denied. Participants older than 16 years completed the research participant consent form only. The online participants were exposed to informed consent page prior to their participation regarding age limitation and were urged to self-opt out if they were under the age. This was employed due to difficulty contacting and obtaining parental consent form from the guardians

of the participants who were under 16 year old. Those who completed the study face-to-face with the researcher were given \$5 in cash as compensation following completion of all parts of the questionnaire.

The purpose of the study was to unveil the motivational usage behind K-pop fanship and further analyze why they consume such cultural media product. Thus, the subjects were selected for participation only if they answered 'yes' to the following preliminary questions: 1) Do you listen to K-pop at least twice a week? 2) Do you identify yourself as a fan of at least one K-pop group?

The next step in Q-sort was to have the participants conduct their Q-sort ("ranking cards") by reading through 40 statements and ranking them subjectively on an 11 point scale ranging from "Most like me" (+5) to "Least like me" (-5) (Robinson et al, 2017). After the Q-sorts were completed, four questions were asked to allow the participants to express their thoughts on the statements they picked as their high and low responses. Six additional questions were asked to glean further information about K-pop's appeal. This helped the researcher to probe deeper into the personality of each participant.

The questions asked were: (1) Why did you pick these two as your favorites? (2) Why did you pick these two as your least favorite? (3) Who are your favorite K-pop groups / singers / idols? (4) What are the similarities between the groups / singers / idols? (5) Why do you listen to K-pop? (6) What do you like most about K-pop? (7) What do you dislike about K-pop? (8) How did you get into K-pop? (9) What emotions do you experience while listening to K-pop? (10) Do you prefer listening to or watching K-pop? The interviewer simultaneously recorded the respective statement numbers and the interview responses (by hand) as the interviewee responded. The average time to complete both Q-sorting and the interview was about 35 minutes for each participant.

The researcher then systematically classified the results of the Q-sorts using the

PQMethod software, that can be found online, to conduct the analyses. The researcher performed a “centroid factor analysis (QCENT) to extract factors, which is a way of defining ‘centers of gravity embedded in a correlation matrix.’ A centroid refers to a kind of grand average of the relationships between all the sorts because they are represented by their correlation coefficients” (Brown 1980a, p. 40; McKeown et al., 2013, p. 140). Finally, a varimax rotation of the factors was performed (QVARIMAX) to obtain a complete analysis of the collected Q-sorts.

At least two participant factor loadings had to be significant at 0.01 level to be an eligible noteworthy factor. Once the reportable factors were established, the z-scores, both positive and negative, were compared for the selected factors. A z-score was considered as significant and representable of the ‘most like’ and ‘least like’ statements for each factor if it was greater than ± 1.0 . With the determined factors, the researcher then compared the statements that represented the significant positive and negative z-scores. Alike to determining a reportable factor, statements with a z-score greater than ± 1.0 were considered to be significant “Most like me” and “Least like me.” Any statements that fell out of that category were not referred to as a supplement.

The researcher determined the factor labels and translation of the data, based on the z-scores and the factor Q-sort values provided by the research participants. Additionally, the interview materials were referred to in order to provide enriched understanding.

Chapter 5: Results

The principal advantage of the Q methodology is its ability to identify and categorize individuals into groups who share similar attitudes and explanatory reasons (Robinson et al, 2017). This approach becomes increasingly valuable when each individual's opinions and motivations – in this case, about “Why I like K-pop” – is the key factor. For this study, the Q-sort factor analysis yielded three significant factors, which are understood as “operational definitions of the attitudes or value preferences” of study participants who conducted the sorts (Brown, 1980, p. 55). Because Q methodology does not consider participants' demographic differences, focusing only on the similar and general perceptions, the outcome factors characterize typologies and thus provide a richer understanding of K-pop's appeal.

The study posed two questions: what types of people enjoy K-pop, and what are the attitudes, motivations, and opinions of people who like the foreign cultural content. According to the factor loadings, three types of people were found to enjoy K-pop. The first category revealed that people enjoyed the feeling of personal connection between themselves and the celebrity. These individuals enjoyed fan community activities and maintained a virtual relationship with fellow fans, and enjoyed the musical production. However, their core reason for attraction towards K-pop was deeply grounded in personal parasocial interaction with the idols.

The second-factor category suggested that individuals appreciated the musical aspect and the high-quality production, with less regard to interest in the celebrity nor the fan community. These individuals viewed the idol singers as providers for their music playlist. In short, the second factor favored only the cultural product and its elements, which is distinctively different motivation to consume K-pop compared to the two other factors.

The third factor demonstrated that people valued the relationship formulated around the common interest. The individuals in the third category revealed the allowance to socialize

beyond the geographical limitations, step outside the virtual relationship and extending it to real-life setting became an appealing factor to like K-pop.

Factor 1: “Honey honey, how you thrill me.”

Factor 1, who held the same views for 16 statements (both positive and negative, see Table 1) was composed of ratings of 27 individuals (one male and 26 females). Factor 1 was the largest group in this study. To Factor 1 members, K-pop is a way to meet new friends. It provides a song genre that lifts their spirits, offers enjoyable visual entertainment, and a word (K-pop) that can easily define them. Although these individuals displayed multiple common reasons for liking K-pop, the strongest one was their affection for the celebrity. Therefore, Factor 1 was named “Honey honey, how you thrill me” to express their passion.

Table 1
Factor 1- Significant Positive and Negative Statements

Statement#	Statement	Z-score
33	K-pop singers are more than just performers on stage to me.	1.737
35	It's K-pop singers' individual personality that draws me in.	1.469
16	Even though I don't speak Korean, I still like Kpop.	1.339
9	I like K-pop because they are great singers.	1.270
15	I am really attracted to choreography in K-pop.	1.224
2	I like how K-pop draws people from all over the world to become new friends.	1.194
1	I think it's fun to be a part of K-pop community.	1.000
40	K-pop stars are precisely calculated, well manufactured products.	-1.058
39	I don't believe K-pop stars' personalities are who they really are.	-1.064
38	I don't know personal information about my favorite K-pop band (his /her family tree, favorite color, favorite food, etc.)	-1.103
27	I dislike how K-pop artists change their fashion style for each song they perform.	-1.150
21	I would like K-pop better if there were no music videos.	-1.159
19	K-pop music videos are all similar to each other.	-1.172
13	I don't relate to themes in K-Pop.	-1.196
3	I don't think my interest in Korea grew even after exposure to K-pop.	-1.201
14	I like K-pop because it's like American music.	-1.374
8	I don't have friends who are fans of same K-pop group as me.	-1.399
36	I never listen to K-pop when I am depressed.	-1.533
4	I don't consider myself as a fan of any K-pop group.	-1.641

It is not true, however, that the “Honey honey” factor is symptomatic of celebrity appeal only and disregards the music. Such fans love the songs as much as the singers and vice versa. However, their unique attribute is that they consider idols as remote friends for whom they feel strong emotions. One participant said, “With social media and all being what it is now, it's almost like they [the idols] feel like distant friends.”

