

K-Pop Culture and Its Influence on Student Lifestyles: A Socio-Cultural Analysis and Islamic Perspective at UTHM Pagoh

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ABSTRACT

K-Pop is a genre of popular music originating from South Korea that encompasses various cultural elements including music, drama, film, food, and fashion. The influence of K-Pop culture has spread widely to Malaysia and has significantly impacted the lifestyle and behaviour of university students particularly in areas such as language interest, fashion preferences, dietary habits, and excessive spending to support their idols. These changes are evident in students' beauty standards, dressing styles and food choices. This study aims to identify the influence of K-Pop culture on the lifestyle of students at Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia (UTHM) in Pagoh. A quantitative research method was employed using descriptive and regression analysis involving a total of 252 UTHM Pagoh students. Data were collected through a questionnaire distributed via Google Forms. The findings reveal that the level of K-Pop cultural influence among students is high, with an overall mean score of 3.80. Regression analysis indicates that K-Pop culture has a significant impact on students' lifestyle, with a p-value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$), a t-value of 17.172 (exceeding the t-table value of 2.831) and an influence contribution of 54.1%. This study demonstrates that K-Pop culture has become an integral part of students' daily lives and significantly shapes their lifestyle in various aspects.

Keywords: Lifestyle, Korean Pop (K-Pop), UTHM, Pagoh, Malaysia

INTRODUCTION

In today's era, the rapid development of the internet and the growth of social media have made it easier for society to access various information from around the world without the need to travel abroad (Fitri Kala, 2022). Along with advancements in digital devices online platforms such as YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok have become highly popular and subsequently exploited by the South Korean entertainment industry through the creation of YouTube channels and the global distribution of music (Ida Ri'arni et al., 2019). The advancement of information technology has led to a more open environment, reducing national boundaries and

allowing foreign cultures to be easily absorbed into our society. According to *Kamus Dewan Edisi Keempat* (2007), "*influence*" refers to the ability or power of a person, object, or event to shape individual or group perspectives, behaviour and decisions. Meanwhile, "*culture*" refers to the civilisation of a society inherited from one generation to the next formed through complex elements such as customs, language, art, religion and political systems. K-Pop, a popular music genre originating from South Korea is part of this cultural export and includes music, dramas, films, food, and fashion (Depi Mawatdah, 2022). Lifestyle is defined as the way an individual lives based on how they spend their time what they value in their surroundings and how they perceive themselves and their environment. *Hallyu*, or the Korean Wave refers to the global spread of South Korean culture. Although this phenomenon began in the 1980s, its influence had yet to reach Malaysia (Norhasimah Jalaluddin & Zaharani, 2019). By 2007–2008, K-Pop expanded its empire through the export of dramas and music with early examples including the drama *Winter Sonata* and second-generation idol groups such as Super Junior and Wonder Girls. With internet growth Hallyu rapidly gained traction in Malaysia and was introduced to the general public.

This influence is evident in the case of a teenage girl who developed Celebrity Worship Syndrome (CWS) due to her obsession with K-Pop. The teenager admitted to spending over RM10,000 on CDs, posters, magazines, photo books, calendars, socks, pens, mugs, clothing, and concert tickets as well as dedicating at least eight hours daily to listening to music and watching Korean dramas. As a result, she suffered from depression and was unable to perform daily activities (Rahim, 2016). In another case, a teenager uploaded a post criticising his sister's extreme obsession with BTS. According to the post she was so fanatical that she even tried non-halal food simply because BTS had eaten it (Ismail, 2019). These cases clearly demonstrate the real impact of Korean culture on society particularly university students. Students' obsession with K-Pop has led to financial waste as K-Pop concerts are highly anticipated events with expensive tickets and additional costs such as travel and accommodation. Furthermore, there is a loss of local culture. When students prioritise K-Pop culture excessively they may neglect or forget traditional music, dances and language, resulting in the erosion of cultural identity, heritage, and values. Students who imitate the appearance of K-Pop idols are usually driven by a desire to try something new. Inspired by their idols, they tend to mimic lifestyles and appearances such as wearing revealing clothing or dyeing their hair in various colours. Peer pressure also plays a role students may blindly follow their peers to avoid being excluded such as by owning branded merchandise.

