

Analysis of Malaysian Youths' Cognizance about K-pop from a Philosophical Viewpoint

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ABSTRACT

Hallyu or the Korean wave has reverberated around the globe since the turn of the millennium in 2000, yet the emergence of Korean pop (K-pop) has been around even before that, ever since 1992. With such attention upon the K-pop idols, the impact they have – whether good or otherwise – upon youths is inevitable. Most researchers tend to study these effects based on economic instruments and psychological factors, thus this research would shed a different light on this issue using philosophy as the social apparatus. Methodology implemented was via questionnaires containing eight items related to K-pop disseminated to 100 undergraduates at National University of Malaysia (UKM). The findings from the eight items would be covered under the four sub disciplines – axiology (3), epistemology (1), logic (1) and metaphysics (3) and elucidated with these themes respectively: social identity, aesthetics, ethics, theory of knowledge (TOK), logical fallacy, determinism, nihilism and possibility-necessity. This study is significant because it gives insight on this social phenomenon with rather abstract yet fundamental concepts in philosophy that lay the foundation for K-pop becoming what it is now, the perception of ongoing idol-fandom interaction, and how the industry will propel in the future.

Keywords: k-pop; philosophy; axiology; epistemology; metaphysics; logic; influence; impact.

Introduction

Korean pop nowadays is not a strange thing for people since it is so popular and well-known across the world. Korean pop, also known as K-Pop, includes all kinds of entertainment made in South Korea such as songs, dramas and movies. We believe that K-pop can affect people's behavior, specifically the youth, when they consume these products.

In Malaysia, on the other hand, the music industry has been one of the most famous entertainments alongside its local dramas. In the past, Malaysia music production genre was pivoted on rock-and-roll, besides ballad songs which were composed to accommodate popular dramas.

Today, Malaysian artists and producers have produced a variety of genres in music such as pop, RnB, Jazz and many more. This kind of music production can really affect Malaysians in a number of ways such as fashion, behavior, and so on. Furthermore, the Malaysian music industry does not have a specific target age, which means the songs produced can be heard by the entire Malaysian populace.

The beginning of the contemporary music genre can be pinned on a specific date: April 11, 1992, when a group called 'Seo Taiji and The Boys' performed their music for the first time on a TV station. Since then, various other K-pop groups have been introduced, , up until the formation of well-known entertainment companies such as SM

Entertainment established in 1995, JYP Entertainment in 1997, and YG Entertainment in 1998. Among the first K-pop idol groups established is HOT, which made its first appearance around 1996 (90 Days Languages LCC, 2020). K-pop idols are groups or artists formed by various entertainment companies that create compelling Korean popular music. The group targets an audience of teenage youth. The group is made up of a number of people who are very talented in at least one of the following: sing, rap, or dance. These K-pop artists were initially recruited by entertainment companies in their teens and then trained for years in various fields such as singing, rapping, dancing, as well as learning foreign languages. Then, a selection process is made to select the most talented trainees to be included in the group.

K-pop began to gain a foothold on social media and started to become famous in Malaysia in late 2008 and all this happened after the group 'Super Junior' gained international recognition through their single album, "Sorry, Sorry" in 2009. From there on, K-pop musicians have managed to win the hearts of fans in Malaysia.

Furthermore, when Netflix, an American based production and broadcast company, was introduced in Malaysia back in 2016, it increased the number of people being exposed to Korean dramas drastically, becoming one of the most preferred channels even till now. This can be shown when the segments in Netflix which is "Top 10 in Malaysia Today" are mostly newly produced and aired Korean dramas. This is also one of the factors that actually increased the viewership of K-pop indirectly because all Korean dramas feature K-pop music as their original soundtrack (OST).

We believe researching about youth's cognizance of Korean pop is significant since it has been so popular among youths and the Korean culture has been rapidly accepted by Malaysians today. Plus, Malaysia is a unique country with its multiracial citizens and rich with cultures from diverse races. Therefore, when there is a new trend coming in, which here is K-Pop, people in Malaysia are affected by it and take it positively and negatively- which will be discussed in this research. Firstly, how Korean artists dress and look when performing is one of the factors that cause the influence of K-pop to grow so rapidly in Malaysia. The first is their level of appearances. No matter where you are, the level of appearance is definitely a major attraction when meeting someone. It is a common fact that celebrities or K-pop artists have beautiful and handsome facial features. This factor has become a craze for youths, especially teenagers, to admire and love their favourite idols. In fact, some are willing to spend

thousands of ringgits to go watch their concerts or buy items produced by K-pop artists such as albums and clothes (Jun, 2017).

Moreover, a dense bass sound as well as an energetic musical is also able to pump up the adrenaline of the listeners and influence them strongly (REV Media Group, 2012). In fact, through music, some of the young Malaysian artists are taking up the idea of K-pop groups in order to introduce this culture to Malaysia. There are also a lot of Malaysian artists collaborating with Korean artists to produce top hit songs such as All Around the World by Mizz Nina featuring Jay Park and CIAO by Joe Flizzow featuring Jay Park. Meanwhile, the high paced dance and fashion brought during their show on stage also attracted the interest of local K-pop fans. Most youths in Malaysia nowadays are following the footsteps of Koreans in the fashion world, leading to some positive as well as negative outcomes. This is because Malaysia's official religion is Islam, therefore, citizens must respect and follow Islamic restrictions in dressing. This will also be discussed further in this research. At the same time, South Korea has become the destination of choice for Malaysians to travel and it is reported that more than two hundred thousand people have visited the country. South Korean-style dishes are also the craze of the people in this country with the existence of halal kimchi, ramen, kimbap and so on. When COVID-19 first appeared in early 2020, creative narratives are promoted as a fostering environment to liven up their 'lockdown experience', and *Hallyu* would be one of such narratives. Creative narratives are personal experiences of life-as-it-is-being-lived that may set out the possibilities for developing an authentically Malaysian identity that includes all Malaysians for Malaysians (Morais, 2020). Therefore, K-pop has the potential to attract the Malaysian youth with their striking identity and popular narratives. This new norm now embraces the digital world, and thus education follows suit (Patra & Sahu, 2020). This would also mean that students and youths would be spending more time using electronic gadgets, rendering them vulnerable to the growing influence of state-of-the-art entertainment, including K-pop.