However, this sense of feeling does not spring just from the celebrities' attractive looks or their frequent appearances on social media. Rather, their personalities and down-to-earth values play an important role in factor 1. One participant said, "I like people based on their personalities and not by the way they look. I can't just like someone because they have a beautiful body/face, I find that disgusting. I like them because they [the idols] are more than people with just beautiful appearances but are people with feelings and emotions just like how I am." Contributing a different perspective, another participant said, "They [the idols] constantly do things in order to show their true selves as humans rather than idols. They are still humans who do human things. The emotions these idols hold within themselves and how they carry themselves is what allows us to really sympathize and support them as passionately as we do."

This trait appears particularly in fans who have watched their idols from the beginning of their careers and have maintained their devotion for some time. As the singers improve in skill, gaining popularity, the fans feel a sense of pride and pleasure that comes from being there from the outset. One participant commented: "I have watched them grow, achieve their dreams, and gain confidence and get the skills they need to further their dreams, and honestly, they don't feel like just an ordinary singer. They feel like someone I've watched grow into a better person and so when they perform on stage, it gives me a bigger sense of proud parent/friend rather than just someone watching somebody else perform." Another study participant also commented similarly by saying, "when one has been with them [the idols] since the beginning, they [the idols] aren't just singers anymore. They are more special." Thus, the "Honey honey" factor group loves the idols for whom they appear to be. Factor 1 people are those who proudly identify themselves as a fan of a particular group. The "Honey honey" group are those who are easily offended when their "honey" has been belittled or attacked by other people, fans, or groups. This group has a strong loyalty towards their "honey" and are protective of their "honey's" reputation and feelings, and wish sincerely for their success. They believe the personality shown by their idols is honest and true, and sense there are stronger and tighter relationships between the celebrities and themselves.

To them, enjoying K-pop is not a one-sided pleasure: it is a two-way affection. As this participant commented: “I know that they [the idols] care about me as the way I care about them.”

Factor 2: “Music is my life.”

Factor 2 consisted of four individuals (four females) with 12 statements (both positive and negative) in common (see Table 2). This group is named “Music is my life” because their fondness for K-pop is based entirely on the music. Unlike the “Honey honey” factor, this factor does not feel personally connected to the idols. Sometimes Factor 2 individuals wonder what it would be like to have a direct connection with the singers, but they do not search the Internet for the idols’ personalities or personal information.

Table 2
Factor 2- Significant Positive and Negative Statements

Statement#	Statement	z-score
16	Even though I don’t speak Korean, I still like K-pop.	2.311
15	I am really attracted to choreography in K-pop.	1.890
6	I like to create K-pop playlists.	1.786
32	I sometimes wish I had personal connection with my favorite K-pop singers.	1.077
38	I don’t know personal information about my favorite K-pop band (his /her family tree, favorite color, favorite food, etc.)	1.048
12	I enjoy that K-pop has real meaningful lyrics unlike American music.	-1.007
34	I feel like I know the K-pop singers personally.	-1.080
21	I would like K-pop better if there were no music videos.	-1.142
7	I like to show interest in K-pop by purchasing related merchandise.	-1.646
3	I don’t think my interest in Korea grew even after exposure to K-pop.	-1.665
5	I like to celebrate on my K-pop group member’s birthdays or debuted date.	-1.810
27	I dislike how K-pop artists change their fashion style for each song they perform.	-1.947

These fans search for a K-pop group with a musical style that fits their taste. They value melodic ability and vocal skill. The personalities of the singers are inconsequential to the “Music is my life” factor, the music and accompanying products being all that matters to them. One individual said, “I really like groups/individuals that sing well. Sometimes it’s harder for me to like a mediocre song if I don’t like their vocals. Not liking the vocals is part of why I never got into Arashi [Japanese boy band].”

Not only do these fans enjoy the music, they like the products that are associated with it, such as fashion, music videos, and choreography. They create playlists, watch music videos and

sometimes mimic the outfits worn by the Korean idols, although watching and trying the dance moves were the biggest reason for their K-pop interest. One participant commented, “Biggest reasons I like K-pop are the styling, dancing, and beat in the music,” adding, “I was really impressed by the dancing [of the K-pop idols], mostly because I used to be a dancer and that tends to stand out to me. That made me want to watch more.” Similarly, another participant said, “The choreography is amazing! I am always so impressed. Most groups are super in sync with each other, yet they all have their own unique style. Plus they do the dances while singing live and I love that.”

The precision of K-pop also seemed to win the “Music is my life” factor’s hearts. One participant said that the dance moves look difficult because they are always perfectly synchronized. She also added that when Americans do a set movement, it looks like a ‘show off’; for K-pop singers, it is the result of long hours of practice. Indeed, factor 2 fans value the intense training and high production skills of K-pop. One person said, “I enjoy a high level of production in anything I see or do. While it [K-pop] doesn’t make or break something for me, it shows me a level of caring.”

K-pop music videos also play a significant role in capturing “Music is my life” fans’ attention: “I love the style that the music videos have. The combination of dancing and acting are perfect. I also like how they have amazing sets because it makes the music videos amazing.” Another fan said, “It was the music videos that got me into K-pop. It was the singing / dancing and high quality that impressed me. They put so much time, money, and effort and it showed. I really appreciate it. I was introduced to K-pop by its music videos on YouTube, but I like the music by itself now.” Because listening to vocals and melodies, and viewing visual elements such as choreography and music videos, are most important to this factor group, there are no obstacles due to the language barrier. Participants commented that “Music is music. The music is good, and the singers are competent, so you don’t really need to speak Korean,” “The music is very catchy. It just feels right,” and “I don’t believe that it is a requirement to understand all of

the lyrics in the music. If it's good music why should it matter if I understand or not? Music is a universal language that can speak for itself." The "Music is my life" fan values the visual and audio characteristics of K-pop over any other musical genre.

Curiosity about idol members does not rank high with these fans. Unlike the "Honey" group, which are self-confessed K-pop idol fans and protective of their singers' reputation, the Factor 2 individuals like the music far more than they like the artists. The "Music is my life" fans may favor certain groups, but that appeal does not lead necessarily to strong feelings about the group.

Factor 3: "With a little help from my friends."

The third factor consists of people who enjoy K-pop through sharing and talking. In this study, the group consisted of five individuals (one male and four females) who shared similar perspectives on 14 common statements (both positive and negative, see Table 3). This group is named "With a little help from my friends" because these fans believe having friends who like K-pop and meeting new people through K-pop are the real appeal for liking K-pop. These fans also enjoy having discussion sessions with their K-pop friends.