The influence of Korean culture has become increasingly evident in various aspects such as dramas, songs, films, music and dance, language and slang, food, and television programs. Beyond this, in more abstract dimensions like norms, values, traditions, beliefs and implicit meanings K-Pop culture also indirectly influences students (Depi Mawatdah, 2022). Popular K-Pop cultural elements among students include fashion, makeup styles, hairstyles, and dressing inspired by Korean trends. Korean dramas and films introduce language and slang into Malaysian society. The soft and romantic tone of the Korean language attracts students to learn it. Innovative music and dance styles have also gained strong appeal among Malaysian fans. Fanaticism has grown as a result of K-Pop influence with fans spending large sums to support their idols such as renting food trucks with their idols' images to enhance their public image. Korean entertainment programs have also promoted Korean cuisine in Malaysia prompting fans to try these foods. Consequently, various Korean food products have been imported into Malaysia. South Korea's advanced cosmetic surgery industry is also internationally renowned. The success of Korean celebrities in cosmetic procedures has inspired fans interested in enhancing their appearance. These aspects of K-Pop culture have influenced some UTHM students particularly in their lifestyle. For example, students are more focused on beauty and fashion trends. Many express a strong interest in learning Korean to communicate directly with others. They are so devoted to their idols that they are willing to spend large amounts of personal savings to support their success. Their eating habits have also changed as they are drawn to Korean food trends such as *ramyeon*, *tteok-bokki*, and *Korean BBQ*. Some students even aspire to undergo cosmetic surgery to appear more attractive. Lastly, the energetic music and dance of K-Pop have become extremely popular among students, who often listen to the latest K-Pop songs and learn dance routines through music video viewings. However, previous studies discussing the influence of K-Pop culture among students in Malaysia have predominantly focused on aspects of entertainment, global cultural identity or fashion choices. Comprehensive investigations into lifestyle changes among university students particularly in terms of psychosocial, economic and religious values as a result of K-Pop culture remain very limited. Therefore, this study is conducted to address this gap by focusing on the influence of K-Pop culture on the lifestyles of students at UTHM Pagoh from both socio-cultural and Islamic perspectives.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Several studies and articles have been reviewed in this paper. One of them is titled “*The Appeal of K-Pop Fans*” which asserts that the K-Pop phenomenon has become a global trend with K-Pop groups receiving overwhelming support. A similar scenario is seen in Malaysia where K-Pop music has grown increasingly popular and established its own fanbase. As evidence, the Asian music streaming platform JOOX recorded a surge in K-Pop music listeners and received positive feedback from users (Najiy Jefri, 2024). This indicates that the influence of K-Pop culture extends beyond music entertainment, shaping local media preferences and tastes. Korean-style makeup for example, has seen high demand among brides-to-be and became a trending style in mid-2024. Natural-toned makeup featuring soft hues, nude palettes and touches of pink on focal areas such as the lips and cheeks has become popular. Various Korean-inspired makeup techniques have emerged as the top choice for modern brides (Bernama, 2024). This trend reflects how Korean beauty aesthetics have successfully penetrated local culture becoming a benchmark for beauty among specific segments of society especially young women. Additionally, Korean dramas easily fulfil the emotional needs of Malaysian audiences through relatable lifestyles, cultural familiarity and expressive storytelling. The Korean language used in dramas is not a barrier for Malaysian viewers as the narratives strongly resonate with universal human emotions, lifestyles and family values (Ariffin, Bakar & Yusof, 2018). The main attraction of Korean dramas lies in their ability to craft storylines that touch the hearts of audiences and transport them into emotionally rich and universally relevant narratives centered on familial love and social connection.

According to Zaizakrani (2021), Korean beauty standards are embedded in K-Pop culture through the visuals of celebrities and idols, drama and film characters, and celebrity-endorsed cosmetic surgery. Although Malaysians generally accept these beauty ideals many Muslims reject beauty practices involving plastic surgery due to religious obligations. This highlights a clear boundary between the aspirations of popular culture and the religious principles upheld by certain segments of society especially Muslims (Nada Raafat Khattab et al, 2022). Nonetheless, the positive influence of K-dramas tends to outweigh the negative among Malaysian youth particularly Muslim youth. The study by Yoke & Jamil (2022) suggests implementing content filtering of K-dramas to prevent exposure to elements that may negatively influence youth thinking. It also advocates for moderate and balanced viewing habits. These recommendations underscore the need for self-regulation and critical media awareness among young viewers to avoid blindly following foreign content. Many Malaysians favour Korean products due to their stylish design and competitive advantages through product innovation. Perceptions of Korean food, fashion, and cosmetics are closely linked to consumer behaviour towards Korean products (Osman & Ismail, 2022). The strong interest in Korean goods reflects not only cultural influence but also the effectiveness of Korea’s marketing strategies which successfully align their products with international consumer expectations.