Through the existence of Instagram fan pages, the availability of Spotify and JOOX, Twitter profiles and music videos on YouTube, the ability of K-pop to reach audiences, previously unreachable, through internet facilities has driven a paradigm shift in the exposure and popularity of this genre. South Korean popular culture today is a major driver of youth culture throughout the Pacific Rim especially in Malaysia itself, in Mainland China, Hong Kong, Japan, Taiwan and Vietnam. The genre is expanding its

influence in the region, much like American music did in Europe in the 1980s and 1990s. The formation of identity and the strengthening of language and culture is not a huge challenge for South Korea. More time is devoted to the alignment of their language and culture to the global community. So, with strategic planning, the K-pop industry was born. With the development of technology, the spread of the Korean entertainment industry was rapid and comprehensive, which acted as the basis of our research for analysing K-pop from a philosophical perspective.

Literature Review

Digital Identity Construction of K-pop

Identity development is a complicated process through which humans build a distinctive image of themselves and is marked by continuity and inner unity. As a result, it is closely connected to concepts like the self, self-concept, values, and personality development. (Herman, 2011). The objective of personal identity formation is to build a cohesive vision of oneself as part of the natural human growth process. Identity formation is crucial for KPOP groups to reign supreme and hold relevance in the entertainment industry, and one of the ways is to advertise their groups as a brand image. Idol K-pop Seventeen as a brand ambassador, according to the findings of a study by Alecia (2019), significantly influences The Saem's purchase choice. A total of 48.9% of the purchase decision of The Saem is impacted by Idol K-pop Seventeen's brand ambassador, while the remaining 51.1% is influenced by other variables not investigated in the study. Faradasya and Trianasari (2021) also concluded that based on the results of multiple linear regression analysis in their study, it is known that brand ambassadors of *Shopee Indonesia*, Stray Kids, have a positive response simultaneously on purchasing decisions.

Twitter is the main centre of attention for various researchers in recognizing this platform as the main venue for the K-pop groups to interact with youths, since Sehl (2020) mentioned that 44% of US adults aged 18–24 used Twitter. Vargas Meza & Park (2015) examined in Spanish-speaking countries the Twitter networking of K-pop dissemination through communication patterns and key hubs, demonstrating the actions and relationships between K-pop enthusiasts on Twitter with hashtag "kpop" from March to August 2012. Their study showed that the genre has a modest but rising share of Hispanic nations' music tastes.

Psychological Impact upon K-pop Fans

The Celebrity Worship Syndrome (CWS) is an obsessive-compulsive disease in which a person gets excessively engaged and fascinated (i.e., totally obsessed) with the minutiae of a celebrity's personal life. Any individual who is "in the public eye" (e.g., writers, politicians, journalists) may be the target of a person's infatuation, although studies and criminal charges indicate they are more likely to be from the worlds of television, cinema, and/or pop music (Griffiths, 2013). Therefore, CWS is closely associated with the erratic behaviors of zealous fandom. As the popularity of the *Hallyu* or the Korean Wave, K-pop in particular, grows, the adverse consequences of *Hallyu* fandoms have also become a major concern. Fans of *Hallyu* interpret K-pop in many ways, with varying degrees of acculturation. While K-pop fans use the internet and social media to completely support their idols, an online K-pop fanbase may have a negative impact (Jang & Song, 2017).

However, some depicted K-pop as a source of inspiration and courage for youths. Kuo et al. (2020) examined how 16 college-aged Asian American LGBTQ+ people identify with K-pop and reconstruct representations to preserve their identities from harmful pressures. Their study revealed that K-pop serves as a form of representation and social connection for LGBTQ+ Asian Americans using the grounded theory approach. Kuo et al. (2020) concluded that Asian Americans of all sexual orientations and gender identities work as K-pop fans to construct narratives that help combat discrimination. This could be related in a Malaysian context via research done by Ling et al. (2020) in which their findings provided some insight on the coping techniques used among 672 Malaysian teens to demonstrate that gender diversity exists. Perbawani and Nuralin (2021) had the item in their questionnaire – "My bias changed my life" – and the Indonesian respondents were inclined to agree with the statement. The works of idols contain more or less inspirational and motivational stories that build. Not infrequently respondents will feel that the message brought by their idol is in accordance with their life story. In the end, the message brought a significant change in the respondent's life.

Research Objectives

We have specified two main objectives in this study, namely:

1. To analyse the social phenomenon via philosophical tools; and

2. To derive the social impact of KPOP upon Malaysian youths with the help of concepts in philosophy.

Methods

In implementing and conducting the research using this instrument, several methods were used as research instruments:

a) Survey

In obtaining the study data, the survey method was used for this purpose. In this method, a questionnaire was distributed randomly to 100 youths/undergraduates at National University of Malaysia (UKM), having 62 female respondents and 38 male respondents. UKM students were selected because it consists of students from different races, cultures, ethnicities, and are from different parts in Malaysia, which could become a good sample for the youth community in Malaysia. This method was designed to enable them to answer the questions provided by the researcher and ensure that the questions could be answered voluntarily by the respondents without any influence from other parties. To construct the items of the survey, an online form was prepared through Google Form.

All eight items about K-pop are in the form of multiple-choice questions, where respondents will select the options displayed on the questionnaire. According to the researchers this method has its advantages and one of them is that the questionnaires can be sent online to many respondents simultaneously. This attracts youths to participate because it is easily accessible by them. The researchers can evaluate and consider the opinions of the respondents to be generalized as data or research findings.

b) Library Research (Secondary Source)

During the conduct of this study, researchers have used sources from printed materials as well as electronic material such as books and secondary sources from the internet. A lot of information from books that is related to the research has been reviewed as input material to complete this study. For this purpose, we have obtained printed reference sources such as reference books and past studies in several online libraries, such as the UKM Main Library. We have used access as UKM students to make optimal use of the facilities offered by this library to borrow and use reference materials by other researchers. In addition, papers and journal articles from universities and other institutions can also be accessed through the Google Scholar website.

Results and Discussion

From the questionnaire on Malaysian youths, it is clear that *Hallyu's* influence is so prominent that it has succeeded in being absorbed into the lives of Malaysian youths in particular and Asian in general. Therefore, the results of the questionnaire will be presented according to the four major themes in philosophy according to this order: axiology, epistemology, logic, and metaphysics.