Table 3
Factor 3- Significant Positive and Negative Statements

Statement#	Statement	z-score
2	I like how K-pop draws people from all over the world to become new friends.	2.051
1	I think it's fun to be a part of K-pop community.	1.885
15	I am really attracted to choreography in K-pop.	1.778
39	I don't believe K-pop stars' personalities are who they really are.	1.232
29	I like K-pop groups because they've been trained to be excellent singers and dancers.	1.185
40	K-pop stars are precisely calculated, well manufactured products.	1.123
6	I like to create K-pop playlists.	1.011
35	It's K-pop singers' individual personality that draws me in.	1.011
36	I never listen to K-pop when I am depressed.	-1.055
34	I feel like I know the K-pop singers personally.	-1.349
14	I like K-pop because it's like American music.	-1.360
3	I don't think my interest in Korea grew even after exposure to K-pop.	-1.730
12	I enjoy that K-pop has real meaningful lyrics unlike American music.	-1.746
21	I would like K-pop better if there were no music videos.	-1.796

Factor 3 fans enjoy making new friends and do not mind if those friends have a different ethnicity, speak a different language, have different religions, or live in different countries. One individual said, “Everyone is so nice. It does not matter where they are from or how old they are. I like the same music as other people, and they like me no matter what.” Additionally, another person indicated that “Same interest = friends! Especially for liking K- pop.” To these people, the common factor of “liking K-pop” is stronger than demographic, geographic, or societal barriers.

Because it is especially difficult in the U.S. to find people who enjoy K-pop as you do, when a fan finds a similar fan, they bond instantly. One of these “With a little help from my friends” commented: “It is hard to find someone who likes K-pop, but once you do find someone who does, it’s great to be able to talk about each other’s favorite groups.” One fan who picked the statement as “most like me” said, “I have had fun short term friendships through talking about K-pop and some of my current best friendships have K-pop/ Korean music/ Korean language as a common tie.”

Sometimes the friendship goes beyond just talking about the Korean idols. It encourages interest in other cultures and languages. One study participant commented, “I love anything that catalyzes intercultural exchange and friendships. K-pop is excellent at that. It encourages people to broaden their exposure to the world. It inspired me to acquire a third language and to live abroad, and because of those things I now have friends from every continent.” Within the “With a little help from my friends” factor, individuals believe that K- pop is a healthy hobby that provides a chance to meet friends worldwide, creates an opportunity to understand the musical genre from other perspectives, and never judges other people’s tastes. This online community of friends become actual friends, as fans befriend one another on social networking sites, through text, chat, and they sometimes even visit each other.

Not only does K-pop help fans bond, but it also breaks age barriers. Although the general belief is that K-pop caters exclusively to teens, the reality is that many mothers join the

fandom to relieve stress or to compensate for the empty nest syndrome. In addition, mothers who enjoy K-pop might have a common musical interest as their children. As one mother said, “K-pop is not just fun, but it gives an opportunity to spend time with my daughter doing something we both enjoy.”

Chapter 6: Discussion

The purpose of this study was to determine why individuals of different needs and personalities are attracted to the foreign cultural product; K-pop. Moreover, the research aimed to analyze the phenomenon of K-pop fandom in depth. Previous research identified the salient characteristics of K-pop: the precise choreography and high production values etc. (Chan, 2014). Some also say that K-pop is a branch of Hallyu (Korean Wave), whose fans were initially introduced to Korean pop culture through TV dramas (Otmazgin, 2014, p. 5). However, Lee presented a fresh perspective at the 2016 PCA/ACA conference, arguing that people K-pop represent a major cultural shift in its own right. In this sense, K-pop works as a “liberation from and resistance to the dominant capitalistic culture.” Indeed, those who have Asian backgrounds find emotional attachments to K-pop and use “their family roots for their excuses why they are open to Asian culture.” Lee also argues that those who love K-pop prefer to make friends online rather than to socialize in reality.

This study presents a different outlook from what Lee suggested (2016). In contrary to Lee’s findings (2016) that K-pop is enjoyed by those who have emotional attachment to the culture because of their backgrounds, this study argues that K-pop is appealing and enjoyed by even non-Asians. Moreover, Lee (2016) presented that K-pop fans prefer to engage in virtual relationships rather than socializing in real life settings. This study finds Lee’s (2016) argument partially valid since factor 1 displayed similar characteristics. However, factor 3 reveals that not all K-pop fans seek isolation and confinement from fellow fans.

As previous research focused on why K-pop appeals to fans, some research has analyzed the personality characteristic of K-pop fans. This study, however, finds that the reasons proposed by previous researchers did not cover every K-pop fan. The study’s analysis of the 40 Q-sort statements identified three factors based on personality characteristics (Honey honey how you thrill me, Music is my life, With a little help from my friends), two of

which – Music is my life and With a little help from my friend – were previously cited as self-reliant factors by researchers. Existing literature identifies production levels, vocals, music videos, fashion (Otmazgin, 2014, pp. 9-13) and so on as the defining reasons for K-pop appeal, but the growth of online forums and social networking sites offer new insights into fan motivation, (Chan, 2014; Choi, Meza, & Park, 2014). These include the sense of belonging and achieving more than just fanship (such as understanding different cultures, opportunities to learn new languages), but these have not been comprehensively researched. Because the specifics of the two-factor categories, or the “Honey honey” factor, has not been previously mentioned nor defined as specific areas for K-pop research, this study provides new insight into this particular study field that should interest academics, entertainment companies, and K-pop fans alike. This is especially pertinent for understanding K-pop fans worldwide and for Korean groups who are trying to break into Western charts.

Members of each factor were distinguished by motivation, attitude, and emotion and, because of these differences, show different degrees of fandom, an extreme version of which was viewed negatively. For instance, the “extreme fanship” is understood as “privacy invasion fans” [사생팬; *sasaeng fan*]. They are “crazily obsessed fans who spend a large amount of time and money following their favorite idols and do not hesitate to perform illegal actions to catch their idols’ attention” (Chan, 2014, p. 130). The extreme fans will often skip school and follow their preferred artists, paying \$400 to \$800 per day to hire illegal *sasaeng* taxis to trail their artists (Chan, 2014; Lansky, 2012). Chan also added:

There have been horrific reports from celebrities where they realized that their phone lines were tapped, their car’s GPS system bugged, their apartments broken into, or they received letters written with mensuration blood, and have even been injured through car accidents due to *sasaeng* taxis (2014, p. 130).

Therefore, any fans who display interest in the idol themselves and collect their personal information (birthdays, blood types, family trees) were previously all titled as the *sasaeing* fans. However, this study found out that the “Honey honey” group shared similar attributes as *sasaeing* fans but were different from those extremes.

The “Honey honey how you thrill me” factor [group] feel a personal connection and have the responsibility to protect their singers. The factor individuals think the singers [the idols] care about them as much as they [the fans] do but do not desire to do anything beyond normal to catch the celebrities’ attention. The individuals believe their job is to support their idol to reach the top and maintain that position. In that sense, like the *sasaeng* fans, these individuals are extreme fanatics when it comes to buying albums, watching TV shows, dramas, or movies that their idols appear on, and attending concerts. However, the underlying reason is different. The “honey honey” individuals believe their relationship with the idols are more like friendship, whereas the *saseang* fans trust it is a romance.