Awareness and preference for Korean food are also significantly higher among individuals aged 20 to 30 compared to older age groups. The most popular Korean food products in Malaysia include *ramyeon*, spicy instant noodles, *kimchi*, *cookies*, fruit and vegetable beverages, and various traditional Korean sauces (Jeong & Choi, 2018). However, the influence of Korean cuisine also raises concerns regarding health and halal compliance, especially when Muslim students are found to consume Korean products without verifying their certification status. (al-Uyuna Mohd Amin et al, 2020). This phenomenon clearly demonstrates how foreign cultural elements can shape local dietary habits especially among younger generations who are more exposed to global influences. However, despite the wide range of existing studies several research gaps remain underexplored. Most prior studies focus on general aspects such as the popularity of K-Pop, Korean makeup influence, or consumer acceptance of Korean food and products. Few studies have been conducted specifically within the context of public higher education institutions in Malaysia, especially in understanding how K-Pop culture shapes student lifestyles across multiple dimensions including self-presentation, social interaction patterns, social values, and future aspirations. Furthermore, there is a lack of comprehensive and contextual approaches to assess the extent to which values promoted by K-Pop culture align or conflict with local cultural norms and religious values held by the Muslim student majority. The absence of empirical data and fieldwork focusing on university youth particularly students in rural campus settings like Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia (UTHM) Pagoh further highlights the need for this study. Therefore, this research seeks to fill these gaps by closely examining the influence of K-Pop culture on the lifestyle of UTHM Pagoh students and

evaluating the level of acceptance and impact of this cultural trend on their identity, values, and way of life.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quantitative research method with descriptive analysis to provide an overall overview of the types of K-Pop culture that influence the lifestyle of UTHM Pagoh students. Simple regression analysis was also used to assess the relationship between the independent variable (K-Pop culture) and the dependent variable (student lifestyle). Quantitative research is appropriate for measuring statistical quantities involving more than ten samples for evaluating variables in each investigated study (Norsyamimi & Mujaheed, 2019).

The selected method for data collection was a questionnaire as it is the most practical and effective way to gather information (Najmul Hasan & Bao Yukun, 2020). The research design used was a survey to identify the types of K-Pop culture practised by UTHM Pagoh students and how it influences their lifestyle. The sample consisted of 252 students comprising 91 males and 161 females. UTHM Pagoh students were chosen as the study sample because they represent young individuals still in the learning phase and are more susceptible to foreign cultural influences particularly from Korea which are widely propagated through mass media such as music, dance, and drama. Therefore, their opinions should be considered valuable data and reference.

Sampling was conducted using a random sampling technique where all individuals in the population had an equal chance of being selected as respondents (Norma Jusof & Mohd Isa Hamzah, 2020). The questionnaire was divided into three sections: Section A, B, and C. Section A contained questions related to the respondents' background information. Section B collected data on the types of Korean pop (K-Pop) culture that influence student lifestyles, and Section C focused on the lifestyle of UTHM Pagoh students within the K-Pop context. Section A (Personal Data) aimed to gather demographic information such as gender, age, ethnicity, religion, and faculty. Sections B and C applied a Likert scale: Scale 1: Strongly Disagree (SD), Scale 2: Disagree (D), Scale 3: Slightly Disagree (SID), Scale 4: Agree (A) and Scale 5: Strongly Agree (SA). The mean score interpretation is based on the following scale range:

Table 1 : Mean Score Interpretation

1.00 – 2.00	Low
2.01 – 3.00	Moderately Low
3.01 – 4.00	Moderately High
4.01 – 5.00	High

Source : Nunnally & Bernstein (1994)