Axiology

The study of axiology is primarily concerned with principles and values. Ethics and aesthetics are the two types of values. Ethics is a term that refers to the study of morals and personal values. The study of what is appealing, delightful, or pleasing to the eye is known as aesthetics. Education, according to axiology, comprises not just gaining knowledge but also improving one's quality of life (Lynch, 2021). There are numerous factors that may help people improve their quality of life. One of the key factors is religious education. Most studies have shown that religious involvement and spirituality are associated with better health outcomes, including greater longevity, coping skills, and health-related quality of life (even during terminal illness) and less anxiety, depression, and suicide (Roberts, 2019). In Malaysia, children were taught the fundamentals of religion from an early age. Even though there are various religions that are practiced in Malaysia such as Islam, Hinduism, Christianity, Buddhism, traditional Chinese religions etc., the purpose of all religions is the same which is to improve the quality of life of its followers. Under the concept of axiology, we are going to analyze how the acceptance of K-pop among youths is related to the value of ethics and aesthetics by referring to the practices of religions in Malaysia.

The first question asked to the respondents is regarding the respondents' favourite group(s) as shown in figure 1. There are four male groups which consist of BTS, NCT, EXO, and Seventeen, and three female groups which are Twice, Blackpink and Mamamoo. The reason for this is because these groups are among the best artist groups listed in the current music industry charts. Based on the result, we found out that Blackpink was the most favoured group among the respondents with 44 votes, followed by BTS with 42 votes and there were 39 respondents who chose "Others".

Mikolla (2019) describes that "social identity" can refer to either a group-based or an individual occurrence, thus it is important to distinguish between the two. The author

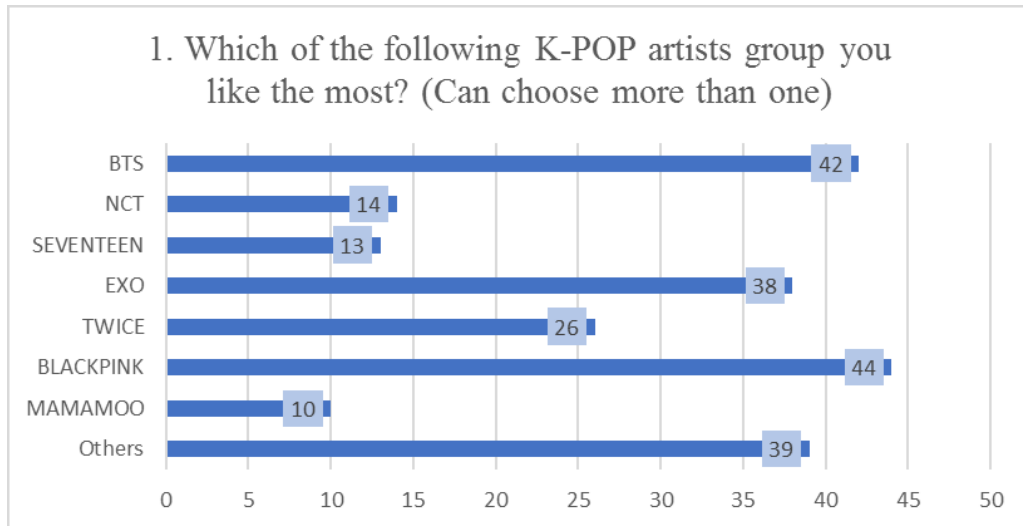


Figure 1: Item 1 (Identity)

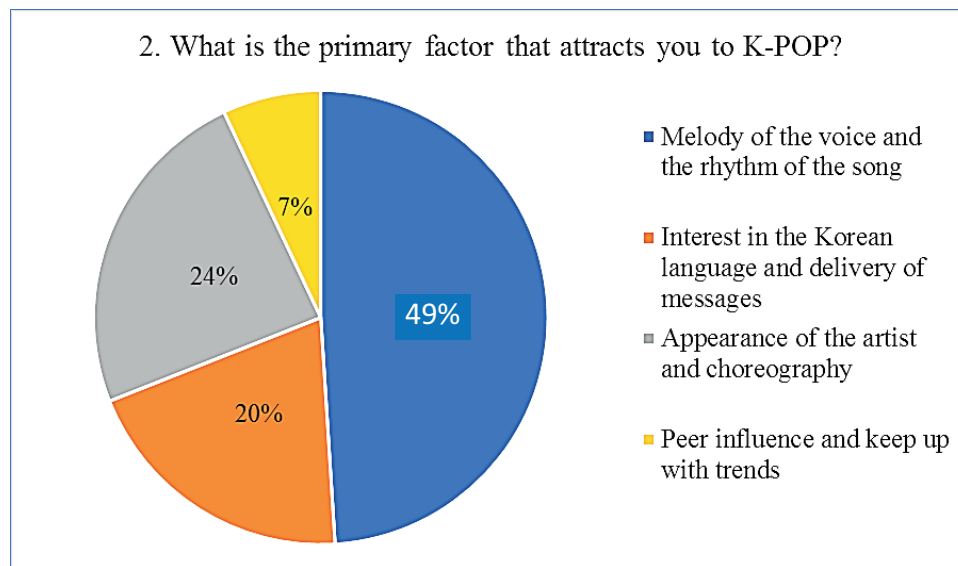


Figure 2: Item 2 (Aesthetics)

added that social identifications and identity formation can occur by different modes, which are voluntary or ascriptive. However, it is also important to note that there is a distinction between a qualitative identity and numerical identity (Noonan & Curtis, 2004).

K-pop is known for their catchy songs and their signature dance moves which attract people's attention, but what differentiates K-pop from other countries' music industry is their greater emphasis on the appearance of artists. This has established an identity among K-pop artists-an artist who has attractive visuals with talent either in singing, dancing, or both. The fans of the groups are also one of the prominent reasons why K-pop has been recognized in other parts of the world. The gathering of people with the same interests and even identifying themselves

as one, for example, people identifying themselves as a fandom for a K-pop group such as ARMY (BTS), BLINK (Blackpink), and ONCE (Twice).

The result of the survey in figure 2 shows that 49 respondents chose that they are attracted to K-pop because of the melody and the rhythm of the songs, 24 people had chosen the appearance of the artist and their choreography, 20 had interest in the Korean language and the message delivered in the songs, and seven respondents had chosen that they were attracted to K-pop because of peer influence and to keep up with the trends.

