

Influence of Daily K-pop Watching Duration and Expenditure on K-pop Merchandise on Intention to Purchase Concert Tickets: Moderating Effect of Likeability Level

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RESEARCH PAPER

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Open Access

Article Info:

Submitted: 01 June 2023

Accepted: 23 June 2023

Approve: 25 August 2023

Published: 25 August 2023

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Abstract. This quantitative study delves into the intricate landscape of K-pop fandom within the United States, particularly focusing on the influences that shape intentions to purchase concert tickets among individuals aged 15-29. With a carefully selected sample of 98 participants from a population of 65.47 million, this research employs the Structural Equation Model-Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) method to analyze secondary data sourced from a figshare dataset by Raman (2020). The study's findings shed light on the diverse connections between K-pop-related factors and concert attendance intentions. Specifically, while Expenditure on K-pop Merchandise strongly and positively influences the intention to purchase concert tickets, "Daily K-pop Watching Duration" alone shows no significant impact. Intriguingly, when considering the moderating role of "Likeability Level," both these factors maintain their significance. The financial investment in K-pop merchandise remains a significant positive influence on concert intentions, further amplified by the positive significant moderating effect of "Likeability Level." But, the effect of Daily K-pop Watching Duration moderated by Likeability Level is not significant to "Intention to Purchase Concert Tickets." These results underscore the multifaceted nature of K-pop fandom and its dynamic interplay with concert attendance intentions, contributing to a nuanced understanding of this vibrant cultural phenomenon.

Keywords: Consumer Behavior, Intention to Purchase, K-pop, Likeability.

A. INTRODUCTION

The global phenomenon of K-pop (Korean pop music) in this globalization and digital era has garnered an immense following across cultures and borders [1], resulting in a dedicated fan base that actively engages with various aspects of K-pop culture [2]. One of the striking features of this fandom is the way fans invest their time and resources into consuming K-pop content, such as watching music videos, variety shows, and fan-made content, as well as purchasing related merchandise. As K-pop continues to thrive and evolve, it has become a multidimensional cultural phenomenon that not only encompasses music but also extends to fashion, lifestyle, and live performances [3]. International Confederation of Societies of Authors and Composers [4] mentions that the global phenomenon of K-pop (Korean pop music) has transcended its origins to establish an unprecedented cultural presence that knows no geographical bounds. Rooted in the vibrant entertainment industry of South Korea, K-pop has effortlessly crossed cultures and borders, captivating a diverse array of audiences worldwide. What began as a genre of music has evolved into a transformative force, giving rise to a fervent and dedicated fan base that traverses continents and embraces a multitude of backgrounds.

Central to the allure of K-pop is its innate ability to connect people from all walks of life, igniting a shared passion that defies language barriers and societal differences. The fandom that has blossomed around K-pop is nothing short of extraordinary, characterized by an active and engaged

community that finds resonance not only in the music itself but also in the broader cultural universe it encapsulates [5].

A hallmark of K-pop fandom lies in the profound investment fans make in both time and resources. Fans immerse themselves in a tapestry of K-pop content, which extends far beyond the auditory realm. They devote hours to watching music videos that are meticulously choreographed and visually captivating, showcasing artistic ingenuity and storytelling prowess. In addition, they indulge in variety shows and reality programs that grant them intimate glimpses into the lives and personalities of their favorite idols [6]. This dynamic engagement is further evidenced by the creation of fan-made content that reimagines and celebrates K-pop in myriad forms, from fan fiction to artistry that spans digital platforms.

However, the connection doesn't end with mere consumption; it extends to the realm of ownership and embodiment. Fans partake in a tangible extension of their devotion through the acquisition of K-pop merchandise. This merchandise serves as more than just material possessions; it's a tangible manifestation of their affiliation and connection to the artists, as well as a way to display their identity within the community. From clothing lines to accessories, fans proudly wear their loyalty, transforming their everyday lives into a canvas that fuses K-pop aesthetics with personal expression [7]. Yet K-pop's evolution doesn't halt at consumption and ownership; it continues to flourish into a multidimensional cultural phenomenon. It has woven itself into the fabric of daily life, transcending the sonic to permeate fashion choices, lifestyle preferences, and even aspirations. K-pop's influence extends to shaping the way fans communicate, interact, and even construct their dreams [8]. And at the zenith of this cultural ascent are the live performances that unite fans in their shared adoration.