Melanie Formentin explains in “Building Communities Online,” that one of “the most notable characteristics [of virtual communities] is that participants develop a sense of membership” (Chan, 2014, p. 121). Both the “Honey honey” and “help from friends” factor enjoy visiting online forums to connect with fellow K-pop lovers. Chan addressed in 2014, that virtual community cultures can be reflected in the real life world, but its generalizability is questionable. The “Honey honey” [Factor 1] individuals’ core reason of visiting forums is to share their affection for their favorite band. This means they focus less on building a tightly knit friendship with fellow K-pop fans. Therefore, the “Honey honey” individuals do not nourish their virtual friendship into reality. On the other hand, the “help from friends” [Factor 3] individuals go online to find and make friends who have similar interests and are willing to further the relationship.

Another difference between these two is that factor 1 individuals believe the personalities shown by the idols on media as truthful and honest, whereas Factor 3 individuals think it as part of the precisely calculated, well-manufactured act. The “Honey honey” individuals think the K-pop idols as human as they could be when the “help from my friends” merely view the celebrities as well-trained products. This represents more in depth of the intention difference of utilizing online society of these two groups.

In relation to mood management theory, both factors 1 and 3 revealed that individuals seek K-pop music when they are depressed, as well as when they are in good moods. This thus suggests a spiral continuum of mood management revolving around K-pop. K-pop works as an entertaining message that can preserve, maintain, regulate, and uplift the current mood states. The concept of self-selecting a media content for spiral phenomena of mood management extends the current understanding of the theory.

Chan commented that “foreign fans have an easier time understanding what foreign brides are going through (culture shock, language barrier, etc.) as they have been through the same while assimilating into K-Pop fandoms” (2014, p. 110). She also added that the fans devote hours to learn the Korean language and the culture and are proud of it. However, the current study revealed that it is not a consistent revelation for all fans. Some devote time and effort to master the language, but some do not care at all, while some only see it as a tool to appreciate the meaning of the music.

Interestingly, Factor 2, “Music is my life,” was the only group that indicated that language is not a barrier for enjoying K-pop. Nor was it an impediment for the “Honey honey” group, for they are the fans most likely to learn Korean just to communicate with fellow fans. For Factor 3 fans, Korean has never bothered them because they focus on friendship rather than the lyrics.

However, it is different for Factor 2 fans. These fans enjoy K-pop with their ears and eyes rather than by associating it with other elements. When this group wants to understand the music, they often google the lyrics into a language they understand. Of course, as a rule, by habit or inclination, they prefer to focus on the tone of the vocals, the melody, and the visual elements, and could not care less about the message it conveys. This group believes music speaks for itself and lyrics are supplemental. The inclination for considering language to be an accompanying tool is a trait unique to Factor 2 fans.

In sum, this research has advanced the uses and gratification theory by addressing why people are attracted to foreign cultural content that they do not share any common cultural elements with. Moreover, the spiral pattern of media selection and engagement to regulate the mood were found. Not only extending the theories, the study opens a new scope for K-pop research. Current K-pop research is limited to defining it as a multicultural product (Do, 2012; Oh & Park, 2013), analyzing what it symbolizes (Fuhr, 2015; Kang, 2010; Lee, 2016), and studying the idol production processes (Ahn, 2011; Hogarth, 2013; Lee, Choi, Hu & Downie, 2013; Ono & Kwon, 2013; Seo, 2012). This study, however, introduces that K-pop has an appealing factor to Asian culture lovers, music appreciators, and people persons who enjoy social interactions. It thus suggests that K-pop should not be undermined as a mere cultural product but be considered as a phenomenon that can harmoniously embrace uniquely different people with varying motivations.

Chapter 7: Future Research Suggestions

Current studies on the popularity of K-pop in the U.S. are woefully scarce. Those that have been done on “Korean popular culture outside Korea” generally focused on how K-pop became commercially successful rather than on understanding the reasons for and motivations behind its appeal. It is certainly true that the novelty and widespread appeal of K-pop is a cultural phenomenon that has failed to pique the interest of research scholars, but there are several intriguing possibilities for future research in this area. It would be useful, for example, to compare and contrast the characteristics of Korean and Western K-pop fans using a Q-sort methodology. Similarly, exploring Korean and Western fans ranking of idols might reveal cultural similarities and differences from which both countries can benefit.

K-pop is an evolving culture. From humble beginnings, it is barely recognizable today when compared to its historical origins. Tracking the differences and analyzing what accounted for the incremental changes would also be an area of considerable interest. For example, in the 1990s, the idol groups were usually composed of three to six people but have increased considerably, now consisting of six to 13 members on average. Initially, the celebrities were fluent only in Korean, but now most are fluent in Japanese, Chinese, and English. In fact, the ethnic composition of the groups has evolved as well. Whereas it was originally Koreans who made up the groups, contemporary K-pop often has Chinese, Chinese Americans, Korean Chinese, Korean Americans, and Japanese members. Exploring how fans have reacted to this ethnic evolution might be an interesting avenue for study, particularly if it sheds light on evolving attitudes to ethnicity.

Similarly, a study on why fans generate a hardcore interest in same-gender idols might be a revealing subject for gender studies. The media to describe a female’s adulation of same-gender celebrities frequently cite a “girl crush.” This should not be mistaken as sexual attraction, but it is clearly connected in some way to gender identity, and would also make an

interesting topic for study.

Since this paper looked at why North Americans like K-pop, other studies might look at the appeal of K-pop in other countries and compare and contrast the similarities and differences. Analyzing K-pop's attractive force, to discover what its cross-cultural appeal is, might enlighten our understanding of commercial music in general and help understand the similarities – rather than the differences – between cultures.

There are other areas, too – besides K-pop – that might yield interesting psychological and behavioral insights, such as in fashion and cosmetics. K-beauty has been insinuating its way into the U.S. and is frequently mentioned on Sephora.com with its own category “K-beauty.” Korean cosmetics are sold in Target and Forever 21 and online at Hautelook.com. With the growth of K-beauty (Korean beauty) products in the United States, it would be interesting to determine why K-beauty products appeal to American consumers.

Cultural studies are important because they help bridge differences between people and remind us that we belong to one race – the human race. It is vital to understand our similarities as well as our differences and be aware that understanding others by incremental steps leads to a better world. K-pop does not claim to be profound or that it will change the world as perhaps the protest music of the 1960s did. K-pop is about youth, energy, and joy, and to its fans, it provides those in abundance.