The findings relate with aesthetics, a branch of philosophy that concerns the nature of beauty and taste. Aesthetics is a larger concept than art philosophy. It is

also broader than the concept of beauty in that it encompasses any of the good or the negative reactions that works of art or entertainment elicit. Judgments of aesthetics value are based on our ability to differentiate on a sensory level, but they typically go beyond that. Even philosophers such as Huhn, Mohan, and Kant, concentrate on the euphemism of dramatic discourses in order to develop artistic and theatrical expression, denoting aesthetics as the core of this concept (Kurraz, 2020). For example, according to Kant (2005), when pleasure emerges from sensation, it is called enjoyment, but rating something beautiful involves a third requirement: sensation must give rise to pleasure through reflective analysis. Judgments of beauty are visceral, emotional, and intellectual all at the same time.

According to the survey, 49 respondents chose that they are attracted to K-pop because of the melody and the rhythm of the songs, 24 people had chosen the appearance of the artist and their choreography, 20 had interest in the Korean language and the message delivered in the songs, and seven respondents had chosen that they are attracted to K-pop because of peer influence and to keep up with the trends. We can see that the majority of the respondents were attracted to K-pop due to its outward displays such as appearance and beauty. In Malaysia, caring for one's physical body is emphasized in many religions, for instance, Islam and Christianity. In order to maintain a good physical body, many religions are actually encouraging their followers to take better care of their bodies by practicing exercise activities, prioritizing meditation, and not partaking in activities that have negative consequences on the body.

On the other hand, 27% of the respondents are particularly interested in abstract concepts such as peer pressure as well as semantic values of the Korean language and song lyrics. One of the principles that were highlighted in every religion is to respect other cultural and

spiritual beliefs. Even though there are differences in people's faiths and traditions, let people talk about their faiths the way they understand them, and accept that we are not experts on their traditions. The findings also relate with materialism. Materialism, in the way of thinking, is the view that all realities including realities about the human brain and will, and the course of mankind's set of history are causally reliant upon physical cycles, or even reducible to them (Smart, 1999).

According to figure 3, 75% of respondents agreed that K-POP songs convey a message of happiness, fun, and serenity. As a kind of entertainment, K-pop songs are frequently used to relieve stress or increase performance because they are able to deliver such meaningful messages to the listeners. Happiness, fun, and serenity are considered to be the fundamental components in improving one's quality of life. Religion is indeed a route to true happiness. Psalm 37:4 reads, "Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart." And Psalm 126:2 says, "Our mouths were filled with laughter, our tongues with songs of joy." Based on the two verses stated, the Bible basically tells us to be happy and each person deserves that. Commands such as "rejoice," "be of good cheer," "do not be afraid," "give thanks" – are all different ways of God telling us to be happy (Kirby, 2018).

However, another ethical component includes the theme of hedonism. Hedonism is a way of thinking that believes that the best and most desirable thing in human life is to maximize pleasure. The term hedonism is a combination of two words, *hedone* and *ism*. *Hedone*, the first word, is a Greek word that means pleasure or enjoyment. The second term, *ism*, is defined as a suffix to indicate belief, political or religious movement, attitude, and action, according to the Dictionary of the House. There are three major versions of hedonism: axiological hedonism, in which pleasure is the only thing of intrinsic value; psychological hedonism, where every purposeful act is ultimately motivated by a desire for pleasure; and ethical hedonism, in which the moral rightness of an act is determined by the pleasure it generates (Tilley, 2012). Hedonism is divided into two categories based on psychology and ethics, respectively. In this context, it encompasses the latter category. Ethical hedonism is the belief that humans should engage in activities that provide them the most pleasure and happiness.

The relationship between the two, (pleasure) and (happiness) is that happiness is desirable for the purpose of particular pleasures, whereas particular pleasures are desirable for their own sake. The fact that we are inherently drawn to pleasure from earliest youth, and that

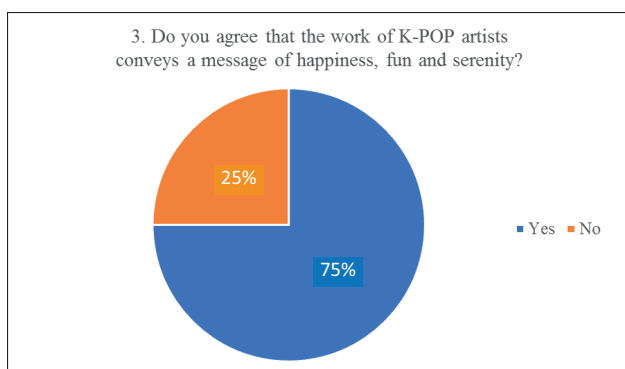


Figure 3: Item 3 (Ethics)

once we get it, we will seek nothing else, proves that pleasure is the end. Even if the action is irregular, the resulting pleasure is desirable and good in and of itself (Moen, 2015). This doctrine came to be known as universal ethical hedonism. Ethical hedonism argues that human beings should act to achieve happiness and avoid misery. For instance, in the context of K-POP, 75% of the youth conclude that K-POP songs carry a message of happiness, fun, and serenity which means they are inclined to pick what gives maximum of both of these terms, therefore justifying the premise of ethical hedonism.

Epistemology

According to figure 4, respondents were asked if they had benefited from K-POP artists' masterpieces. The option that received the most votes from the respondents was language, with 73 people saying that the song had helped them enhance their language skills. The respondents' knowledge of Korean has improved as a result of the work of K-POP artists who use their own language, namely Korean. 59 respondents said they could learn something about art from the works. This is because music is one of the ways in which the Korean entertainment business expresses art and originality to its audience. Listeners can admire K-POP singers' lyric writing and song composition, and then learn about the artistic characteristics that have been demonstrated or performed. In addition, 56 people said that the work of K-POP artists helps them develop

their personalities, particularly their confidence. This is difficult to deny because certain songs are developed with constructive lyrics and positive messages to instil confidence in listeners, thus assisting in the development of a positive personality. The lyric of the song 'Start' by Gaho, which emphasizes the attitude to keep moving forward, exemplifies this. Documentaries on K-POP artists or groups also foster a lot of good characters in the audience since they lay a lot of focus on virtues like craftsmanship, courage, and cooperation in order to obtain a spot in the Korean entertainment industry, which is not simple to attain.

A total of 55 respondents said they were able to learn about Korean culture through the work of K-POP artists. This is because many K-POP artists or groups incorporate Korean culture in their work. This can be seen in their song creation, for example the Idol song from the group BTS which incorporates traditional Korean musical instruments in their song production. Not only that, but in music videos, dramas, and live performances, K-POP artists wear a lot of 'hanbok', a traditional Korean clothing. This is a good way to introduce Korean culture to people outside of Korea. A total of 29 respondents chose other aspects, indicating that the work of K-POP artists provides them with other benefits.