K-pop's live performances, notably its electrifying concerts, stand as the epitome of this multidimensional phenomenon. Concerts become a nexus where the virtual and the real collide, where the energy of the crowd fuses with the passion of the artists, and where the synergy of fandom is truly palpable. This is the culmination of the journey that fans embark upon, the destination where the investments of time, resources, and emotions culminate in an experience that defies expectation [9]. The theory of content likeability and engagement is a model that explains how consumers engage with brand-related social media content. According to this theory, consumer engagement is influenced by the likeability of the content, content credibility, and social media engagement [10]. The research paper titled "Go Long or Go Often: Influences on Binge Watching Frequency and Duration among College Students" focuses on the factors influencing binge-watching behavior among college students. Specifically, it investigates the predictors of both binge-watching frequency and the duration of binge-watching sessions, one of them is likeability [11].

The theory that can be relevant to understanding the relationship between time spent consuming media content and liking or preferences is the "Uses and Gratifications Theory". The Uses and Gratifications Theory posits that people engage with media content to fulfill specific psychological, social, and emotional needs [12]. This theory suggests that media consumption is an active and goal-oriented process, where individuals select and engage with content that aligns with their personal motivations and needs. It suggests that individuals make conscious choices about the media they consume based on the gratifications they expect to receive from that consumption [13]. In the context of this research, this theory can help explain how the time individuals spend consuming K-pop content is related to their liking or preferences for that content.

In the other hand, the theory which suggests that time spent consuming media does not necessarily correlate with liking or preferences, is the Selective Exposure Theory. This theory posits that individuals tend to actively choose media content that aligns with their preexisting attitudes and beliefs, while avoiding content that challenges or contradicts them [14]. In the context of this research, this theory could explain why the amount of time spent consuming K-pop content may not always directly influence individuals' liking for that content. Individuals who do not have a strong liking for K-pop might not dedicate as much time to consuming the content, as they may be more inclined to avoid it due to their differing preferences [15].

The theory that could be relevant to understanding the relationship between spending on something and liking that thing is the Effort Justification Theory. The Effort Justification Theory proposes that people have a tendency to justify the effort or resources they invest in something by enhancing their liking or positive evaluation of that thing [16]. When individuals expend effort, time, or resources to attain a particular goal or object, they often engage in cognitive processes that reduce any cognitive dissonance they may feel due to the effort expended. This reduction in dissonance can result in an increased liking for the object or goal [17]. In the context of your research, the Effort Justification Theory could suggest that fans who spend money on K-pop merchandise are likely to develop a stronger liking for K-pop culture and related experiences. This financial investment represents a form of effort, and fans may justify their expenditure by attributing higher value and positive emotions to their involvement in K-pop. The more resources they invest in merchandise, the more likely they are to perceive K-pop content and experiences positively, enhancing their overall liking and satisfaction.

In the other hand, the theory that could be relevant to understanding the lack of direct correlation between spending on something and liking that thing is the Cognitive Dissonance Theory. In the context of this research, individuals who spend money on K-pop merchandise may experience cognitive dissonance if their spending contradicts their initial level of liking or preferences for K-pop content [18]. If their investment does not result in a significant increase in liking, they might employ cognitive strategies to reduce this dissonance [19]. For instance, they could justify their spending by focusing on other positive aspects of the merchandise or the overall fan experience. This theory could suggest that while financial investment can lead to cognitive strategies aimed at reducing dissonance, the actual increase in liking might be more complex. Spending money on K-pop merchandise might not guarantee an immediate and proportional increase in liking, as individuals might engage in cognitive processes to rationalize their behavior and align their attitudes with their actions.

The theory of intention to purchase is a model that explains how consumers form their intentions to buy a product or service. According to this theory, consumer behavior is influenced by their attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control [20].

The theory that could be relevant to understanding how liking something can influence people's likelihood to attend concerts is the "Theory of Reasoned Action" [21] or its extension, the Theory of Planned Behavior [22]. Both of these theories emphasize the role of attitudes and intentions in predicting behavior, such as attending concerts in this case. In this research context, the theory suggests that individuals' liking for K-pop (a positive attitude toward K-pop) will likely influence their intention to attend K-pop concerts. If someone likes K-pop and enjoys the music, performances, and overall culture, they are more likely to have a positive attitude toward attending a K-pop concert. This positive attitude will contribute to a stronger intention to actually go to the concert. Moreover, subjective norms play a role. If an individual's social circle includes friends or fellow fans who also like K-pop and are planning to attend the concert, the individual might perceive social pressure to attend as well, further strengthening their intention.

