Factors of Knowledge, Attitude, Friends, and Social Media that Influence The Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris (UPSI) Students in Accepting K-Pop Culture

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Abstract
Korean pop, also known as K-pop, has become a phenomenon worldwide as a part of entertainment and culture. Youths have readily accepted K-pop culture to the point that people take it as their cultural identity. This has happened worldwide, and Malaysia is no exception. Hence, the fear of them losing their own culture as they accept K-pop culture in their life might cause cultural identity within themselves. Therefore, this research analyses the factors that influence the Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris undergraduates' acceptance of K-pop culture using Cultural Identity. This study uses a quantitative method, and the survey was distributed through social media platforms such as email, Telegram, and WhatsApp. Using a stratified random sampling method, data from 414 respondents were collected among undergraduate students at Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris and analysed using a statistical software, SPSS. The analysis shows a high correlation between two factors that influences K-pop fandom and the level of acceptance of K-pop culture. The correlation coefficient results are 0.778 for the attitude factor and 0.779 for the social media factor. Both indicate that the strength of the relationships is high. The research finding shows that cultural identity happens when youths are influenced by external and internal factors, especially social media. This study contributes to the development of cultural identity theory and as an awareness to society on how K-pop culture may lead to a person having a crisis in their cultural identity. Hence, this study can be utilised by stakeholders to act on encouraging Malaysians to accept their own culture using the same factors as how K-pop culture is influencing the youths. This can also be used by future researchers to conduct higher empirical research.

Keywords

K-Pop; Korean Pop Culture; Cultural Identity; Acceptance; University Student

Introduction

Culture can be defined as a way of life of a particular society, group, or even place regarding their beliefs, arts, customs, and many more (LaMorte, 2016). There are also cultures where people adapt it to their own life. Interestingly, Korean pop culture has caught the eyes of the world. Korean pop or also known as K-pop, has become a phenomenon ever since the popularity of the PSY Gangnam Style song. Since then, the Korean entertainment culture, or the "Hallyu Wave", has vigorously spread throughout the globe. People worldwide have begun to accept K-pop culture to the point that it has become a part of their culture as well. K-pop culture has succeeded in making people accept the culture as their own cultural identity. K-pop most easily influences youths. The effects can be seen when the acceptance of K-pop culture particularly K-pop idols, turns into an obsession. The obsession with K-pop idols has caused the youths to hallucinate and fantasise about their K-pop idols as if their idols know them or even reciprocate their love (Rahim, 2016).

Malaysia has also welcomed the K-pop culture even before the PSY Gangnam Style phenomenon, when Malaysia first accepted the Korean wave in the high viewership of Korean Dramas. Winter Sonata, the first Korean drama aired in Malaysia in 2002, paved the way for the Korean wave, also known as the Hallyu wave in Malaysia. The drama has caused a phenomenon to the point that a Malaysian local singer sang his version of the original soundtrack of Winter Sonata. The Malaysian local singer, Hazami did a cover version of the original soundtrack and released "Sonata Musim Salju" (Loong W. T., 2017). The K-pop culture has been in Malaysia for so long that it is no longer a new culture. It has become a norm in society because of how easy it is for people to accept it, especially among young adults. According to Rahim (2016) in *Berita Harian* news, she stated that a teenager has confessed that they have spent RM20,000, entirely to support the idols. There is no doubt that K-pop culture has become a culture that is accepted in Malaysian youths' lives.

K-pop culture is easily accepted because the lack of exposure of its bitter truth. K-pop fans will try to be like their idols; however, K-pop idols are not perfect as they seem, and the amount of pressure to fit in with the criteria of K-pop perfection is high. Before becoming K-pop idols, they must undergo a lot of training and pressure to ensure they fit in with Korean beauty standards. It will lead to extreme dieting and plastic surgery in most cases (Wong, 2018), which contribute to

the pressure of becoming a K-pop idol.

The attitude of K-pop fans influences their acceptance of K-pop culture, and this is because attitude is related to the way humans think and results in our behaviours (Saylor Academy, 2012). A fan's interest in K-pop culture may change into an obsession, and as it changes, it will also change their logical thinking. A Chinese K-pop fan stated that she had repetitively streamed a K-pop boy group GOT7's music video by opening six different browsers at once. By doing that, the boy group could increase their chance of winning music charts or award shows (Sun, 2020). They will go to any length for their obsession with K-pop when they have accepted the culture as theirs. This shows that an individual's acceptance of Kpop culture depends on their attitude towards K-pop.

Friends significantly influence a youth's life because they are the closest and spend most of their time with them (Shahruddin et al., 2018). Friends is also one of the factors leading to being influenced by K-pop culture, and a person might accept K-pop culture because of the friends around them.