From these responses, a relationship between epistemological philosophy and the above diagram can be derived because it is a posteriori knowledge based on empirical

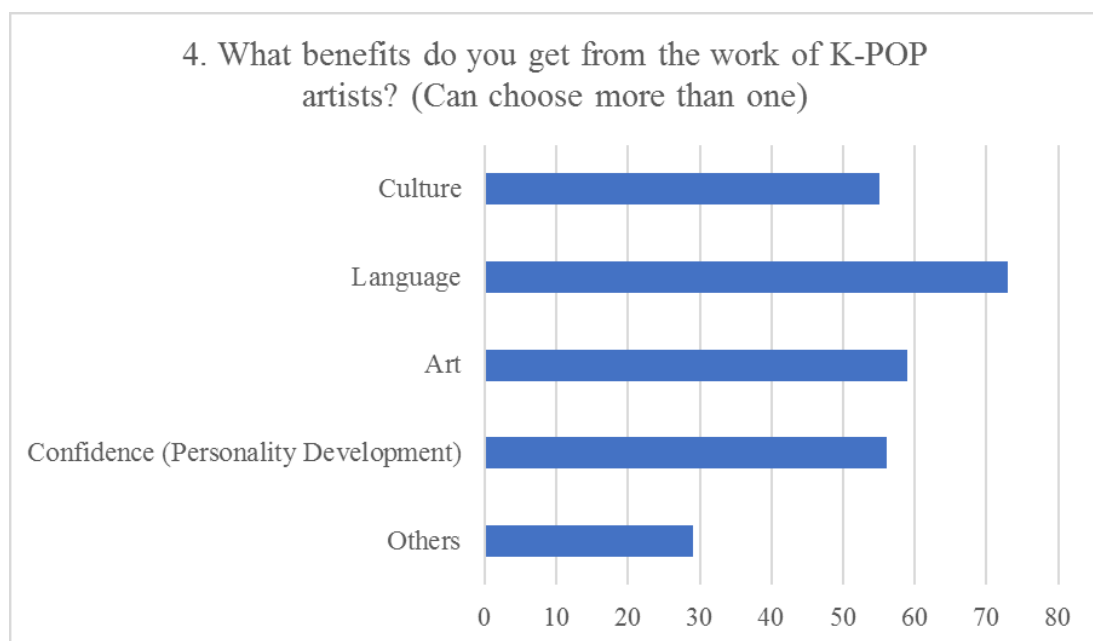


Figure 4: Item 4 (Theory of Knowledge, TOK)

findings. *A posteriori* is a term first used by Immanuel Kant and it means “from below” or “bottom-up”. It is a form of argument based on personal experience. It derives conclusions based on actual facts (information from the five senses). Synthetic knowledge is what Kant calls the knowledge gained from this type of argument; it is knowledge of the world, not just a better comprehension of what the premises in the argument mean (Hanna, 2018). A *posteriori* knowledge is information that is not based on empirical evidence and is instead dependent on logic. This differs from *a priori* knowledge, which is gained from empirical experience. *A priori* starts with objective thought, progresses to reasoning, and goes on to conjecture. *A priori* calculations cannot guarantee the result; they can only guarantee that it can be predicted with a reasonable degree of certainty (Boggs, 2008). Hence, using the concept of a *posteriori*, respondents made choices based on their respective experiences in K-POP masterpiece, where the experience they gained from watching and learning from K-POP, is then used to derive their conclusion on culture, language, art, confidence and so on. In the study of epistemic philosophy, the distinction between these two concepts is very essential. Both of these concepts can be associated with empiricism and rationalism where the view that emphasizes the importance of a *posteriori* knowledge is the practitioner of empirical thinking while the view that emphasizes the importance of a *priori* knowledge is the practitioner of rationalist thinking (Longworth, 2021).

Logic

This part asked respondents for their reaction when someone criticizes K-pop artists and their songs because they are not giving any benefits to their supporters. Based on the responses given in figure 5, there are some fallacies perceived and recognized. Fallacies are common logical flaws that will invalidate your argument's logic.

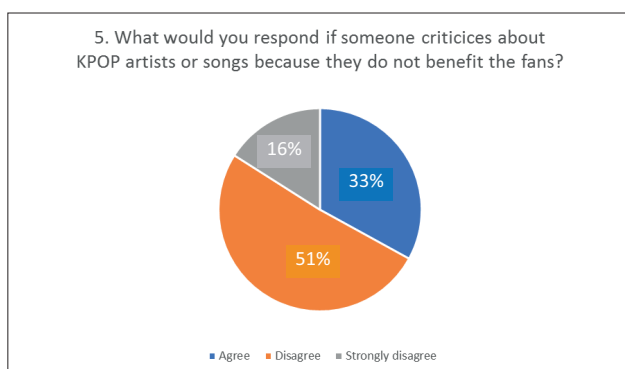


Figure 5: Item 5 (Logical Fallacy)

Fallacies might be invalid arguments or irrelevant points, and they are easily recognizable because they do not have any proof to back up their claims.

The logical element discovered based on the questionnaire shows that the majority of respondents chose to disagree, which accounts for 51% of all respondents, and strongly disagree, which accounts for 16% of all respondents. This is comparable to the public's poor impression of KPOP, which frequently draws judgments without knowing the facts. This is a fallacy known as “hasty generalization”.

“Hasty” refers to someone who is in a hurry. A “generalization” is a broad judgment or concept about anything. As a result, “Hasty Generalization” has a very straightforward and concise meaning: it refers to the act of drawing broad generalizations about something in a hurry and without relying on substantial data. Internet users also known as netizens, especially adolescents, frequently have this misconception due to a lack of information about something. With the questionnaire in hand, however, this fallacy can be disproved because it is evident that the respondents are competent and comprehend the subject at hand.

In the year 2020, the world was stunned by the condemnation of Shin Ji-Min, the leader of the AOA (Ace of Angels) group, because he was found to be bullying his group members. Netizens, primarily made up of teenagers who did not know the whole thing, then discovered that it was a sham. The victim of bullying herself then testified and elucidated the problem to the public (Chin, 2020).

The aforementioned issue demonstrates that today's youth only make conclusions by following their instincts and make no reference to anything else. This is dangerous since it can lead any individual to believe something that is not true. If this trend continues, future generations will be conditioned to do the same. So, it is best to grasp the issue rather than relying solely on rumors whose veracity is debatable before reaching a firm conclusion.