There are research gaps from each of the relationships that have been shown above. A way to fill this gap is to use variables that focus specifically on K-pop fans. In addition, we use a moderating variable, namely Likeability Level, so that it becomes a novelty in research. Introducing a K-pop fan-adjusted variable can help us capture nuances that may not be adequately addressed in a wider study, and using Likeability Level as a moderating variable adds an additional layer of complexity to this research's analysis. This new approach allowed us to study how individual preferences and affinity within the K-pop community can influence the relationship between daily K-pop consumption, merchandise spending, and intention to attend concerts.

The aim of this research is to investigate the complex relationship between daily K-pop watching duration, expenditure on K-pop merchandise, and the intention to purchase concert tickets among fans. Specifically, this study seeks to explore how individuals' levels of liking for K-pop content moderate the associations between these variables. By examining the potential moderating

effect of likeability, this research aims to enhance our understanding of how fan engagement, financial investment, and personal preferences interact to shape fans' intentions to attend K-pop concerts. Through comprehensive analysis, this study aims to contribute valuable insights into the nuanced dynamics within the K-pop fandom and shed light on the underlying factors that drive fans' concert attendance intentions.

B. METHOD

Conceptual Model

1 Daily K-pop Watching Duration to Intention to Purchase Concert Tickets

Uses and Gratifications Theory Moon and Norman [13] supports the positive effect of "Daily K-pop Watching Duration" on "Intention to Purchase Concert Tickets." It suggests that people engage with media content, such as K-pop, to fulfill specific needs, and the time spent consuming K-pop content could influence their liking and motivation to attend concerts. In the other hand, Selective Exposure Theory Camaj [14] presents an opposing perspective to the positive effect of "Daily K-pop Watching Duration" on Intention to Purchase Concert Tickets. According to this theory, individuals might actively choose media content that aligns with their preexisting attitudes and beliefs. Thus, individuals who already have a strong liking for K-pop might spend more time consuming content, but this might not necessarily lead to a proportional increase in their intention to attend concerts.

H1: Daily K-pop Watching Duration has a positive effect to Intention to Purchase Concert Tickets

2 Expenditure on K-pop Merchandise to Intention to Purchase Concert Tickets

Effort Justification Theory [16] supports the positive effect of Expenditure on K-pop Merchandise on "Intention to Purchase Concert Tickets." The theory suggests that individuals tend to value and like something more when they have invested effort or resources into obtaining or achieving it. In this case, spending on K-pop merchandise could enhance fans' liking for the overall K-pop experience, including attending concerts". In the other hand, Cognitive Dissonance Theory [18] offers an opposing perspective to the positive effect of Expenditure on K-pop Merchandise on "Intention to Purchase Concert Tickets." Individuals who spend money on K-pop merchandise might experience cognitive dissonance if their spending contradicts their initial level of liking or preferences for K-pop content. This could lead to cognitive strategies that aim to reduce dissonance, which might not always result in a significant increase in liking or intention to attend concerts.

H2: Expenditure on K-pop Merchandise has a positive effect Intention to Purchase Concert Tickets

3 Daily K-pop Watching Duration and Expenditure on K-pop Merchandise to Intention on Purchase Concert Tickets with the moderating effect of Likeability Level

The Theory of Reasoned Action [22] could support the moderating effect of Likeability Level on the relationships. It suggests that an individual's liking for K-pop content would influence their intention to attend concerts. The more someone likes K-pop, the stronger their intention to attend concerts, possibly enhancing the effects of both "Daily K-pop Watching Duration" and "Expenditure on K-pop Merchandise."