The scores for each question were calculated and presented as frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation values. To determine the influence level, the data were analysed using simple regression to evaluate the relationship between the independent variable (K-Pop culture) and the dependent variable (student lifestyle). The average scores and the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable were calculated using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 2.3. The research instrument was developed electronically using the Google Form platform and distributed online via social media applications such as WhatsApp, Telegram and email. The distribution period ran from the end of October 2024 until the end of December 2024. Nevertheless, this study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, although a random sampling method was employed the respondents were limited to students from a single campus namely UTHM Pagoh which may restrict the generalizability of the findings to the broader population of Malaysian university students. Second, the use of a closed-ended quantitative approach may not fully capture the nuances of individual understandings, motivations and cultural interpretations. Third, the online data collection method carries the risk of response bias such as socially desirable responses or carelessness in completing the questionnaire. In addition, the questionnaire was self-developed by the researcher and has not undergone a full validation process by psychometric experts which may compromise the reliability of some of the items.

These limitations should be considered when interpreting the findings and they highlight the need for further

research that expands in terms of location, incorporates additional qualitative methods such as in-depth interviews and employs a more systematic validation of research instruments.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Respondent Demographics

The demographic composition of the respondents was analysed based on gender, ethnicity, religion, age, faculty and academic qualification. Table 1 shows that out of 252 respondents who participated in this study, 91 (36.10%) were male and 161 (63.90%) were female. The majority of respondents were Chinese with 147 individuals (58.30%), while those from other ethnicities made up the smallest group with only 9 individuals (3.60%). In terms of religion, the majority of respondents identified as Buddhists totalling 118 individuals (46.80%), while those adhering to other religions were the fewest with only 5 individuals (1.97%). With regard to age, most respondents were between 21 and 23 years old accounting for 191 individuals (75.80%). The smallest age group consisted of respondents aged 27 to 29 years with only 1 person (0.40%). From the perspective of faculty, the Faculty of Applied Sciences and Technology (FAST) had the highest number of respondents with 146 individuals (57.90%), whereas the Diploma Studies Centre (PPD) had the fewest with 35 individuals (13.90%). In terms of academic qualification, 203 respondents (80.60%) were undergraduate students and 35 (13.90%) were diploma students. The year of study with the highest number of respondents was Year 1 with 132 individuals (52.40%), while the fewest were in Year 4 with only 10 individuals (4.00%).

Table 2 : Respondent Demographics

Personal Information		Frequency (n)	Percentage(%)
Gender	Male	91	36.10
	Female	161	63.90
Ethnicity	Malay	65	25.80
	Chinese	147	58.30
	Indian	31	12.30
	Others	9	3.60
Religion	Islam	65	25.80
	Buddhism	118	46.80
	Hinduism	19	7.53
	Christianity	45	17.90
	Others	5	1.97
Age	18-20 years	47	18.70
	21-23 years	191	75.80
	24-26 years	13	5.10
	27-29 years	1	0.40
Faculty	PPD (Diploma Studies)	35	13.90
	FAST	146	57.90
	FTK	71	28.20
Academic Qualification	Diploma	35	13.90
	Bachelor's Degree	203	80.60

	Master's Degree	13	5.10
	Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)	1	0.40
Year of Study	Year 1	132	52.40
	Year 2	77	30.60
	Year 3	33	13.00
	Year 4	10	4.00

Source : Survei 2024

Types of Korean Pop (K-Pop) Culture Influencing UTHM Pagoh Students

Based on Table 2 below, the highest mean score was recorded for item number six which pertains to K-Pop music and dance with a mean of 4.26. Meanwhile, the lowest mean score was observed for item number five which involves plastic surgery with a mean of 3.15. Overall, the average mean score for the types of K-Pop culture influencing students was 3.80. This indicates that on the whole the influence of K-Pop culture on various aspects of student life is high and warrants deeper investigation.