Social media plays a part in influencing the K-pop culture in youths, and students heavily depended on it when the pandemic happened. Students could only go to certain places to gain guidance and information because of the Movement Control Order period (Abdul Manan et al., 2022). During this moment, social media exposure can happen quickly. It cannot be denied that social media is the perfect platform for giving K-pop culture exposure. Social media has become the place for fans of K-pop culture, especially K-pop group fans, to find their community or people who share the same interest as them. These fanbase accounts will provide their needed information (Zakiah Fadhila, 2021).

Acceptance of Korean pop culture by the younger generations has raised societal issues and concerns. The fear of them losing their own culture as they accept K-pop culture in their life might cause cultural identity within themselves. Therefore, the acceptance of K-pop culture could cause a person to lose their real identity and spirit of patriotism. Hence, this research aims to study the factors that influence the Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris undergraduates in accepting K-

pop culture using Cultural Identity theory. Below are the research objectives for this research:

1. To measure the level of knowledge, attitude, friends, social media, and acceptance of cultural identity among Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris undergraduate students
2. To measure the relationship between knowledge, attitude, friends, social media, and acceptance of cultural identity among Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris undergraduate's students.

Cultural Identity Theory

According to Jin Sook Lee (2001), cultural identity is formed by the complex understanding of one's awareness of one's own culture and recognition of the social group to which one belongs in practice. Moreover, cultural identity happens when an individual feels a sense of belonging in any group that reaffirms itself to the extent of the individual following the culture behaviourally, communicatively, psychologically, and sociologically (Phiney, Horenczyk, Liebkind, et al, 2001). An individual may develop both identities himself; the culture he feels he belongs to, and the culture that was already in his life during his upbringing. This usually happens when the individual is influenced and begins to accept the other culture as theirs. Hence, cultural identity could quickly happen to any individual who identifies as similar to a specific culture.

Besides that, cultural identity is formed and nurtured in an individual when they go through the process of sharing collective knowledge such as traditions, language, norms, and customs (Chen, 2014), considering that an individual may be involved and meet many types of groups of people, it will affect how their mind perceives a certain culture. The individual might accept the culture as their own identity to have a sense of belonging in a group because they share the same traits. This is normally seen in the younger generation, such as teenagers would do anything and not refuse any request from their friends because they want to be a part of the group to have a sense of belonging (Nazarali Saeril, 2020). Therefore, being influenced by culture is not uncommon to happen and can happen to anyone.

Korean Pop Culture in Malaysia

According to Yifan Chang (2014), the popularity of Korean pop music is rising and even overtaking some parts of marketing that used to belong to Western pop music. The media calls this cultural phenomenon the Korean Wave, also known as Hallyu, which means it influences the surrounding countries in a wave. Hallyu refers to the significant increase in the popularity of South Korean entertainment and culture starting in the 1990s in Asia, and later, many other parts of the world also acknowledge the K-pop culture. This could be seen from the success of k-pop group BTS, which managed to win three prizes, one of it being Artist of the Year in The American Music Awards (Savage, 2021). Hence, it indicates that K-pop culture has dominated the world like a wave.

Malaysia is at the 9th place for the countries with the most K-pop fans on Twitter (The Star, 2021), so it is not surprising that Korean culture has been accepted among Malaysians, especially youths. Korean pop culture is not a "Gen Z" influence, and the culture started back in the 2000s with the phenomenon of a Korean Drama, Winter Sonata. The drama aired in 2003 and stole the attention of many Malaysian viewers, including the younger generation (Jalaluddin, 2011). The drama marked the beginning of the spread of Korean culture among Malaysians. Gradually, people began to enjoy the culture to the extent that there were many remakes of Korean dramas to Malaysian dramas such as My Coffee Prince which was aired in 2017 and was an adaptation of Coffee Princ,e a South Korean television series that was released in 2007 (Nazri & Ahmad, 2020). Clearly, Korean culture in Malaysia is no longer a myth but a fact.

Relationship of Knowledge, Attitude, Friends, and Social Media with Acceptance of Cultural Identity

According to Tan (2019), Chinese college students are more interested and able to accept American culture easily because, after learning and experiencing it, it is easily associated with open and accessible innovation in their thinking rather than Chinese culture. Hence, cultures can readily be accepted by people because of their knowledge. Besides, Ioana Cupsa (2018) said that knowing other cultures will influence the acceptance of cultural identity, leading to culture shock. This shows that gaining new knowledge on culture may lead to a self-identity crisis that may lead

to a person losing their culture because of accepting new ones.