H3: Daily K-pop Watching Duration has a positive effect Intention to Purchase Concert Tickets with the moderating effect of Likeability Level

H4: Expenditure on K-pop Merchandise has a positive effect Intention to Purchase Concert Tickets with the moderating effect of Likeability Level

Data Collection

Data collection presents how the research data collected must be clearly disclosed along with the population, sample and sampling method [23]. The population in this study is all people of United States of America aged 15-29 years (65,470,000 people) based on Statista [24]. The sampling

method in this study used the Taro Yamane method [25], with an error rate of 10%. The calculation of the Taro Yamane method uses the following formula:

$$n = N / (N d^2 + 1) \quad (1)$$

The explanation of the formula is that n is the number of samples, N is the population, d is the error rate. So the calculation can be done as follows:

$$n = 65,470,000 / (65,470,000 \times 0.1^2 + 1)$$

$$n = \sim 98 \text{ samples}$$

The data collected is secondary data taken from the figshare dataset owned by Saanjanaa Raman [26], that was obtained through a survey conducted for a study on social media and K-Pop. This dataset has Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0) that this data is free to copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format, and remix, transform, and build upon the material for any purpose, even commercially.

Table 1 Variable Operationalization

Variable	Indicators
Intention to Purchase Concert Tickets (Y) The theory of intention to purchase is a model that explains how consumers form their intentions to buy a product or service. According to this theory, consumer behavior is influenced by their attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control [20].	• 1: Strongly Disagree - No, I don't want to buy • 2: Disagree • 3: Neutral • 4: Agree • 5: Strongly Agree - Yes, really want to buy
Likeability Level (Z) The theory of content likeability and engagement is a model that explains how consumers engage with brand-related social media content. According to this theory, consumer engagement is influenced by the likeability of the content, content credibility, and social media engagement [10].	• 1: Strongly Disagree - No • 2: Disagree • 3: Neutral • 4: Agree • 5: Strongly Agree - Yes
Daily K-pop Watching Duration (X1) The amount of time an individual spends engaged in watching a particular form of media content, such as TV shows, series, movies, or videos, in a single session [11].	• 1: Less than 1 hour • 2: 1 to 3 hours • 3: 4 to 6 hours • 4: 7 to 10 hours • 5: More than 10 hours
Expenditure on K-pop Merchandise (X2) Buying is the process of acquiring goods or services in exchange for money or other valuable consideration [27].	• 1: Never buy • 2: Less than 25 USD • 3: 25 to 50 USD • 4: 50 to 100 USD • 5: More than 100 USD

Analysis Method

Quantitative approach is used to analyze the influence between variables in the model. Data analysis used the SEM-PLS method (sequential equation model -partial least square). The reason for using this method is because the number of samples needed in the analysis is relatively small and the Smart PLS analysis does not have to have a normal distribution. In addition, tests are conducted to see the effect of each dependent variable on the independent variable. The influence analysis forms a path from the dependent variable to the independent variable, which is referred to as a path analysis in the SEM-PLS test. Data processing uses Smart PLS version 4.0 [23].

External model testing such as Cronbach alpha, VIF, Multicollinearity, and other outer loading values are not shown because the variable only uses one indicator, so it is certain that the value is 1

and meets all the minimum criteria for the outer model test [28]. Structural model testing using the coefficient of determination. A strong R-Square value exceeding 0.67 indicates a significant effect. The R-Square value ranges from 0.33 to 0.67, indicating a moderate level of influence. In addition, a weak R-Square value is between less than 0.19 and 0.33, indicating a relatively small impact [23]. The significance of the influence of the path in the model uses a standard estimate with a standard P value less than or equal to 0.1 with an error rate of 10%.

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive Statistics

Table 2 shows the results of the descriptive analysis, which are as follows:

Table 2 Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Mean	Median	Min	Max
Time Spent	2.649	3	1	5
Money Spent	2.464	2	1	5
Concert Ticket Purchase Intention	3.856	4	1	5
Likeability Level	3.041	3	1	5

The Time Spent variable represents the amount of time participants spend engaging with K-pop content on a daily basis. The mean time spent is approximately 2.649, with a median of 3. This suggests that, on average, participants spend slightly less than 3 hours consuming K-pop content daily. The range of the variable spans from 1 (indicating less than 1 hour) to 5 (indicating more than 10 hours), showing variability in participants' time spent consuming K-pop. The Money Spent variable represents the amount of money participants spend on K-pop merchandise. The mean money spent is approximately 2.464, with a median of 2. This suggests that, on average, participants' spending on K-pop merchandise is relatively low. The range of the variable extends from 1 (indicating never buying) to 5 (indicating spending more than 100 USD), indicating varying levels of financial investment in K-pop merchandise.