Table 3 : Analysis of Types Koeran Pop (K-Pop) Culture

No	Item	N (%)					Mean	Standard Deviation	Level
		SD	D	SID	A	SA			
1	Fashion and Style (e.g., makeup, hairstyles, Korean-style clothing)	7 (2.8)	12 (4.7)	55 (21.8)	72 (28.6)	106 (42.1)	4.02	1.041	Very High
2	Language and Slang (e.g., Korean-style speech)	8 (3.2)	16 (6.3)	58 (23.0)	90 (35.7)	80 (31.7)	3.87	1.036	High
3	Fanaticism	13 (5.2)	23 (9.1)	90 (35.7)	63 (25.0)	63 (25.0)	3.56	1.115	High
4	Food and Cuisine (Korean-style eating habits)	6 (2.4)	17 (6.7)	48 (19.0)	88 (34.9)	93 (36.9)	3.97	1.023	Tinggi
5	Plastic Surgery	35 (13.9)	34 (13.5)	83 (32.9)	59 (23.4)	41 (16.3)	3.15	1.249	High
6	Music and Dance (K-Pop songs and performances)	3 (1.2)	8 (3.2)	40 (15.9)	71 (28.1)	130 (51.6)	4.26	0.920	Very High
Overall Mean Score: 3.80									

Table 3 presents an overview of the types of Korean Pop (K-Pop) culture potentially influencing UTHM Pagoh

students. The majority of these cultural elements were found to have a high level of influence. Based on the survey results, the types of K-Pop culture that have entered the country include music, fashion, food and beverages as well as drama. These cultural forms easily influence students especially in the era of globalization where the use of modern technology such as electronic gadgets is widespread. This has accelerated the spread of K-Pop culture particularly among youth. The proliferation of K-Pop has been driven by social media platforms such as TikTok which feature various Korean cultural content and other platforms like *Facebook*, *Instagram* and *YouTube*. Technological advancement in the modern era has expedited the dissemination of K-Pop culture directly impacting youth lifestyles (Bahagia et al., 2022). The emergence of K-Pop culture in Malaysia began around the year 2000 through the broadcast of the Korean drama *Winter Sonata* on TV3. The drama sparked widespread interest among Malaysian audiences due to its cultural uniqueness especially in clothing, food and lifestyle which were distinct from local traditions (Syed, 2019). According to *Utusan Malaysia* (2007), thousands of fans from various ethnic backgrounds attended a concert by renowned Korean artist Rain in Kuala Lumpur reflecting the cross-cultural appeal of K-Pop in Malaysia. Korean food such as kimchi has also become popular among Malaysians (Bernama, 2022).

The types of K-Pop culture identified as influencing UTHM Pagoh students include fashion and appearance, language and slang, fanaticism, cuisine, plastic surgery and music and dance. Findings show that the highest mean score was for music and dance (4.26). This category includes diverse genres such as hip hop, dance and R&B which attract youths to listen to and watch K-Pop performances through music videos. For example, PSY's viral song *Gangnam Style* became a global phenomenon due to its catchy beat, humorous elements and simple dance moves (Alam & Nyarimun, 2017). This proves that music and dance are among the most influential elements of K-Pop culture on Malaysian students and society in general. The dominance of this category highlights the strong appeal of entertainment in shaping youth cultural preferences especially in a postmodern era that values identity expression through performance arts. However, from the Islamic perspective held by the majority in Malaysia some findings raise concerns especially when K-Pop elements touch on lifestyle aspects that may contradict Islamic values. Many K-Pop performances are often associated with revealing clothing, sexualized dance moves and lyrics that conflict with Islamic etiquette and modesty principles (Kamarzaman et al., 2024). Islam strongly upholds *haya'* (modesty) and moderation in appearance and social interaction. Thus, students' blind imitation of K-Pop idols' dressing and performances may lead to moral decline and open the door to hedonistic tendencies that contradict Islamic principles. Culturally these behaviours also conflict with traditional Malay dress norms that emphasize decency, modesty and the preservation of dignity.