Based on a past study, Hallajow (2018), there is a connection between attitude and the building of identity. Attitude relates to cultural identity because a person's attitudes determine whether they can accept a new culture as theirs. However, Chaniago, et al (2018) stated that Hijabers metal (Women who wear hijab and like metal music) wear metal music fashion, but they retain their identity and attitude as Muslim women. This means the influence of cultural identity depends on a person's attitude. Acceptance of cultural identity will easily happen if a person's attitude, consisting of emotions, beliefs, and behaviours (Cherry, 2021), is weak.

Norzarina and Le To (2012) stated that an ethnic majority group dramatically influences the value systems of an ethnic minority group, especially when the ethnic groups live near each other. This shows that friends can easily influence the acceptance of other cultures as their own. Similarly, Mahathir et al. (2018) agreed that friends influence students to accept the smoking culture because most of the respondents in their research stated that they started smoking because they were offered by their friends to try cigarettes. However, Vietze et al. (2019) found that friends may hold the potential to accept a student's cultural identity, but other contributions could lead to the acceptance.

Hsu's (2018) research stated that international students studying in China use social media to help them accept cultural differences. The students were able to overcome the culture shock by accepting the culture of China using social media. Hence, there is a relationship between social media and the acceptance of cultural identity. On the other hand, Mark stated that the changes in the development of information and communication technologies (ICTs) influence mass media to contribute to social and cultural changes in individuals and society throughout the process. Therefore, the ability of social media in influencing cultural identity is possible.

Theoretical Framework

Cultural Identity Theory is a theory that suggests a relationship between the competence of intercultural and cultural identities. The theory deals with how individuals use communicative processes to construct and negotiate their cultural group identities and relationships in specific

contexts (Communication Theory, 2014). Cultural identity refers to a person's sense of belonging in a certain culture or group even though the culture is not even a part of them by blood or biologically. The acceptance of another culture starts with the process of learning and accepting their language, heritage, social structure and many more and eventually this will cause them to identify with the culture, hence it becomes a part of themselves.

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│ ENDURING AND CHANGING       │          │   CULTURAL IDENTITY         │
│ ASPECTS OF IDENTITY         │───────▶  │   ACCEPTANCE                │
│ Backgrounds Factors         │          │                             │
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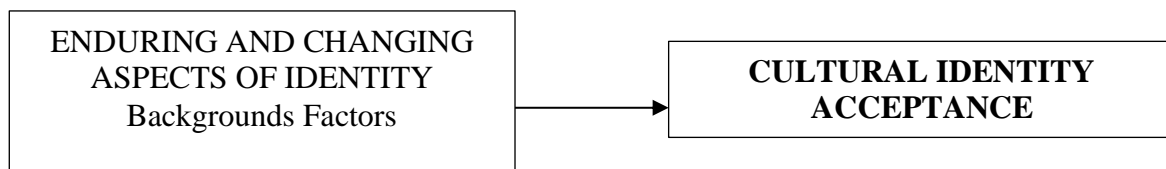
Figure 1.0: Theoretical Framework of The Study

Based on figure 1.0, Jane Collier and Milt Thomas combined the ethnography of communication and social construction to frame the properties of cultural identity (Communication Theory, 2014). This theory has seven properties, but the researchers applied only the fourth property which is enduring and changing aspects of identity. Cultural identity changes due to social, political, economic and contextual factors. However, in this research, it is only going to be specifically applied for background factors as stated; knowledge, attitude, friends, and social media leading to cultural identity acceptance.

Methodology

This research is quantitative research design and survey was selected as the method. Questionnaires are tools used to collect data from a group of respondents by asking them similar questions to gain information regarding the research (Parveen & Showkat, 2017). According to Tarsi and Tuff (2012), a population is a group of individuals of the same species that live within the exact location. The research used the stratified random sampling method where *Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris* undergraduate students who are K-pop fans were selected as the target population. The research instrument was pre-tested, and some errors in terms of items' meaning and word structure in the instruments were found and corrected. The pilot test was then conducted on 31 respondents. Overall, the Cronbach alpha value for all variables ranged between 0.833 to

0.897. Moreover, a Pearson correlation matrix was conducted to measure the construct validity of the instruments. The result shows that all the matrix items presented positive correlations. Hence, the validity and reliability of the instrument were established. The data collection process was between the 10th to 30th of May 2022. A total of 450 questionnaires were randomly distributed, and 440 respondents managed to complete them. The collected data then underwent the data entry and cleaning process. A total of 414 responses then were identified as valid data. Using the Krejcie and Morgan Table (Krejcie, R. V., & Morgan, D. W., 1970) and the total undergraduate population, the total of 378 respondents was considered a fair number to be selected as the research population.

Result

This research conducted descriptive analyses to examine the mean value to measure the level of knowledge, attitude, friends, social media, and acceptance of cultural identity among Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris K-pop fans. In addition, Pearson correlation analysis was employed to analyse the relationship between knowledge, attitude, friends, social media, and acceptance of cultural identity among Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris K-pop fans.