The Concert Ticket Purchase Intention variable represents participants' intentions to purchase tickets for K-pop concerts. The mean intention is approximately 3.856, with a median of 4. This suggests that, on average, participants express a moderate to strong intention to purchase concert tickets. The range of the variable spans from 1 (indicating "no, I don't want to buy") to 5 (indicating "yes, really want to buy"), indicating a variety of intentions among participants. The Likeability Level variable represents participants' overall level of enthusiasm or likeability for K-pop. The mean enthusiasm level is approximately 3.041, with a median of 3. This suggests that, on average, participants have a moderate level of enthusiasm or likeability for K-pop. The range of the variable extends from 1 (indicating "no") to 5 (indicating "yes"), reflecting varying degrees of enthusiasm among participants.

Table 3 Favourite K-pop Group

Group	Total	Group	Total
BTS	55	NCT	2
EXO	9	Big Bang	2
MONSTA X	5	Girl's Day	1
Seventeen	4	BJJ	1
BLACKPINK	3	SHINee	1
Loona	3	SNSD	1
Stray Kids	3	TVXQ	1
(G)I-dle	2	TWICE	1
GOT7	2	Wanna One	1

The table provides a comprehensive snapshot of respondents' preferences for K-pop groups, shedding light on the distribution of favor among various iconic acts. Topping the list with remarkable dominance is BTS, capturing a significant 55% of respondents' hearts. This resounding support reaffirms BTS's global influence and solidifies their status as a frontrunner in the K-pop realm, showcasing their ability to resonate across diverse audiences in United States. Notably, the remarkable lead of BTS is indicative of their enduring popularity and the strong emotional connection they maintain with their dedicated fanbase.

While BTS reigns supreme, the remaining preferences are distributed across a spectrum of K-pop groups, with EXO, MONSTA X, and Seventeen securing the second, third, and fourth spots respectively. EXO gathers 9% of respondents' favor, a testament to their lasting impact despite lineup changes and shifting dynamics within the industry. Meanwhile, a trio of BLACKPINK, Loona, and Stray Kids, each with 3%, underscores the appeal of girl groups, demonstrating that gender-diverse acts also have a dedicated following. Additionally, various groups like (G)I-dle, GOT7, and NCT, among others, round out the preferences with 1-2% support. Collectively, this data underscores the multifaceted nature of K-pop fandom in United States and highlights the ongoing evolution of group popularity within a dynamic musical landscape.

Table 4 R square and Inner Model Calculation

Variable	Original sample	P values	R ²	Category
Money Spent → Concert Ticket Purchase Intention	0.473	0.000	0.26	Weak
Time Spent → Concert Ticket Purchase Intention	-0.005	0.479		
Likeability Level x Money Spent → Concert Ticket Purchase Intention	0.172	0.046		
Likeability Level x Time Spent → Concert Ticket Purchase Intention	-0.041	0.324		

The variable Concert Ticket Purchase Intention (Y) gets an R Square result of 0.26, so this variable has a weak relationship. Although weak, the figure shows that the model can continue to process data because it is greater than 0.2. It indicates that approximately 26% of the variability in the Concert Ticket Purchase Intention can be explained by the independent variables included in this model.