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Appendix B. Q sort statements

1. I think it's fun to be a part of K-pop community.
2. I like how K-pop draws people from all over the world to become new friends.
3. I don't think my interest in Korea grew even after exposure to K-pop.
4. I don't consider myself as a fan of any K-pop group.
5. I like to celebrate on my K-pop group member's birthdays or debuted date.
6. I like to create K-pop playlists
7. I like to show interest in K-pop by purchasing related merchandise.
8. I don't have friends who are fans of same K-pop group as me.
9. I like K-pop because they are great singers.
10. I like how troublemaking and badassery are not huge themes in K-pop.
11. I love K-pop because it doesn't say anything about drugs, sex or alcohol.
12. I enjoy that K-pop has real meaningful lyrics unlike American music.
13. I don't relate to themes in K-Pop.
14. I like K-pop because it's like American music.
15. I am really attracted to choreography in K-pop.
16. Even though I don't speak Korean, I still like K-pop.
17. I enjoy K-pop because their videos of high level production.
18. I like K-pop because of the high-drama music videos.
19. K-pop music videos are all similar to each other.
20. I like the storylines in K-pop music videos.
21. I would like K-pop better if there were no music videos.
22. K-pop has the best music videos I've seen.
23. I enjoy K-pop singers acting in their music videos.
24. I am more interested in the K-pop music than K-pop music videos.
25. I like particular bands better because I think one of the members is hot.
26. I think K-pop's bands are overly stylized.
27. I dislike how K-pop artists change their fashion style for each song they perform.
28. I like how K-pop singers are presented as androgynous/gender neutral.
29. I like K-pop groups because they've been trained to be excellent singers and dancers.
30. I never copy the fashion trends that K-pop singers introduce.
31. I want my ideal man / woman to look like K-pop singers.
32. I sometimes wish I had personal connection with my favorite K-pop singers.
33. K-pop singers are more than just performers on stage to me.
34. I feel like I know the K-pop singers personally.
35. It's K-pop singers' individual personality that draws me in.
36. I never listen to K-pop when I am depressed.
37. I follow my favorite K-pop singers on social media.
38. I don't know personal information about my favorite K-pop band (his /her family tree, favorite color, favorite food, etc.)
39. I don't believe K-pop stars' personalities are who they really are.
40. K-pop stars are precisely calculated, well manufactured products.

Appendix C. Online K-pop Q sort

Q1 I like K-pop music.

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

If No Is Selected, Then Skip To End of Survey. If Yes Is Selected, Then Skip To Why do you like K-pop?

Q2 Why do you like K-pop?

Q3 I listen to K-pop at least 2 times a week.

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

If No Is Selected, Then Skip To End of Survey

Q4 I identify myself as a fan of at least one K-pop group.

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

If No Is Selected, Then Skip To End of Survey. If Yes Is Selected, Then Skip To Approximately how many of the Sailor ...

Q5 Who is/are your favorite K-pop singer, artist, group? (Please limit to maximum 3 groups)

Q6 Did you learn Korean at an institute before your interest in K-pop?

- Yes (30)
- No (31)

Q7 Timing

- First Click (1)
- Last Click (2)
- Page Submit (3)
- Click Count (4)

Q8 You Passed the test! Let's get started! The cards on the left each have a statement reflecting a feeling or opinion about K-POP. First we want to know how you feel generally about each of the statements. Instructions (Please read me!): Simply drag-and-drop the statements on the left into one of the three Groups on the right as you think is appropriate. * Don't worry about ranking the statements in specific order yet. ** IGNORE the numbers in (#) - those are for our own record keeping only. *** You do NOT need to put the same number of statements in each group.

I Agree	Neutral	I Disagree
_____ 1. I think it's fun to be a part of K-pop community. (1)	_____ 1. I think it's fun to be a part of K-pop community. (1)	_____ 1. I think it's fun to be a part of K-pop community. (1)