Moreover, excessive use of Korean slang can weaken the appreciation and use of the national language "*Bahasa Melayu*" (Mujani et al., 2022). The fanaticism aspect, which scored a mean of 3.56 also poses concerns from an Islamic theological perspective. Excessive idol worship, imitating celebrities' lifestyles and speech without discernment may erode Islamic identity. Islam forbids imitation (*tashabbuh*) of cultures that contradict Shariah as mentioned in the hadith: **"Whoever imitates a people is one of them."** (Abu Dawud, 2009). Fanaticism toward foreign idols can also dilute patriotism and national pride among the younger generation. Disregarding traditional arts such as *zapin*, *dikir barat* and traditional poetry songs reflects a troubling shift in cultural interest. This contrast does not suggest a total rejection of foreign culture but calls for a more discerning and identity-conscious approach to cultural adaptation. K-Pop culture can be appreciated for its artistic and creative elements but it must be filtered through local cultural and religious values to avoid undermining traditions, etiquette and Malaysia's moral foundation (Jenol & Pazil, 2020). On the other hand, the lowest mean score was for plastic surgery (3.15) possibly due to its high cost and associated health risks. Plastic surgery is generally not covered by health insurance and carries risks such as infection, blood loss, delayed healing and complications from anaesthesia (Sissons, 2023). Most respondents felt that plastic surgery is unlikely to be a dominant K-Pop influence on their lifestyle. However, this finding conflicts with current trends among celebrities and social media influencers who promote post-surgery beauty standards (Walker et al., 2021). This suggests that the influence of plastic surgery persists indirectly as an aspirational ideal (Sadi Ades, 2024). Of greater concern exposure to K-Pop culture that promotes cosmetic surgery may normalize alterations to Allah's creation which goes against the principle of *qana'ah* (contentment and self-acceptance). Although the plastic surgery score was low its presence among students deserves critique as Islam clearly prohibits altering one's natural creation without a valid medical reason. As stated in **Surah al-Nisa' (4:119): "Indeed, I (Satan) will mislead them, and I will arouse in them (sinful) desires... and I will command them so they will change the creation of**

Allah.” Thus, the influence of K-Pop culture on students must be assessed carefully considering not only external interests such as music or food but also its deeper impact on morality, thinking and value systems. A *tadabbur budaya* (reflective cultural evaluation) approach is necessary one that analyses foreign culture through the lens of local and Islamic values, to prevent total unfiltered absorption (Liu, 2023).

UTHM Pagoh Students’ Lifestyle in the World of Korean Pop (K-Pop)

Based on Table 4 below, the highest mean score was recorded for item number six: “*I frequently listen to the latest K-Pop songs and learn the dances by watching music videos (MV’s)*” with a mean of 3.94. In contrast, the lowest mean score was for item number five: “*I have considered undergoing plastic surgery to look more attractive*” with a mean of 2.90. Overall, the average mean score for the lifestyle of UTHM Pagoh students in the context of K-Pop is 3.53.

Table 4 : Analysis of UTHM Pagoh Students’ Lifestyle in the World of Korean Pop (K-Pop)

No	Item	N (%)					Mean	Standard Deviation	Level
		SD	D	SID	A	SA			
1	I pay attention to Korean beauty standards, including face, weight, makeup, hairstyle, and fashion.	11 (4.4)	24 (9.5)	59 (23.4)	75 (29.8)	83 (32.9)	3.77	1.136	Very High
2	I often use Korean slang and language when texting or speaking with others.	18 (7.1)	37 (14.7)	55 (21.8)	75 (29.8)	67 (26.6)	3.54	1.228	High
3	I am very loyal to my idol, actively support their work, and am willing to spend large amounts of money for their success.	27 (10.7)	35 (13.9)	88 (34.9)	51 (20.2)	51 (20.2)	3.25	1.233	High
4	I often eat Korean food that follows the latest trends (e.g., ramyeon, tteok-bokki, Korean BBQ).	15 (6.0)	23 (9.1)	54 (21.4)	77 (30.6)	83 (32.9)	3.75	1.179	High
5	I have considered undergoing plastic surgery to look more attractive.	50 (19.8)	49 (19.4)	70 (27.8)	43 (17.1)	40 (15.9)	2.90	1.338	High

6	I frequently listen to the latest K-Pop songs and learn the dances by watching MVs (e.g., BLACKPINK, BTS, SEVENTEEN).	12 (4.8)	20 (7.9)	41 (16.3)	78 (31.0)	101 (40.1)	3.94	1.145	Very High
Overall Mean Score : 3.53									

The findings indicate that the most prevalent lifestyle behaviour among UTHM Pagoh students in relation to K-Pop is frequent listening to K-Pop songs and learning dance routines through music videos with a mean score of 3.94. K-Pop music is highly popular among youth due to its unique characteristics such as innovative presentation, energetic rhythms, varying tempos (fast, moderate, slow) and harmonious melodies. Furthermore, K-Pop is not only focused on music but also incorporates choreography and performances by visually appealing male and female artists (Sakinah et al., 2022).