The next fallacy discovered through study and research is “appeal to emotion,” which is a conclusion reached by the manipulation of a person's emotions. Many emotional appeals are deceptive, as they conceal a full surrender of logic behind the guise of a direct appeal to emotion. Where there is argument, however, what can be erroneous in emotional appeals is that the premise that appeals to emotion turns out to be, in some important ways, irrelevant to the conclusion to be argued for (Walton,

1984). For example, respondents may react honestly and according to their feelings to the questions, so the questionnaire cannot be utilized as the sole source of information about KPOP's influence on Malaysian youth.

Plus, in music videos, live performances, major events, and even the airport look, anything these KPOP artists do becomes a trend, whether a new hairstyle, make-up, or clothing. It is not surprising that the most popular K-pop's performers are also the faces of internationally known luxury fashion labels, given their extensive influence (Thailand, 2021). Then, because of this fallacy, today's Malaysian adolescents are so influenced by the cultures presented by KPOP groups and artists that they forget about proper religious beliefs. For example, it is one of the current fashion trends to dress like KPOP artists because there is no question that their style is very much in tune with the interests of today's youth. However, the question that emerges is whether or not all of the fashions presented by KPOP artists should be emulated by Malaysian youth. Because Malaysia is a Muslim-majority country, this is not the case. As a result, Malaysian society must respect and assess the fashion that can be followed and cannot think solely on the basis of feelings.

Furthermore, the "appeal to tradition" fallacy is constantly present in the influence of KPOP, which provides the sense that a person must follow a tradition that has long existed, regardless of its positive or bad effects (Harpine, 2013). For example, in the context of KPOP's effect, if a KPOP group fandom organization holds an event that can distort the members' beliefs or beliefs simply because it is a common tradition created by the organization, it can distort the members' beliefs or beliefs. This is a delicate issue for all Malaysians, and it has drawn criticism from a variety of perspectives. So far, this fallacy has had a negative impact on society, and the culture that has been absorbed and displayed has been very unpleasant.

There are many different KPOP cultures to follow because it is indisputable that the KPOP industry now impresses a wide range of people, as KPOP was formerly solely known in Asia and has now extended its wings all over the world. The strong work ethic demonstrated by the "trainees" prior to their first appearance (debut) should serve as a model for the youth.

Metaphysics

In the question related to the Influence of K-pop, respondents were asked about the ability of K-pop artists of

influencing the behavior and personality of a youth. By referring to figure 6, up to 75% of respondents have agreed with that statement. They believed that the lives of K-pop stars displayed in the media are able to affect the youth's attitude in their everyday life. The idea of influencing a person's personality and behavior can be discussed philosophically within the concept of determinism. Determinism is the philosophical belief that every occurrence or state of affairs, including human decisions and actions, is unavoidable and totally determined by prior causes (Doyle, 2021). Determinism is commonly thought to deny free will since it implies that humans are unable to act differently than they do. Their attitude and behavior is affected by the events that led to it.

Going back to the survey, the majority of respondents believed that the events or phenomena brought about by the K-POP artists could be the causes of influencing the youth's willingness to act, namely hard determinism. Hard determinism regards free will as a figment of the imagination, believing that everything happens for a reason (McLeod, 2019). For example, each K-POP event they have attended or watched has the potential to change their thoughts and ways of thinking, thereby influencing their behavior and personality. In justifying this claim, we know that changes in brain chemistry can affect a person's behavior; otherwise, neither alcohol nor anti-psychotics would work. In terms of brain structure, the same can be said: Cases of regular people turning into murderers or pedophiles after having a brain tumor highlight how dependent we are on our grey matter's physical qualities (Cave, 2016).

However, out of 100 respondents, 25% of respondents disagreed with the potential of K-POP artists to influence a youth's behavior and personality due to certain factors. They claimed that essentially each person can act on their own free will although it is restricted to some factors. Opposite from hard determinism, these respondents are

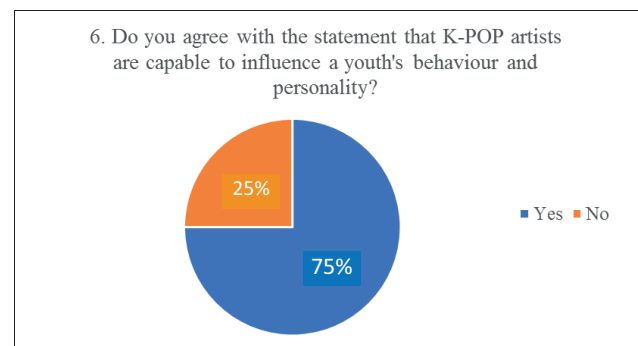


Figure 6: Item 6 (Determinism)

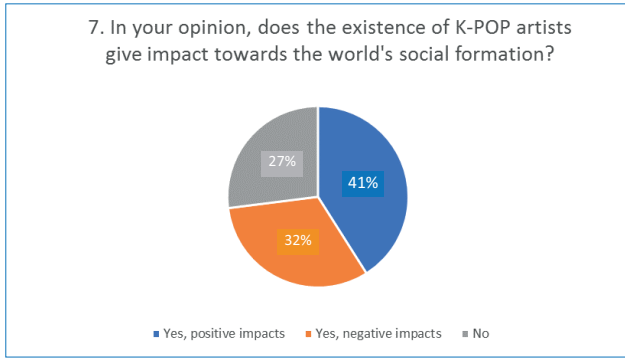


Figure 7: Item 7 (Nihilism)

considered to believe in soft determinism. Soft determinism represents a middle ground in which people do have choice, but it is restricted by external (parental influence and media) or internal (biological perspective and personality traits) circumstances. Back in the survey, the remaining respondents oppose that K-POP artists have the ability to influence the behavior and personality of the youth, which is free will. They may believe that everybody has some control over how they act, and this indicates that they are free to choose their own behavior and personality.