Level of Agreement on the Factor of Knowledge

Based on the analysis conducted for this research, Table 1.0 shows the level of agreement on the knowledge factor. Based on the table, 73.4% of respondents agree that Knowledge influences K-pop culture among Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris (UPSI) students. The highest level of agreement is 88.7% which shows that respondents strongly agreed that Kimchi is a staple side dish in Korean cuisine (M = 4.43, SD = 0.77), and next in line is 85.7% strongly agreed that Viu is one of the platforms to watch Korean drama (M = 4.29, SD = 0.86). Similarly, 85% of respondents strongly agreed that DARARI from TREASURE is one of the latest popular K-pop songs (M = 4.25, SD = 0.92), and 82.8% of respondents strongly agreed that one of the top Korean actors is Nam Joo Hyuk (M = 4.14, SD = 0.94).

Table 1.0: Level of Agreement on the Factor of Knowledge

Factor Knowledge (N=414)	M	SD	%	*df*
Kimchi is a staple side dish in Korean cuisine	4.43	0.77	88.7	414
Viu is one of the platforms to watch Korean drama	4.29	0.86	85.7	414
DARARI from TREASURE is one of the latest popular K-pop song	4.25	0.92	85.0	414
One of the top Korean actors is Nam Joo Hyuk	4.14	0.94	82.8	414
I know where to find Korean food	3.80	1.06	75.9	414
Laneige is a top Korean skincare brand in Malaysia	3.79	1.06	75.7	414
Hallyu wave is regarding the Korean lifestyle	3.72	0.93	74.3	414
Etude house is one of the top Korean makeup brands	3.68	1.12	73.6	414
I know product of Korean makeup brands	3.64	1.19	72.8	414
I can understand the Korean Language	3.36	1.01	67.2	414
I know about the latest K-pop fashion trend	3.33	1.20	66.7	414
I know where to buy clothes related to K-pop fashion	3.22	1.24	64.3	414
I can speak Korean language	2.96	1.10	59.1	414
I know how to prepare Korean food	2.78	1.20	55.6	414
Total for Factor Knowledge	3.67	0.65	73.4	414

5 Likert scale ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree (0-20%), 2= Disagree (21-40%), 3 = Partially Agree (41-60%), and 4 = Agree (61-80%), and 5 = Strongly Agree (81-100%).

Meanwhile, 75.9% agreed that they know where to find Korean food (M = 3.80, SD = 1.06), and 75.7% of respondents agreed that Laneige is a top Korean skincare brand in Malaysia (M = 3.79, SD = 1.06). Moreover, 74.3% of respondents agreed that the Hallyu wave reflects the Korean lifestyle (M = 3.72, SD = 0.93). Etude House was agreed upon as one of the top Korean makeup brandsby 73.6% of respondents (M = 3.68, SD = 1.12), while 72.8% of respondents agreed that they know Korean makeup brands (M = 3.64, SD = 1.19). Next, 64.3% of respondents agreed that they know where to buy clothes related to K-pop fashion (M = 3.22, SD = 1.24). However, the results showed that only 67.2% of respondents agreed that they could understand the Korean

language (M = 3.36, SD = 1.01), and the item 'I know about the latest K-pop fashion trend' was agreed by 66.7% of respondents (M = 3.33, SD = 1.20). In addition, 59.1% of respondents partially agreed on how they can speak Korean (M = 2.96, SD = 1.10). However, the lowest level of agreement is shown for 'I know how to prepare Korean food', resulting in 55.6% of respondents partially agreeing with the item (M = 2.78, SD = 1.20). This indicates that most of the respondents know K-pop culture even though it is not thorough, but they know specific categories.

Level of Agreement on the Factor of Attitude

Table 1.1 presents the analysis that was done on the level of agreement on the attitude factor. Generally, 71.6 % of respondents agreed that attitude influences the acceptance of K-pop culture among Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris (UPSI) students. Moreover, the results showed that 91.8% of respondents strongly agreed that they like to listen to K-pop music (M = 4.59, SD = 0.72). Next, 88.7% strongly agreed that they like to sing K-pop songs ((M = 4.43, SD = 0.82), and 88.1% also strongly agreed that they like to watch Korean dramas and films compared to Malaysian dramas and films (M = 4.41, SD = 0.89).