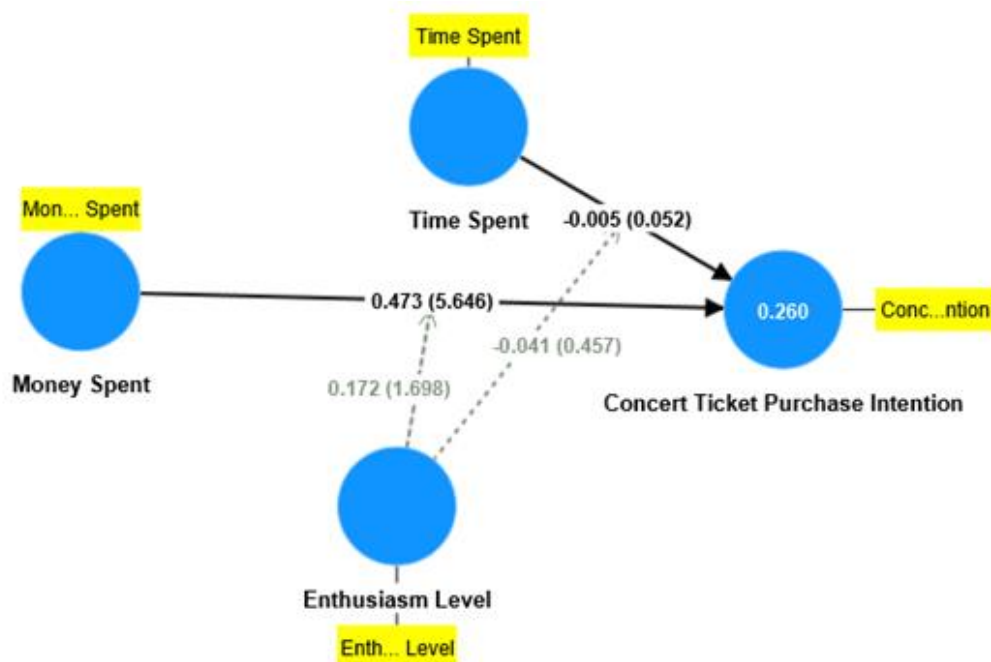


Figure 1 Inner Model

Figure 1 shows the estimated linkage between variables including the moderating effect from SmartPLS 4. Table 4 shows the flow of influence between variables in the model. In light of the findings presented in Table 4, the relationship between the 'Money Spent' variable and the 'Concert Ticket Purchase Intention' is reflected by an Original Sample coefficient of 0.473. As the coefficient is positive, it indicates a positive relationship direction. The associated p-value is 0.000, which is smaller than the significance level of 0.05. This suggests a statistically significant positive relationship between 'Money Spent' and 'Concert Ticket Purchase Intention.' In essence, the results indicate that increased expenditure on K-pop merchandise is associated with a higher intention to purchase concert tickets. This outcome aligns with the initial hypothesis, and therefore, the hypothesis is accepted based on the statistical evidence.

Turning to the relationship between the 'Time Spent' variable and the 'Concert Ticket Purchase Intention,' the Original Sample coefficient is -0.005. This coefficient is close to zero and negative, suggesting a negligible and potentially inverse relationship. However, the associated p-value is 0.479, which is greater than the significance level. This indicates that the relationship between 'Time Spent' and 'Concert Ticket Purchase Intention' is not statistically significant. Consequently, the data do not provide sufficient evidence to support a meaningful relationship between these variables, and the hypothesis related to this relationship is not supported by the findings.

Moving on to the interaction effects involving 'Likeability Level' and the other variables, the interaction of 'Likeability Level' and 'Money Spent' yields a coefficient of -0.172. The corresponding p-value is 0.046, which is below the significance threshold of 0.05. This suggests that the interaction effect is statistically significant. This interaction indicates that the relationship between 'Money Spent' and 'Concert Ticket Purchase Intention' is influenced by 'Likeability Level.' The exact nature of this influence would require further investigation, but the findings imply that the role of 'Likeability Level' should not be ignored when considering the impact of expenditure on concert ticket purchase intention.

Similarly, the interaction of 'Likeability Level' and 'Time Spent' yields a coefficient of -0.041, with a p-value of 0.324. The p-value is above the significance threshold, indicating that the interaction effect is not statistically significant. As such, the findings suggest that the relationship between 'Time Spent' and 'Concert Ticket Purchase Intention' does not significantly vary based on Likeability Level. These results provide nuanced insights into the relationships between variables. While 'Money Spent' positively relates to 'Concert Ticket Purchase Intention,' 'Time Spent' does not exhibit a statistically significant relationship. Additionally, 'Likeability Level' interacts with 'Money Spent,' influencing its relationship with 'Concert Ticket Purchase Intention.' However, the interaction of 'Likeability Level' and 'Time Spent' is not deemed statistically significant in affecting the relationship with 'Concert Ticket Purchase Intention.' The findings contribute to a deeper understanding of the factors influencing concert ticket purchase intention among K-pop fans.

Discussions

1 Daily K-pop Watching Duration to Intention to Purchase Concert Tickets

Based on the results of the study regarding the relationship between "Daily K-pop Watching Duration" and Intention to Purchase Concert Tickets, several noteworthy insights emerge. The findings indicate that there is no statistically significant relationship between the two variables. While Money Spent on K-pop merchandise exhibited a positive and significant impact on "Concert Ticket Purchase Intention," and an interaction effect was observed between Likeability Level and "Money Spent," the relationship between the time spent watching K-pop content daily and the intention to purchase concert tickets did not meet the statistical significance criterion.