<p>_____ 2. I like how K-pop draws people from all over the world to become new friends. (2)</p> <p>_____ 3. I don't think my interest in Korea grew even after exposure to K-pop. (3)</p> <p>_____ 4. I don't consider myself as a fan of any K-pop group. (4)</p> <p>_____ 5. I like to celebrate on my K-pop group member's birthdays or debuted date. (5)</p> <p>_____ 6. I like to create K-pop playlists (6)</p> <p>_____ 7. I like to show interest in K-pop by purchasing related merchandise. (7)</p> <p>_____ 8. I don't have friends who are fans of same K-pop group as me. (8)</p> <p>_____ 9. I like K-pop because they are great singers. (9)</p> <p>_____ 10. I like how troublemaking and badassery are not huge themes in K-pop. (10)</p> <p>_____ 11. I love K-pop because it doesn't say anything about drugs, sex or alcohol. (11)</p> <p>_____ 12. I enjoy that K-pop has real meaningful lyrics unlike American music. (12)</p> <p>_____ 13. I don't relate to themes in K-Pop. (13)</p> <p>_____ 14. I like K-pop because it's like American music. (14)</p> <p>_____ 15. I am really attracted to choreography in K-pop. (15)</p>	<p>_____ 2. I like how K-pop draws people from all over the world to become new friends. (2)</p> <p>_____ 3. I don't think my interest in Korea grew even after exposure to K-pop. (3)</p> <p>_____ 4. I don't consider myself as a fan of any K-pop group. (4)</p> <p>_____ 5. I like to celebrate on my K-pop group member's birthdays or debuted date. (5)</p> <p>_____ 6. I like to create K-pop playlists (6)</p> <p>_____ 7. I like to show interest in K-pop by purchasing related merchandise. (7)</p> <p>_____ 8. I don't have friends who are fans of same K-pop group as me. (8)</p> <p>_____ 9. I like K-pop because they are great singers. (9)</p> <p>_____ 10. I like how troublemaking and badassery are not huge themes in K-pop. (10)</p> <p>_____ 11. I love K-pop because it doesn't say anything about drugs, sex or alcohol. (11)</p> <p>_____ 12. I enjoy that K-pop has real meaningful lyrics unlike American music. (12)</p> <p>_____ 13. I don't relate to themes in K-Pop. (13)</p> <p>_____ 14. I like K-pop because it's like American music. (14)</p> <p>_____ 15. I am really attracted to choreography in K-pop. (15)</p>	<p>_____ 2. I like how K-pop draws people from all over the world to become new friends. (2)</p> <p>_____ 3. I don't think my interest in Korea grew even after exposure to K-pop. (3)</p> <p>_____ 4. I don't consider myself as a fan of any K-pop group. (4)</p> <p>_____ 5. I like to celebrate on my K-pop group member's birthdays or debuted date. (5)</p> <p>_____ 6. I like to create K-pop playlists (6)</p> <p>_____ 7. I like to show interest in K-pop by purchasing related merchandise. (7)</p> <p>_____ 8. I don't have friends who are fans of same K-pop group as me. (8)</p> <p>_____ 9. I like K-pop because they are great singers. (9)</p> <p>_____ 10. I like how troublemaking and badassery are not huge themes in K-pop. (10)</p> <p>_____ 11. I love K-pop because it doesn't say anything about drugs, sex or alcohol. (11)</p> <p>_____ 12. I enjoy that K-pop has real meaningful lyrics unlike American music. (12)</p> <p>_____ 13. I don't relate to themes in K-Pop. (13)</p> <p>_____ 14. I like K-pop because it's like American music. (14)</p> <p>_____ 15. I am really attracted to choreography in K-pop. (15)</p>
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<p>_____ 16. Even though I don't speak Korean, I still like K-pop. (16)</p> <p>_____ 17. I enjoy K-pop because their videos of high level production. (17)</p> <p>_____ 18. I like K-pop because of the high-drama music videos. (18)</p> <p>_____ 19. K-pop music videos are all similar to each other. (19)</p> <p>_____ 20. I like the storylines in K-pop music videos. (20)</p> <p>_____ 21. I would like K-pop better if there were no music videos. (21)</p> <p>_____ 22. K-pop has the best music videos I've seen. (22)</p> <p>_____ 23. I enjoy K-pop singers acting in their music videos. (23)</p> <p>_____ 24. I am more interested in the K-pop music than K-pop music videos. (24)</p> <p>_____ 25. I like particular bands better because I think one of the members is hot. (25)</p> <p>_____ 26. I think K-pop's bands are overly stylized. (26)</p> <p>_____ 27. I dislike how K-pop artists change their fashion style for each song they perform. (27)</p> <p>_____ 28. I like how K-pop singers are presented as androgynous/gender neutral. (28)</p> <p>_____ 29. I like K-pop groups because they've been</p>	<p>_____ 16. Even though I don't speak Korean, I still like K-pop. (16)</p> <p>_____ 17. I enjoy K-pop because their videos of high level production. (17)</p> <p>_____ 18. I like K-pop because of the high-drama music videos. (18)</p> <p>_____ 19. K-pop music videos are all similar to each other. (19)</p> <p>_____ 20. I like the storylines in K-pop music videos. (20)</p> <p>_____ 21. I would like K-pop better if there were no music videos. (21)</p> <p>_____ 22. K-pop has the best music videos I've seen. (22)</p> <p>_____ 23. I enjoy K-pop singers acting in their music videos. (23)</p> <p>_____ 24. I am more interested in the K-pop music than K-pop music videos. (24)</p> <p>_____ 25. I like particular bands better because I think one of the members is hot. (25)</p> <p>_____ 26. I think K-pop's bands are overly stylized. (26)</p> <p>_____ 27. I dislike how K-pop artists change their fashion style for each song they perform. (27)</p> <p>_____ 28. I like how K-pop singers are presented as androgynous/gender neutral. (28)</p> <p>_____ 29. I like K-pop groups because they've been</p>	<p>_____ 16. Even though I don't speak Korean, I still like K-pop. (16)</p> <p>_____ 17. I enjoy K-pop because their videos of high level production. (17)</p> <p>_____ 18. I like K-pop because of the high-drama music videos. (18)</p> <p>_____ 19. K-pop music videos are all similar to each other. (19)</p> <p>_____ 20. I like the storylines in K-pop music videos. (20)</p> <p>_____ 21. I would like K-pop better if there were no music videos. (21)</p> <p>_____ 22. K-pop has the best music videos I've seen. (22)</p> <p>_____ 23. I enjoy K-pop singers acting in their music videos. (23)</p> <p>_____ 24. I am more interested in the K-pop music than K-pop music videos. (24)</p> <p>_____ 25. I like particular bands better because I think one of the members is hot. (25)</p> <p>_____ 26. I think K-pop's bands are overly stylized. (26)</p> <p>_____ 27. I dislike how K-pop artists change their fashion style for each song they perform. (27)</p> <p>_____ 28. I like how K-pop singers are presented as androgynous/gender neutral. (28)</p> <p>_____ 29. I like K-pop groups because they've been</p>
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<p>trained to be excellent singers and dancers. (29)</p> <p>_____ 30. I never copy the fashion trends that K-pop singers introduce. (30)</p> <p>_____ 31. I want my ideal man / woman to look like K-pop singers. (31)</p> <p>_____ 32. I sometimes wish I had personal connection with my favorite K-pop singers. (32)</p> <p>_____ 33. K-pop singers are more than just performers on stage to me. (33)</p> <p>_____ 34. I feel like I know the K-pop singers personally. (34)</p> <p>_____ 35. It's K-pop singers' individual personality that draws me in. (35)</p> <p>_____ 36. I never listen to K-pop when I am depressed. (36)</p> <p>_____ 37. I follow my favorite K-pop singers on social media. (37)</p> <p>_____ 38. I don't know personal information about my favorite K-pop band (his /her family tree, favorite color, favorite food, etc.) (38)</p> <p>_____ 39. I don't believe K-pop stars' personalities are who they really are. (39)</p> <p>_____ 40. K-pop stars are precisely calculated, well manufactured products. (40)</p>	<p>trained to be excellent singers and dancers. (29)</p> <p>_____ 30. I never copy the fashion trends that K-pop singers introduce. (30)</p> <p>_____ 31. I want my ideal man / woman to look like K-pop singers. (31)</p> <p>_____ 32. I sometimes wish I had personal connection with my favorite K-pop singers. (32)</p> <p>_____ 33. K-pop singers are more than just performers on stage to me. (33)</p> <p>_____ 34. I feel like I know the K-pop singers personally. (34)</p> <p>_____ 35. It's K-pop singers' individual personality that draws me in. (35)</p> <p>_____ 36. I never listen to K-pop when I am depressed. (36)</p> <p>_____ 37. I follow my favorite K-pop singers on social media. (37)</p> <p>_____ 38. I don't know personal information about my favorite K-pop band (his /her family tree, favorite color, favorite food, etc.) (38)</p> <p>_____ 39. I don't believe K-pop stars' personalities are who they really are. (39)</p> <p>_____ 40. K-pop stars are precisely calculated, well manufactured products. (40)</p>	<p>trained to be excellent singers and dancers. (29)</p> <p>_____ 30. I never copy the fashion trends that K-pop singers introduce. (30)</p> <p>_____ 31. I want my ideal man / woman to look like K-pop singers. (31)</p> <p>_____ 32. I sometimes wish I had personal connection with my favorite K-pop singers. (32)</p> <p>_____ 33. K-pop singers are more than just performers on stage to me. (33)</p> <p>_____ 34. I feel like I know the K-pop singers personally. (34)</p> <p>_____ 35. It's K-pop singers' individual personality that draws me in. (35)</p> <p>_____ 36. I never listen to K-pop when I am depressed. (36)</p> <p>_____ 37. I follow my favorite K-pop singers on social media. (37)</p> <p>_____ 38. I don't know personal information about my favorite K-pop band (his /her family tree, favorite color, favorite food, etc.) (38)</p> <p>_____ 39. I don't believe K-pop stars' personalities are who they really are. (39)</p> <p>_____ 40. K-pop stars are precisely calculated, well manufactured products. (40)</p>
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Q9 Now you have an opportunity to organize the order of your statements even further. Rank each statement from “Most Like Me” (as #1) to “Least Like Me”. Note: You can click the back button at the bottom of the page if you want to re-order your statements into another

group.

Q10 Please rank the statements you said you “Agreed” with. 1= MOST Like Me

Q11 Please rank the statements you said you “Disagreed” with. 1= MOST Like Me

Q12 Please rank the statements you said you felt “Neutral” about. 1= MOST Like Me

Q13 What is your age?