The reality about K-pop also discusses the impact that K-pop performers have on society at large. In the first question related to the reality of K-pop, respondents were asked whether the existence of K-pop performers had an impact on the social formation of the global community. They were also asked to justify their answers in addition to the question. Philosophically, this question was covered under the concept of metaphysical nihilism. Nihilism, according to the Oxford Dictionary, is the rejection of all religious and moral principles, in the belief that life is meaningless. It is frequently seen as a derogatory term for a life-denying, destructive philosophy that could be one of the most depressing (Veit, 2018) philosophies. It is typically associated with pessimism and an extreme skepticism that rejects existence. A true nihilist would believe in nothing, have no allegiances, and serve no purpose other than to destroy. According to the study's findings in figure 7, 41% of respondents believe that the existence of K-pop performers can have a positive impact on the world community's social formation. The justifications mainly serve to accept the principles of life and how the existence of K-pop can play a role in creating a meaningful life for the global community. One of the reasons stated by the respondents in response to the question is fostering the spirit to learn a new foreign language, hence increasing knowledge and value of life. Positive principles can also be taken when K-pop artists strive hard to improve their lives and the lives of their family members.

Conversely, 32% of respondents answered that the existence of K-pop performers had a significant detrimental impact on the world community's social structure. They believed that there were no moral principles or values in the existence of K-pop rather a negative impact, thus there is no way that the order or social system as well as religious principles of the global community can be established as an impact that K-pop can bring upon the society. Conclusively, the respondents claimed that monitoring the development of K-pop was a big waste of time. For example, the norms of K-pop artists are mostly said to be one of the negative impacts on youth. Amongst 32% of the respondents, most of them highlighted the inappropriate clothing and the habit of changing hair color to be flashy and too striking. We can infer from the survey that respondents of this group reject the concept of moral nihilism, which states that there is no actual morality existing in the universe. These people believe that moral principles and truths actually exist intrinsic to the universe and despite the fact that existence has no meaning, and the universe has no purpose, man nonetheless seeks meaning, value, and purpose.

Meanwhile, a total of 27 respondents stated that the existence of K-pop artists does not have any impact on the social formation of the world community. K-pop, according to the average respondent, is merely entertainment that fills free time. Human personality is entirely self-contained and unaffected by K-pop influences. In philosophy, this is related to moral nihilism, where no true morality exists in this world. Moral nihilism, also known as ethical nihilism, denies the existence of absolute moral or ethical principles. Instead, good and evil are ambiguous, and beliefs that address them are the result of social and emotional influences (Pratt, 2021). The existence of K-pop may be seen in the notion of idealism when the questions presented emphasize the importance of mind, soul, and spirituality in influencing one's social formation. As a result, the question of how the existence of K-pop may be measured through the influence of the global community arose. After conducting the study, it became evident that, because the theory of idealism emphasizes the value of reason and ideas, the main focus in social formation should be on mind training, spiritual nourishment, and mastering concepts in any field.

Respondents were given the chance to answer a question concerning K-pop artists' ability to lead the establishment of a worldwide community more positively in the future as shown in figure 8. This is the continuation from the previous question concerning metaphysics to describe the reality of K-pop. Based on their previous experiences, the majority of respondents believe that K-pop artists

8. Are you enthusiastic about KPOP artists' ability to influence the establishment of a more positive global community?

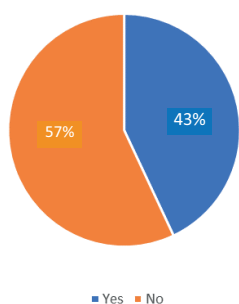


Figure 8: Item 8 (Possibility and Necessity)

may positively help shape society. Many parties have opened their hearts to embrace their presence because of the positive qualities demonstrated by most K-pop artists, such as donating a large sum of money to the community affected by disasters, like the Covid-19 pandemic.

When talking about something ahead which has not happened yet, humans use their prediction skills to estimate the results. There are many ways people can use that can affect their way of predicting and estimating future events. This is beyond any human knowledge because it has not happened yet and what humans can do is just to predict using their senses, but can we increase the possibility of an event to come true in the future. Yes, we can do so by using these two ways which are the "Pattern Theory" and also "Possibilities and Necessities".

Humans are pattern recognizers by nature. We use patterns to deduce meaning without having to perform a more extensive investigation, whether we were sensing danger in a tell-tale rustle of the bushes in primitive times or skimming a page of letters and figures now. Therefore, humans also increase the possibility of prediction by using patterns. A concept which can relate to this is *a posteriori* which tells us how people make a pattern before predicting it only by using their past experiences. As Aristotle pointed out, though, this way of thinking places us in a bind. If everything has a cause, then those causes must have causes of their own, leading to an infinite loop (Satell, 2015). In relation to KPOP and the questionnaire, news and media nowadays are producing lots and lots of good things done by a lot of Korean artists. For example, in a newly hit Korean drama "Squid Game", they successfully give the viewers a lot of positive insights such as that intelligence wins over power, money cannot buy happiness, and many more (Gupta, 2021). Based on this, people will predict that Korean entertainment will continue to produce songs, dramas, and movies of better

quality for the viewers. The other 57% on the other hand are positive that KPOP will lead society to negative moral impacts in Malaysian society. This is because violence and inappropriate dresses are promoted in most of the music videos. Imagine if young teenagers are used to violence and inappropriate dressing, they will surely continue to do whatever they feel they want to do without thinking about restrictions that they have to follow, such as parents' orders or their religion. The music that has been named "Gangnam Style" number two was prohibited for reasons, despite being acclaimed for its addictive tune and viral dance. The artist is shown kicking a traffic cone and then laughing into the camera in a moment near the beginning of the song video which is destruction of public property. According to KBS, the music video was deemed unacceptable for public broadcast to the general public as a result of this action. Furthermore, the music video of a song called "Bae Bae" produced by a well-known KPOP group which is "Big Bang" is banned by KBS as well because of the inappropriate sexual action in the music video, which became an issue to be produced and shown worldwide (Koreaboo, 2019).

Next is the concept "Possibilities and Necessities" which is one of the fundamentals in metaphysics. The basis of this concept discusses modality or modal reasoning which is central to human cognition because it is prevalent in both philosophy and everyday life. It entails looking into and assessing claims about what is possible, impossible, necessary, and contingent. Some things could have been different from what they are now, while others could not. Some things could have been truer than others (Mallozzi et al., 2021).

Hence, when referring to causality, this phenomenon falls under metaphysical possibilities and necessities. In this case it is the ability of KPOP to shape up a better community socially in the future. This is a metaphysical possibility because there is no certain answer to this (Rusavuk, 2018). This explains the result of the questionnaire which is relatively equal compared to others. Due to different predictability estimators between each respondent when discussing the future, they sometimes rely on instinct or natural feeling rather than logic. Therefore, as certain as a person can be, ambiguity persists and this relates to the metaphysical perspective regarding the prospect of K-pop in the global community.