This lack of significant relationship might suggest that the duration of K-pop consumption on a daily basis does not directly translate into a higher intention to purchase concert tickets. There could be various factors contributing to this outcome. One possible interpretation is that, while fans may invest time in consuming K-pop content, the motivations behind their consumption might differ from their motivations to attend concerts. Factors such as personal preferences, financial

considerations, or availability of live events could influence the connection between time spent consuming content and the intention to attend concerts.

The non-significant result aligns with studies like Camaj [14], which discusses the idea that time spent consuming media might not necessarily correlate directly with intentions or preferences. Furthermore, this result also provides an opportunity to explore additional factors that might mediate or moderate the relationship between daily K-pop watching duration and concert ticket purchase intention. While the findings do not align with the initial hypothesis, they contribute valuable insights to the existing body of knowledge. As the K-pop phenomenon continues to evolve and expand, factors influencing fans' behaviors might be more intricate than expected. Future research could delve deeper into the interplay between different motivations, preferences, and external factors that influence the decision to attend concerts, potentially uncovering nuanced relationships not captured in this study.

2 Expenditure on K-pop Merchandise to Intention to Purchase Concert Tickets

The exploration of the link between Expenditure on K-pop Merchandise and Intention to Purchase Concert Tickets has yielded intriguing insights that illuminate the intricate dynamics within the realm of K-pop fandom. The results reveal a statistically significant positive relationship between the amount of money spent on K-pop merchandise and the intention to purchase concert tickets. This discovery suggests that fans who make greater financial investments in K-pop merchandise also tend to express a heightened intention to attend concerts. The observed positive correlation between merchandise expenditure and concert attendance intention resonates with the Effort Justification Theory [17]. This theory proposes that people tend to justify their investments, and in this context, fans who allocate substantial resources towards merchandise may develop a stronger sense of attachment and identification with the K-pop culture. This emotional connection and investment might consequently amplify their desire to engage in more immersive experiences, such as attending live concerts.

The positive relationship between merchandise spending and concert attendance intention underscores the multifaceted nature of fan engagement within the K-pop community. Financial investment in merchandise extends beyond the mere acquisition of material possessions; it acts as a conduit for expressing identity and affiliation within the fan community [29]. This nexus between merchandise expenditure and concert attendance intention underscores the broader dimensions of K-pop fandom, where merchandise serves as a gateway to deeper forms of engagement. However, it's important to acknowledge that not all theories point exclusively towards positive relationships. For instance, the "Cognitive Dissonance Theory" [19] suggests that individuals might employ cognitive strategies to rationalize their behavior when their actions (such as spending on merchandise) contradict their initial level of liking or preferences. While the current findings demonstrate a positive correlation between merchandise spending and concert attendance intention, this theory raises the possibility that fans might engage in cognitive processes to align their attitudes with their actions. This could imply that while financial investment in merchandise might not guarantee an immediate and proportional increase in liking, cognitive strategies could still influence concert attendance intentions.

3 Daily K-pop Watching Duration to Intention to Purchase Concert Tickets with the moderating effect of Likeability Level

The examination of the relationship between "Daily K-pop Watching Duration" and Intention to Purchase Concert Tickets, with the moderating effect of "Likeability Level," reveals insightful nuances in the realm of K-pop fandom dynamics. The results indicate that the relationship between these variables is not statistically significant. However, this outcome takes on added significance when considering the moderating influence of Likeability Level. The non-significant relationship between "Daily K-pop Watching Duration" and Intention to Purchase Concert Tickets suggests that the amount of time fans invest in consuming K-pop content on a daily basis does not directly translate into a higher intention to attend concerts. This may indicate that while fans dedicate time

to consuming K-pop content, their motivations and preferences for attending concerts might be influenced by other factors.

The introduction of Likeability Level as a moderating variable adds depth to the analysis. Although the interaction effects involving Likeability Level were also non-significant, the idea that Likeability Level could potentially moderate the relationship underscores the complexity of fan behavior. The "Theory of Reasoned Action" [21] and the Theory of Planned Behavior [22] discussed earlier highlight how attitudes and intentions can shape behavior. In this context, the moderating effect of Likeability Level could mean that while time spent watching K-pop content might not directly affect concert attendance intention for all fans, those with higher levels of likeability for K-pop could be more influenced by this factor.