- Under 18 (1)
- 18 - 24 (2)
- 25 - 34 (3)
- 35 - 44 (4)
- 45 - 54 (5)
- 55 - 64 (6)
- 65 - 74 (7)
- 75 - 84 (8)
- 85 or older (9)

Q14 In which state do you currently reside?

- Alabama (1)
- Alaska (2)
- Arizona (3)
- Arkansas (4)
- California (5)
- Colorado (6)
- Connecticut (7)
- Delaware (8)
- District of Columbia (9)
- Florida (10)
- Georgia (11)
- Hawaii (12)
- Idaho (13)
- Illinois (14)
- Indiana (15)
- Iowa (16)
- Kansas (17)
- Kentucky (18)
- Louisiana (19)
- Maine (20)
- Maryland (21)
- Massachusetts (22)
- Michigan (23)
- Minnesota (24)
- Mississippi (25)

- Missouri (26)
- Montana (27)
- Nebraska (28)
- Nevada (29)
- New Hampshire (30)
- New Jersey (31)
- New Mexico (32)
- New York (33)
- North Carolina (34)
- North Dakota (35)
- Ohio (36)
- Oklahoma (37)
- Oregon (38)
- Pennsylvania (39)
- Puerto Rico (40)
- Rhode Island (41)
- South Carolina (42)
- South Dakota (43)
- Tennessee (44)
- Texas (45)
- Utah (46)
- Vermont (47)
- Virginia (48)
- Washington (49)
- West Virginia (50)
- Wisconsin (51)
- Wyoming (52)
- I do not reside in the United States (53)

Q15 How long have you resided in U.S.A? (Approximate answers are acceptable as well)

Q16 Do you identify yourself / your nationality as U.S. Citizen and/or American?

- Yes, I do. (1)
- No, I do not. (2)

Q17 What is your gender?

- Male (1)
- Female (2)

Q18 What is your Ethnicity?

- White (18)
- Black or African American (19)
- American Indian or Alaska Native (20)
- Asian (21)
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (22)
- Other (23)

If Asian Is Selected, Then Skip to You indicated yourself as “Asian”. Pl...If White Is Selected, Then Skip to Why did you choose these two statements...If Black or African American Is Selected, Then Skip To Why did you choose these two statements...If American Indian or Alaska N... Is Selected, Then Skip To Why did you choose these two statements...If Native Hawaiian or Pacific ... Is Selected, Then Skip To Why did you choose these two statements...If Other Is Selected, Then Skip To Why did you choose these two statements...

Q19 You indicated yourself as “Asian”. Please specify your nationality.

- Korean (1)
- Non-Korean Asian (2)

Q20 Why did you choose these two statements as being MOST like you? Note: you can click and drag to change the size of your answer box. There is no limitation on the length of your answer.

Q21 Why did you choose this statement as being LEAST like you? (Note, you can click and drag to change the size of your answer box. There is no limitation on the length of your answer.)

Q22 In your own words, why do you listen to K-POP?

Q23 What do you LIKE most about K-POP?

Q24 What do you DISLIKE the most about K-POP?

Q25 How did you get into K-POP? (i.e., found it on YouTube, invited by a friend, family member, etc.?)

Q26 What emotions do you experience while listening to K-POP?

Q27 How often do you participate in online commentary/ forums/ live tweeting or chatting about K-POP?

- Daily (31)
- Weekly (32)
- Monthly (33)
- A few times a year (34)
- Never (35)

Q28 What do you prefer, watching K-POP or listening to K-POP?

- Watching K-pop (Music videos, etc.) (1)
- Listening K-pop (Music) (2)

Q29 What year were you first introduced to K-pop?

Q30 Please tell us anything else you think might be important to the discussion that wasn't addressed above.

Appendix D. Factor Matrix with an X Indicating a Defining Sort

Factor Matrix with an X Indicating a Defining Sort

QSORT	1	2	3
1	0.7183X	0.2871	0.3328
2	0.7687X	0.3034	0.2159
3	0.5981X	0.2320	0.3390
4	0.6792X	0.4487	0.2476
5	0.6216X	0.2935	0.4166
6	0.6378X	0.4198	0.3884
7	0.7692X	0.3375	0.0864
8	0.7758X	0.4190	0.1201
9	0.8199X	0.0871	-0.1145
10	0.5790X	0.2808	0.4685
11	0.7327X	0.0468	0.2845
12	0.0667	0.3883	0.5144X
13	0.6993X	0.4072	0.0940
14	0.6703X	0.4268	0.2639
15	0.6421X	0.5263	0.0146
16	0.6352X	0.2356	0.4063
17	0.5282	0.5870	0.3861
18	0.4306	0.4839	0.5361
19	0.0985	0.5289X	0.0704
20	-0.0478	0.4229	0.7497X
21	-0.0188	0.2652	0.5132X
22	0.0733	0.0552	0.3547X
23	0.7804X	0.1817	0.2823
24	0.1017	0.6475X	0.2221
25	0.0851	0.7392X	0.4048
26	0.7184X	0.3821	0.0783
27	0.1215	0.5313X	0.2123
28	0.4983X	-0.0277	0.4124
29	0.8307X	-0.0917	0.3864
30	0.8307X	-0.0917	0.3864
31	0.6754X	0.1925	0.4216
32	0.8444X	0.0799	0.1421
33	0.7162X	0.1944	0.0546
34	0.7871X	0.4809	0.2198
35	0.4597	0.1677	0.5095X
36	0.5802X	0.4520	0.2598
37	0.8504X	-0.0382	-0.0329
38	0.5901X	0.1820	0.0182
39	0.8486X	0.0148	-0.0655
% expl.Var.	39	13	11