Further Analysis on Metaphysics (Social Impact)

Based on figures 6, 7, and 8, an average of 68% of the respondents agreed that K-pop does influence society,

especially in issues such as behavior and personality of the youth, social formation, and establishment of a positive global community. In explaining the K-pop influence on behavior and personality, Korean culture has become very popular in Malaysia and one of the reasons for it is because of K-pop idols. Fans of K-pop idols will likely follow the fashion and lifestyle of their artists, which includes their interests, hobbies, food, beauty, and many more. As the number of K-pop fans is becoming immensely large in Malaysia, this has set Korean culture as the trend which intrigues others to try it, too. In addition, people fear missing out on current trends, so most people will keep up to avoid becoming obsolete in today's society. A person is a social being who worries about how others think and act plus its affects (Abel et al., 2016).

The emergence of Korean culture could benefit the community in Malaysia, putting forth more cultures to be learned and embraced. Diverse cultural representations in a nation could open up the society's minds to become more tolerant and more accepting, which allows them to realize the differences of people living in different parts of the world. The community in Malaysia could value and respect other cultures, which could prevent racial tensions. However, the uprising of Korean culture could also backfire on Malaysian cultures. Fans who are overly obsessed with K-pop idols may forget their own culture and moral lessons. Some fans are willing to wear revealing clothes because they are influenced by those worn by K-pop artists. The issue is that those fans are Malays who are Muslims in which Islam prohibits conspicuous outfits. K-pop has also highlighted the importance of visuals through their presence and performance, increasing demands on cosmetic surgery in Malaysia, which conflicts with the beliefs of the Muslim community in Malaysia. Another issue that once provoked the Muslims in Malaysia is the candlelight vigil for Kim Jong-Hyun, a member of the Korean boy band, SHINee in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, which some Muslim fans joined. Joining a candlelight vigil is not permissible in Islam. All of the arguments above are directly related to the issues of determinism towards the youth in Malaysia. Influenced by their obsession over their idols or the idols' visuals, the individuals were willing to disregard their own culture and beliefs to imitate their idols.

Moreover, in the aspect of nihilism, the social impact is that people, especially the youth, cannot deny the existence of K-pop. This is because the concept of nihilism was stated as "the fact that we can't really make sense of reality as a whole doesn't mean we cannot make sense of things inside it; for example, the reason for my existence remains that my parents met," (Tartaglia, 2016).

Therefore, it implies that K-pop does exist and also brings morals towards the society as a whole, because it is inter-related from one to another. Good and bad moral influences both exist in this matter, corresponding with Figure 7. Positively, Malaysian youth are more eager to learn the Korean language so that they can understand the meaning of each sentence they hear or see from Korean songs, movies, dramas, and writings. Negatively, K-pop can cause laziness in the youth because watching their movies and miniseries can be addicting and thus leading people to lessen their study time and prefer to use that time to watch movies.

Next, regarding possibilities and necessities, K-pop has impacted the Malaysian youth in integrating some of Korean tradition into Malaysian culture. For example, Korean foods such as Kimchi (fermented vegetables) and Bulgogi (marinated beef barbecue) are now famous and becoming food-to-go in most Malaysian societies. Meanwhile, according to *a posteriori* judgment – knowledge from past experience- parental care can be the root of social impact of K-pop for the Malay youth, to have their trust in K-pop artists when they do good things, thereby making them role models, because these youth are being taught by their parents to admire good people since they were young.

In conclusion, the social impact of K-pop towards the youth in Malaysia is directly related to the three philosophical items which are determinism, nihilism, and possibilities-necessities. Essentially, each of these concepts plays an important role in establishing a link between one to the other to discuss this social phenomenon.

Limitation

This study was able to gain the opinions of 100 Malaysian youths on K-pop and henceforth analyzed from a philosophical viewpoint. This research could give an overview of the youths' view of K-pop. From their opinions, issues such as the influence of K-pop among the youth, the impact of K-pop and its artists, and the relationship between the hedonism principles of K-pop with the youth are obtained. The collapse of the youths' own culture and identity in maintaining respective customs and religious beliefs could be related to the rising influence of K-pop in Malaysia. In addition, the study presents philosophical aspects such as axiology, epistemology, logic, and metaphysics in regards to increasing the popularity of K-pop in Malaysia. The relevance of the philosophical aspects to this research is to provide exposure and a deeper understanding of philosophy. Based on the study, axiology is

associated with the youths' interest towards K-pop in the context of aesthetics and hedonism principle in ethics. Epistemology discusses the benefits of the emergence of K-pop. Metaphysics elaborates on the influence of K-pop and the reality of K-pop, which raises questions about the impact of K-pop existence. Logic discusses the fallacies found in the negative responses towards K-pop.

However, further research on this topic can be solidified with a greater number of respondents. Besides that, researchers can also primarily conduct research on each of the four major concepts in philosophy related to K-pop. The endeavors can contribute to literature in this cross-disciplinary study between the contemporary media studies and the classical discipline: philosophy.

Conclusion

The expanding influence of K-POP can be witnessed not just in Malaysia, but also around the world. Based on the responses of the youth in UKM, the results reveal that this topic can be linked to four branches of philosophy – axiology, epistemology, logic, and metaphysics. The respondents' choice of K-POP artist groups relates to social philosophy regarding identity formation. The K-pop appeal factor revealed the aesthetic subset of axiology, whereas respondents' agreement that hedonism exists in K-POP artists' work reflects an ethical subset. In terms of epistemology, the survey depicts the reality of a posteriori knowledge, in which respondents express their opinions about the benefits received from KPOP's work based on their own experiences. The perspectives of respondents on criticism of K-POP artists or songs might reveal the fallacies that occur regarding specific circumstances. This topic is linked to logic that examines the truth and validity of a conclusion based on a given premise. As a result of the respondents' selections regarding the effect of K-pop and the actuality of K-pop, metaphysics can be related. The section on K-POP influence assesses the impact of K-pop on UKM's youth and considers if K-POP artists may be used as role models. This part also explores the respondents' perspectives on the impact of K-POP artists' existence on the worldwide community, as well as their ability to contribute to the construction of a more positive global society.

K-pop has become a tremendous phenomenon for human development, igniting both favorable and adverse consequences of its existence. Contrary to the views of some scholars, philosophy can be the platform to discuss contemporary issues in order to provide insight regarding the paradigm of human thought struggling with hedonistic entertainment of today.

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