Furthermore, it's important to recognize the contrasting theory of Selective Exposure Theory [15]. This theory suggests that individuals tend to actively choose media content that aligns with their preexisting attitudes and beliefs, avoiding content that challenges them. This could explain why the direct relationship between time spent consuming K-pop content and concert attendance intention might not be significant. Individuals who do not have a strong liking for K-pop might not dedicate as much time to consuming the content, affecting the observed relationship.

4 Expenditure on K-pop Merchandise to Intention to Purchase Concert Tickets with the moderating effect of Likeability Level

The exploration into the relationship between Expenditure on K-pop Merchandise and Intention to Purchase Concert Tickets, with the moderating effect of "Likeability Level," uncovers intricate insights into the motivations and behaviors within the realm of K-pop fandom. The results reveal a statistically significant positive relationship between the amount of money spent on K-pop merchandise and the intention to purchase concert tickets. However, the introduction of Likeability Level as a moderating variable brings an additional layer of complexity to this relationship. With the positive moderating effect of Likeability Level on the relationship of Expenditure on K-pop Merchandise to Intention to Purchase Concert Tickets means that the more fans invest in merchandise plus intrinsic motivation or liking for K-pop will increase the Intention to Purchase Concert Tickets.

The observed positive correlation between merchandise expenditure and concert attendance intention aligns with the Effort Justification Theory [17], suggesting that fans who invest more significantly in K-pop merchandise are likely to experience a stronger attachment and identification with the K-pop culture. This emotional connection, fostered by financial investment, might amplify their desire to engage in immersive experiences such as attending live concerts. The moderating effect of Likeability Level adds a fascinating dimension to this relationship. The notion that Likeability Level could potentially moderate the relationship underscores the intricate interplay between fan behaviors and motivations. This introduces the possibility that the influence of merchandise expenditure on concert attendance intention might be more pronounced among those with higher levels of likeability for K-pop. This aligns with the "Theory of Reasoned Action" [21] and the Theory of Planned Behavior [22], which emphasize the role of attitudes and intentions in predicting behavior.

Moreover, it's pertinent to acknowledge the potential influence of the Cognitive Dissonance Theory [18]. This theory posits that individuals might engage in cognitive strategies to rationalize their behavior when their actions (such as spending on merchandise) contradict their initial level of liking or preferences. While the results demonstrate a positive correlation between merchandise spending and concert attendance intention, this theory suggests that cognitive processes could play a role in the relationship, potentially leading to more complex dynamics.

D. CONCLUSION

The research demonstrates a significant positive correlation between fans' financial investment in K-pop merchandise and their intention to attend concerts. This alignment with the Effort

Justification Theory emphasizes the influential role of emotional attachment fostered by financial investment. With the positive moderating effect of Likeability Level on the relationship of Expenditure on K-pop Merchandise to Intention to Purchase Concert Tickets means that the more fans invest in merchandise plus intrinsic motivation or liking for K-pop will increase the Intention to Purchase Concert Tickets. Theories such as the "Theory of Reasoned Action" and the Theory of Planned Behavior add depth to the analysis by considering how attitudes and intentions shape behavior. In the other hand, the effect of Daily K-pop Watching Duration is not significant to "Intention to Purchase Concert Tickets." Also, the effect of Daily K-pop Watching Duration moderated by Likeability Level is not significant to "Intention to Purchase Concert Tickets."

As the global phenomenon of K-pop continues to evolve, these findings hold valuable implications for fans, practitioners, and researchers alike. Fans can better comprehend the interconnections between their investments in merchandise and their desire to engage in live experiences. Practitioners within the K-pop industry can leverage these insights to tailor marketing strategies that harness emotional connections to merchandise to drive concert attendance intentions.

For future research, delving deeper into the interrelationships between factors such as economic backgrounds, cultural influences, and social dynamics could provide a more comprehensive understanding of fan behaviors. Furthermore, exploring additional moderating variables beyond likeability could reveal further nuances in the relationship between merchandise spending and concert attendance intentions. The consideration of contextual factors, such as regional differences or specific fan communities, could unveil valuable insights for a more comprehensive understanding.

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Author declaration

Author contributions and responsibilities

The authors made major contributions to the conception and design of the study. The authors took responsibility for data analysis, interpretation and discussion of results. The authors read and approved the final manuscript.

Funding

This research did not receive external funding.

Availability of data and materials

All data is available from the author.

Competing interests

The authors declare no competing interests.

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