Table 1.1: Level of Agreement on the Factor of Attitude

Factor Attitude (N=414)	M	SD	%	*df*
I like to listen to K-pop music	4.59	0.72	91.8	414
I like to sing K-pop song	4.43	0.82	88.7	414
I like to watch Korean dramas and films compared to Malaysian dramas and films	4.41	0.89	88.1	414
I believe K-pop fashion are more stylish than Malaysian fashion brands	3.78	1.13	75.7	414
I like to stalk my favourite K-pop idol to know them better	3.53	1.35	70.5	414
Korean skincare more effective than Malaysian skincare products	3.51	1.05	70.3	414
I like to buy merchandise from Korea	3.50	1.30	70.1	414

I would purchase Korean products because my favourite Korean celebrity uses them	2.84	1.31	56.7	414
I believe Korean lifestyle suits me	2.72	1.18	54.4	414
I preferred to eat Korean food rather than Malaysian food	2.44	1.05	48.7	414
Total for Factor Attitude	3.58	0.74	71.6	414

5 Likert scale ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree (0-20%), 2 = Disagree (21-40%), 3 = Partially Agree (41-60%), 4 = Agree (61-80%), and 5 = Strongly Agree (81-100%).

In addition, 75.7% of respondents agreed that they believe K-pop fashion brands are more stylish than Malaysian fashion brands (M = 3.78, SD = 1.13), and 70.5% of respondent agreed that they like to stalk their favourite K-pop idol to know them better (M = 3.53, SD = 1.35). Moreover, 70.3% of respondents agreed that Korean skincare is more effective than Malaysian skincare products (M = 3.51, SD = 1.05), and 70.1% of respondents agreed that they like to buy merchandise from Korea (M = 3.50, SD = 1.30).

However, 56.7% of respondents partially agreed that they would purchase Korean products because their favourite Korean celebrity uses it (M = 2.84, SD = 1.31), and only 54.4% of respondents partially agreed that they believe the Korean lifestyle suits them (M = 2.72, SD = 1.18). The least number of respondents which represents 48.7% of respondents partially agreed that they prefer to eat Korean food rather than Malaysian food (M = 2.44, SD = 1.05). This shows that an individual's attitude towards K-pop culture can also determine the amount of K-pop culture content they consume.

Level of Agreement on the Factor of Friends

Based on the analysis that has been conducted for this research, Table 1.2 shows the level of agreement on the friends factor. Based on the table, 76% of respondents agreed that friends influence the acceptance of K-pop culture among Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris (UPSI) students. The highest level of agreement among the respondents as shown in the table is 87.6%

who strongly agreed that they have friends who are K-pop culture fans (M = 4.38, SD = 0.93). Moreover, the results based on the table shows that 82.8% of respondents strongly agreed that their friends think K-pop music is unique and exciting (M = 4.14, SD = 0.99). 80.8% of respondents strongly agreed that their friends encourage them to watch Korean dramas (M = 4.04, SD = 1.10), while 80.2% of respondents agreed that their friends listen to K-pop music every day (M = 4.01, SD = 1.10).

Table 1.2: Level of Agreement on the Factor of Friends

Factor Friends (N=414)	M	SD	%	df
I have friends who are a K-pop culture fan	4.38	0.93	87.6	414
My friend thinks that K-pop music are unique and interesting	4.14	0.99	82.8	414
My friends encourage me to watch Korean dramas	4.04	1.11	80.8	414
My friend listens to K-pop music eve1Yday	4.01	1.10	80.2	414
My friends and I always listen to K-pop songs together	3.99	1.10	79.8	414
My friends encourage me to watch Korean films	3.97	1.14	79.4	414
My friend and I always discuss on latest update about K-pop	3.82	1.19	76.5	414
My friends always talk about K-pop culture with me	3.81	1.19	76.2	414
My friend influenced me in accepting K-pop culture	3.42	1.39	68.3	414
My friend likes to use Korean products	3.41	1.20	68.2	414
My friend is active in a fan community	3.39	1.36	67.7	414
My friends can talk in Korean language	3.30	1.22	66.0	414
Total for Factor Friends	3.80	0.89	76.0	414

5 Likert scale ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree (0-20%), 2 = Disagree (21-40%), 3 = Partially Agree (41-60%), 4 = Agree (61-80%), and 5 = Strongly Agree (81-100%).

Next, 79.8% of respondents agreed that they always listen to K-pop songs with their friends (M = 3.99, SD = 1.10). Similarly, 79.4% of respondents agreed that their friends encouraged them to watch Korean films (M = 3.97, SD = 1.14). Aside from that, 76.5% of respondents agreed with the item 'My friend and I always discuss the latest update about K-pop' (M = 3.82, SD = 1.19) and 76.2% of respondents agreed that their friend always talks about K-pop culture with them (M = 3.81, SD = 1.19). However, 68.3% of respondents agreed that their friends influenced them to accept K-pop culture (M = 3.42, SD = 1.39). Similarly, the item 'My friend likes to use Korean products' shows agreement by 68.2% of respondents (M = 3.41, SD = 1.20), and 67.7% of respondents (M = 3.39, SD = 1.36) agreed that their friends are active in the fans community. On the other hand, the lowest level of agreement is 'My friend can talk in the Korean language'. Only 66% agreed that their friends could talk in Korean (M = 3.30, SD = 1.22). This indicates that friends play a part in an individual accepting K-pop culture in their life.