Appendix E. Factor scores for factor 1

No. Statement	No. Z-SCORES
33. K-pop singers are more than just performers on stage to me.	1.737
35. It's K-pop singers' individual personality that draws me in.	1.469
16. Even though I don't speak Korean, I still like K-pop.	1.339
9. I like K-pop because they are great singers.	1.270
15. I am really attracted to choreography in K-pop.	1.224
2. I like how K-pop draws people from all over the world to become new friends.	1.194
1. I think it's fun to be a part of K-pop community.	1.000
7. I like to show interest in K-pop by purchasing related merchandise.	0.928
37. I follow my favorite K-pop singers on social media.	0.862
12. I enjoy that K-pop has real meaningful lyrics unlike American music.	0.858
22. K-pop has the best music videos I've seen.	0.857
32. I sometimes wish I had personal connection with my favorite K-pop singers.	0.841
29. I like K-pop groups because they've been trained to be excellent singers and dancers.	0.680
23. I enjoy K-pop singers acting in their music videos.	0.595
17. I enjoy K-pop because their videos of high level production.	0.486
6. I like to create K-pop playlists	0.468
20. I like the storylines in K-pop music videos.	0.468
11. I love K-pop because it doesn't say anything about drugs, sex or alcohol.	0.464
34. I feel like I know the K-pop singers personally.	0.429
10. I like how troublemaking and badassery are not huge themes in K-pop.	0.234
18. I like K-pop because of the high-drama music videos.	0.100
5. I like to celebrate on my K-pop group member's birthdays or debuted date.	-0.006
24. I am more interested in the K-pop music than K-pop music videos.	-0.045
28. I like how K-pop singers are presented as androgynous/gender neutral.	-0.177
31. I want my ideal man / woman to look like K-pop singers.	-0.263
25. I like particular bands better because I think one of the members is hot.	-0.495
30. I never copy the fashion trends that K-pop singers introduce.	-0.538
26. I think K-pop's bands are overly stylized.	-0.925
40. K-pop stars are precisely calculated, well manufactured products.	-1.058
39. I don't believe K-pop stars' personalities are who they really are.	-1.064
38. I don't know personal information about my favorite K-pop band (his /her family tree, favorite color, favorite food, etc.)	-1.103
27. I dislike how K-pop artists change their fashion style for each song they perform.	-1.150
21. I would like K-pop better if there were no music videos.	-1.159
19. K-pop music videos are all similar to each other.	-1.172
13. I don't relate to themes in K-Pop.	-1.196
3. I don't think my interest in Korea grew even after exposure to K-pop.	-1.201
14. I like K-pop because it's like American music.	-1.374
8. I don't have friends who are fans of same K-pop group as me.	-1.399
36. I never listen to K-pop when I am depressed.	-1.533
4. I don't consider myself as a fan of any K-pop group.	-1.641

Appendix F. Factor scores for factor 2

No. Statement	No. Z-SCORES
16. Even though I don't speak Korean, I still like K-pop.	2.311
15. I am really attracted to choreography in K-pop.	1.890
6. I like to create K-pop playlists	1.786
32. I sometimes wish I had personal connection with my favorite K-pop singers.	1.077
38. I don't know personal information about my favorite K-pop band (his /her family tree, favorite color, favorite food, etc.)	1.048
20. I like the storylines in K-pop music videos.	0.982
25. I like particular bands better because I think one of the members is hot.	0.884
39. I don't believe K-pop stars' personalities are who they really are.	0.876
17. I enjoy K-pop because their videos of high level production.	0.782
9. I like K-pop because they are great singers.	0.743
29. I like K-pop groups because they've been trained to be excellent singers and dancers.	0.609
33. K-pop singers are more than just performers on stage to me.	0.543
24. I am more interested in the K-pop music than K-pop music videos.	0.420
22. K-pop has the best music videos I've seen.	0.408
40. K-pop stars are precisely calculated, well manufactured products.	0.405
23. I enjoy K-pop singers acting in their music videos.	0.397
18. I like K-pop because of the high-drama music videos.	0.327
31. I want my ideal man / woman to look like K-pop singers.	0.142
1. I think it's fun to be a part of K-pop community.	0.137
2. I like how K-pop draws people from all over the world to become new friends.	0.090
28. I like how K-pop singers are presented as androgynous/gender neutral.	0.035
35. It's K-pop singers' individual personality that draws me in.	0.024
26. I think K-pop's bands are overly stylized.	-0.145
30. I never copy the fashion trends that K-pop singers introduce.	-0.177
19. K-pop music videos are all similar to each other.	-0.323
11. I love K-pop because it doesn't say anything about drugs, sex or alcohol.	-0.380
13. I don't relate to themes in K-pop.	-0.455
36. I never listen to K-pop when I am depressed.	-0.560
10. I like how troublemaking and badassery are not huge themes in K-pop.	-0.584
37. I follow my favorite K-pop singers on social media.	-0.597
14. I like K-pop because it's like American music.	-0.772
8. I don't have friends who are fans of same K-pop group as me.	-0.777
4. I don't consider myself as a fan of any K-pop group.	-0.848
12. I enjoy that K-pop has real meaningful lyrics unlike American music.	-1.007
34. I feel like I know the K-pop singers personally.	-1.080
21. I would like K-pop better if there were no music videos.	-1.142
7. I like to show interest in K-pop by purchasing related merchandise.	-1.646
3. I don't think my interest in Korea grew even after exposure to K-pop.	-1.665
5. I like to celebrate on my K-pop group member's birthdays or debuted date.	-1.810
27. I dislike how K-pop artists change their fashion style for each song they perform.	-1.947

Appendix G. Factor scores for factor 3

No. Statement	No. Z-SCORES
2. I like how K-pop draws people from all over the world to become new friends.	2.051
1. I think it's fun to be a part of K-pop community.	1.885
15. I am really attracted to choreography in K-pop.	1.778
39. I don't believe K-pop stars' personalities are who they really are.	1.232
29. I like K-pop groups because they've been trained to be excellent singers and dancers.	1.185
40. K-pop stars are precisely calculated, well manufactured products.	1.123
6. I like to create K-pop playlists	1.011
35. It's K-pop singers' individual personality that draws me in.	1.011
9. I like K-pop because they are great singers.	0.854
30. I never copy the fashion trends that K-pop singers introduce.	0.797
23. I enjoy K-pop singers acting in their music videos.	0.655
26. I think K-pop's bands are overly stylized.	0.612
17. I enjoy K-pop because their videos of high level production.	0.532
32. I sometimes wish I had personal connection with my favorite K-pop singers.	0.438
38. I don't know personal information about my favorite K-pop band (his /her family tree, favorite color, favorite food, etc.)	0.388
24. I am more interested in the K-pop music than K-pop music videos.	0.272
19. K-pop music videos are all similar to each other.	0.243
33. K-pop singers are more than just performers on stage to me.	0.235
13. I don't relate to themes in K-Pop.	0.000
28. I like how K-pop singers are presented as androgynous/gender neutral.	-0.012
7. I like to show interest in K-pop by purchasing related merchandise.	-0.039
16. Even though I don't speak Korean, I still like K-pop.	-0.047
20. I like the storylines in K-pop music videos.	-0.224
25. I like particular bands better because I think one of the members is hot.	-0.252
18. I like K-pop because of the high-drama music videos.	-0.420
37. I follow my favorite K-pop singers on social media.	-0.459
11. I love K-pop because it doesn't say anything about drugs, sex or alcohol.	-0.569
31. I want my ideal man / woman to look like K-pop singers.	-0.606
22. K-pop has the best music videos I've seen.	-0.679
8. I don't have friends who are fans of same K-pop group as me.	-0.718
10. I like how troublemaking and badassery are not huge themes in K-pop.	-0.745
4. I don't consider myself as a fan of any K-pop group.	-0.756
27. I dislike how K-pop artists change their fashion style for each song they perform.	-0.792
5. I like to celebrate on my K-pop group member's birthdays or debuted date.	-0.950
36. I never listen to K-pop when I am depressed.	-1.055
34. I feel like I know the K-pop singers personally.	-1.349
14. I like K-pop because it's like American music.	-1.360
3. I don't think my interest in Korea grew even after exposure to K-pop.	-1.730
12. I enjoy that K-pop has real meaningful lyrics unlike American music.	-1.746
21. I would like K-pop better if there were no music videos.	-1.796