Level of Agreement on the Factor of Social Media

Table 1.3 shows the data that has been analysed for the level of agreement on the factor of social media. In general, 75.1% of respondents agreed that social media influence the acceptance of K-pop culture among Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris (UPSI) students. Besides that, 89.1% of respondents strongly agreed that they are followers of Korean celebrities on social media (M = 4.46, SD = 0.93). 88% of respondents also strongly agreed that they stream music videos of their favourite K-pop idol group on YouTube (M = 4.40, SD = 0.99). 87.3% of respondents strongly agreed that they watch Korean idol videos on social media (M = 4.37, SD = 1.19); meanwhile, 86.5% of respondents strongly agreed that they watch Korean drama and films on social media (M = 4.32, SD = 1.10).

Table 1.3: Level of Agreement on the Factor of Social Media

Factor Social Media (N=414)	M	SD	%	*df*
I am a follower of Korean celebrity on social media	4.46	0.93	89.1	414
I stream music videos of my favourite K-pop idol	4.40	0.99	88.0	414

group in YouTube

I watch Korean idol videos on social media	4.37	1.19	87.3	414
I watch Korean drama and films on social media	4.32	1.10	86.5	414
I like to watch Korean food mukbang (eating) on social media	3.86	1.19	77.1	414
I join fan community that related to Korean idols on social media	3.67	1.10	73.4	414
I read Korean skincare reviews on social media	3.64	1.20	72.8	414
I discuss about K-pop issues on social media	3.20	1.11	63.9	414
I share latest K-pop news on social media	3.15	1.14	63.0	414
I like to create K-pop content on social media (singing, dancing, cooking, etc)	2.50	1.22	49.9	414
Total for Factor Social Media	3.76	0.83	75.1	414

5 Likert scale ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree (0-20%), 2 = Disagree (21-40%), 3 = Partially Agree (41-60%), and 4 = Agree (61-80%), and 5 = Strongly Agree (81-100%).

Moreover, 77.1% of respondents agreed that they like to watch Korean food *mukbang* (eating) on social media (M = 3.86, SD = 1.19). Other than that, 73.4% of respondents agreed that they join a fan community that is related to Korean idols on social media (M = 3.67, SD = 1.10), and 63.9% of respondents agreed that they discuss K-pop issues on social media (M = 3.20, SD = 1.11). Next, 63% of respondents also agreed that they share the latest K-pop news on social media (M = 3.15, SD = 1.14). Nonetheless, 49.9% of respondents partially agreed that they like to create K-pop content on social media (M = 2.50, SD = 1.22). Therefore, social media does help individuals to accept K-pop culture as their own cultural identity.

Level of Frequency for Acceptance of K-pop Culture

Based on the analysis conducted for this research, Table 1.4 shows the frequency of acceptance of K-pop culture. Based on the table, 66.5% of respondents' level of acceptance frequency towards K-pop culture is often. Most of the respondents, making up about 91.5%, always listen to K-pop

music (M = 4.57, SD = 0.74), followed by 83.5% who always follow updates about K-pop idols through social media (M = 4.17, SD = 1.02). Next, 79.4% of respondents often binge-watch Korean dramas (M = 3.97, SD = 1.11). Meanwhile, approximately 65.2% of respondents often devote their time to their favourite celebrity (M = 3.26, SD = 1.24), and 64.1% of respondents also often post about K-pop on social media (M = 3.21, SD = 1.36). At the same time, the statement 'I feel angry if someone stops me from pursuing my passion for K-pop culture' often happened to 60.9% of respondents (M = 3.05, SD = 1.44).

Table 1.4: Level of Frequency for Acceptance towards K-pop Culture

Acceptance towards K-pop Culture (N=414)	M	SD	%	df
I listen to K-pop music	4.57	0.74	91.5	414
I follow the update about K-pop idols through social media	4.17	1.02	83.5	414
I binge watch Korean drama	3.97	1.11	79.4	414
I devote my time for my favourite celebrity	3.26	1.24	65.2	414
I post regarding K-pop on social media	3.21	1.36	64.1	414
I feel angry if someone stops me from pursumg my passion for K- pop culture	3.05	1.44	60.9	414
I wear Korean skincare brands	2.98	1.32	59.7	414
I eat Korean food often	2.80	1.09	56.0	414
I wear Korean fashion style	2.76	1.21	55.1	414
I communicate using Korean language	2.50	1.20	50.0	414
Total for Acceptance towards K-pop Culture	**3.33**	**0.81**	**66.5**	**414**

5 Likert scale ranging from 1 = Never (0-20%), 2 = Rarely (21-40%),

3 = Sometimes (41-60%), 4 = Often (61-80%), and 5 = Always (81-100%).

Moreover, 59.7% of respondents sometimes wear Korean skincare brands (M = 2.98, SD = 1.32), and 56% sometimes eat Korean food (M = 2.80, SD = 1.09). However, only 55.1% of respondents wear Korean fashion style (M = 2.7, SD = 1.21) and 50% communicate using the Korean language (M = 2.5, SD = 1.20).

Based on the analysis of the results, the study found that the UPSI K-pop fans agreed that they know Korean culture. Moreover, they also believe that the Korean lifestyle is a pleasant way of living. They also enjoy Korean cuisine, entertainment, and fashion. In addition, the respondents also agreed that their friends are also K-pop fans, and their friends encourage them to practice the Korean lifestyle. Similarly, respondents strongly agreed that social media is vital to keep them updated about their K-pop news. Finally, the respondents agreed that K-pop culture is part of their daily lifestyle. Based on these arguments, this research found that the levels of knowledge, attitude, friends, social media, and acceptance of cultural identity among Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris K-pop fans are high. Hence, research objective 1 that is to measure the level of knowledge, attitude, friends, social media, and acceptance of cultural identity among Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris undergraduate students is achieved.

The Relationship Between Knowledge, Attitude, Friends, Social Media, and Acceptance of Cultural Identity Among Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris Undergraduate Students

To analyse the strength of the relationship between the variables, this research used a correlation strength table suggested by Rusli Ahmad and Hasbee Usop (2011).

Table 1.5 Strength value of Correlation Coefficient

Size of correlation coefficient	Strength of correlation
.91 until 1.00 or - .91 until -1.00	Very strong
.71 until .90 - .71 until -.90	Strong
.51 until .70 - .51 until -.70	Moderate
.31 until .50 -31 until -.50	Weak
.01 until .30 or -.01 until -.30	Very weak
.00	No correlation

Table 1.6 shows that all factors, which are 'Knowledge', 'Attitude, 'Friends, 'Social Media', and 'Acceptance of Cultural Identity', have positive and significant relationships. The result found that Acceptance of Cultural Identity and Social Media (r=.779) have the most substantial relationship,

followed by Acceptance of Cultural Identity and Attitude (r=.778) and Social Media and Attitude (r=.762).

Table 1.6: Correlation Between Knowledge, Attitude, Friends, Social Media, And Acceptance of Cultural Identity

	Knowledge	Attitude	Friends	Social Media	Acceptance of cultural identity
Knowledge	1				
Attitude	.650**	1			
Friends	.583**	.617**	1		
Social Media	.681**	.762**	.632**	1	
Acceptance of cultural identity	.651**	.778**	.538**	.779**	1
Sig. (1-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
N	414	414	414	414	414

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed)

Meanwhile, social media and Knowledge (r=.681), Friends and Knowledge (r=.583), Acceptance of Cultural Identity and Knowledge (r=.651), Attitude and Knowledge (r=.650), Social Media and Friends (r=.632), and Friends and Attitude (r=.617) were found to have positive but moderate relationships.

Finally, Friends and Knowledge (r=.583) and Acceptance of Cultural Identity and Friends (r=.538) were also found to have moderate correlation but was recorded as the two weakest connections compared to another variables' relationships.

Based on the analysis of the results, the study found that the relationships of all variables were

positively correlated in the range of high to moderate. Hence, research objective 2; to measure the relationship between knowledge, attitude, friends, social media, and acceptance of cultural identity among Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris undergraduate students, is achieved.

Discussion

Most items for the knowledge factor show a high level of agreement, meaning that most of the respondents know K-pop culture not only in one specific element but also in food, music, drama, skincare, and fashion. Therefore, it can be stated that knowledge influences the acceptance of K-pop culture among Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris students. The findings in this study are in line with a past study, Iona Cupsa (2018) which stated how knowing other cultures may lead to an influence to accepting another culture in one's life. Students who are more exposed and gain knowledge regarding K-pop will accept the culture despite knowing the dark side of K-pop because of their deep knowledge of it. It can be concluded that that the more knowledge they gain on a culture they are interested in, the higher the possibility of them being influenced to accept the culture.

Next, regarding the level of influence in accepting K-pop culture among Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris (UPSI) students, 71.7% of respondents agreed that attitude influences them in accepting K-pop culture. Based on the findings, it is seen that most of the items are in the Agree level of agreement which means that their attitude has caused them to have a great passion for K-pop culture. This is because each person has a different attitude and the causes of it are different between people. Thus, some people can easily accept a new culture, and some would not accept cultures other than theirs. In this research, K-pop culture is accepted by the respondents because of their attitude. However, among people passionate about K-pop culture, some elements that K-pop culture fans accept include liking to sing K-pop songs and watching Korean dramas and films. However, there are also elements they do not accept, such as purchasing Korean products because their favourite celebrity uses them and preferring to eat Korean food rather than Malaysian food. Therefore, the students' attitude towards K-pop culture has led to it becoming one of the factors influencing the acceptance of K-pop culture.

Friends play a part in a person's life, especially among youths that are still struggling to find themselves. Friends can easily influence an individual to accept K-pop culture among students. Based on the findings, most of them agreed that their friends influence them to accept K-pop culture. The level of agreement from the respondents is 'Agree', and it is not a surprise because to be able to make friends, people tend to share the same hobbies, and this is one of the youths' ways to gain friends and not be outcasted. Youths spend the most time with their friends, especially during these online studies, where most are always in contact through their modern gadgets such as laptops and smartphones. This can lead to K-pop culture being exposed to them and accepting it as their own culture, and this happens by students sharing and showing favourite videos, idols, and many more in their group chat (Kim, 2017). Hence, friends can influence the students of Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris, and most of them have friends who are K-pop culture fans.

Social media has become a medium for a person to communicate with others and a platform to learn news, create content, listen to music, watch drama, and even read gossip about celebrities. According to Arabella Cai (2021), technology has helped K-pop expand its global reach with social media platforms such as Instagram and YouTube in line with the data gained from the respondents. Based on the findings, 75.1% of respondents generally agreed that social media influences the acceptance of K-pop culture. The chance of K-pop culture acceptance increases when they use social media to be a part of the K-pop culture and get the latest news. It does not help the current situation when social media has also been used as a marketing tool, which means advertisements on K-pop may occur through social media. Hence, social media influences the Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris students to accept K-pop culture.

Based on analysis of the findings, the results have shown a positive correlation between factors of knowledge, attitude, friends, social media, and acceptance of cultural identity among 414 Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris undergraduate students. Cultural identity happens quickly when external and internal factors influence youth. So, in the early stage of the study, there is a significant relationship between knowledge, attitude, friends, social media, and acceptance of cultural identity among students at Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris. The hypothesis was tested, and there is a significant relationship between all the stated factors. Acceptance of cultural identity

and the Knowledge factor, shows a moderate strength of the relationship. Even though the Friends factor shows the lowest strength among the factors, the strength is still moderate.

Meanwhile, the Social Media and Acceptance factors show high strength relationships with the Acceptance of Cultural Identity. Based on the Cultural Identity Theory, the acceptance of another culture starts from the process of learning, and that will lead to an individual accepting their language, heritage, social structure, and cultural identity changes due to several factors, which are social, political, economic and contextual (Communication Theory, 2014). It is proven, in this study, that most of the respondents were influenced by external factors, and each factor has a significant relationship because the strength of the relationships for two of the factors is Moderate, and the other two are High.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study shows a positive correlation between knowledge, attitude, friends, social media, and acceptance of cultural identity among 414 Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris undergraduate students from approximately 21 000 students. Probability sampling was used to choose the samples through simple random sampling, and the data was collected through questionnaires among students, that have been shared on several social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Telegram, and email Siswa.. Both research objectives have been achieved. Objective 1 is to measure the level of knowledge, attitude, friends, and social media factors in accepting K-pop culture among Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris (UPSI) undergraduate students using descriptive analysis while objective 2 is to measure the relationship between knowledge, attitude, friends, social media, and acceptance of cultural identity using Pearson correlation. The finding of the research concluded that cultural identity happens easily when youth are influenced by external and internal factors, especially social media. K-pop does play a central part in being an influence in the first place. However, added factors intensify the acceptance of K-pop culture in a student's life.

As for recommendations, to ensure that the demographic data from each group is balanced to avoid partial data, the researcher should determine the number of participants with sets of demographic data. Therefore, the researcher needs to adapt the research questionnaire to the targeted sample.

The research analysis and discussion could change and be impacted by the balanced data that is gathered.

Next, other variables can be added to the research, but this study did not use other variables such as the environment of the individual. According to Yan (2018), cultural identity development will occur when a person creates a different self-identity of who they are in an environment so that they have a social significance in a group. Therefore, future researchers could use the environment variable in their studies to determine if there is a significance between an individual's environment and the acceptance of cultural identity.

Researchers in the future should conduct this research as qualitative research as this might give better data for the research because the researchers will be able to understand the responses in depth through interviews.

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