Physical appearance is one of the main factors that attract youth to K-Pop idols. Many young people become interested in K-Pop music after being captivated by the attractive looks of the idols (Hatma, 2022). This phenomenon demonstrates how visual aesthetics and entertainment can shape student interests and behaviour even when it may not align with local cultural or religious values. From an Islamic perspective, the inclination toward idol performances and dance routines raises serious concerns as many of these performances involve indecent clothing, sexually suggestive choreography and lyrics that conflict with modesty and ethical dressing in Islam. The exposure to such content may weaken moral sensitivity among Muslim students and distract them from spiritual values expected to be nurtured at the higher education level. As stated in **Surah al-Nur, verse 30**, *"Tell the believing men to lower their gaze and guard their private parts. That is purer for them."* This principle clearly contrasts with the themes commonly presented in K-Pop content (Mujani et al., 2022).

From the local cultural standpoint, Malaysia's heritage rooted in Eastern values and traditions of politeness conflicts with the excessive display of liberal K-Pop culture. For instance, aggressive dance moves and revealing attire deviate from Malay cultural norms and public decency. The use of Korean slang and the tendency to imitate foreign celebrities' lifestyles also risks eroding national cultural identity particularly among youth who are still developing a sense of self (Kim et al., 2023). On the other hand the lowest mean score was recorded for the item *"I have considered undergoing plastic surgery to look more attractive"* with a mean of 2.90. This may be attributed to the respondents' backgrounds predominantly Malay and Muslim. In Islamic teachings undergoing plastic surgery purely for cosmetic reasons is prohibited as it involves altering Allah's creation, even if intended for good and may lead to negative consequences that contradict human nature. Additionally, the study found a growing awareness of self-acceptance among UTHM Pagoh students. According to Hurlock self-acceptance is a vital aspect of a healthy personality, encompassing acceptance of reality, social acceptance, emotional control and a sense of responsibility. Respondents exhibited a higher tendency to appreciate their natural appearance and demonstrated stronger self-acceptance compared to other individuals (Inni Fathatun Nazihah, 2022). Therefore, they are more inclined to embrace their natural facial features rather than pursuing cosmetic alterations. Nevertheless, the normalization of Korean aesthetics which promote idealized facial and body features still has the potential to implant the belief that beauty must meet a certain standard. This stands in contrast to the Islamic and Malay principles of *qana'ah* (gratitude and contentment) which encourage self-appreciation and humility.

The Influence of Korean Pop (K-Pop) Culture on the Lifestyle of UTHM Pagoh Students Coefficient of Determination Test

Through hypothesis testing and data analysis the influence of Korean Pop (K-Pop) culture on the lifestyle of UTHM Pagoh students can be observed as follows. The Coefficient of Determination (R Square) test is used to determine the significance level of a variable. It serves to assess how much the independent variable (X) affects

the dependent variable (Y). This value can be found in the Model Summary table which shows the percentage contribution of variable X to the variation in variable Y.

Table 6 : Coefficient of Determination Test

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std.Error of the Estimate
1	.736 ^a	.541	.539	4.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), K-Pop Culture

Based on Table 5 above, the coefficient of determination (R Square) is 0.541 indicating that the result is significant because $\alpha > 0.05$. This means there is a strong correlation between K-Pop culture and student lifestyle. The adjusted R Square value is 0.539 which shows that 53.9% of the variation in student lifestyle at UTHM Pagoh is influenced by K-Pop culture. The remaining 46.1% is influenced by other factors not covered in this study. These findings indicate that K-Pop culture is not merely a form of entertainment but has evolved into a lifestyle and reference point for identity among students, significantly affecting their thinking patterns, appearance and social behaviours.

t-Test (Partial Test)

This statistical test is used to determine whether there is an individual (partial) effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable. Using a 5% significance level and degrees of freedom (df) = n - K - 1 the t-table value is compared with the calculated t-value from the data analysis.

Testing criteria:

a) If t-calculated > t-table or significance value (sig.) < 0.05, then H_0 is rejected and H_a is accepted, indicating a significant effect.

b) If t-calculated < t-table or sig. > 0.05, then H_0 is accepted and H_a is rejected, indicating no significant effect.

Table 7 : t-Test Results (Partial)

Coefficients ^a					
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	.639	1.221		.524	.601
K-Pop Culture	.899	.052	.736	17.172	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Students Lifestyle

Based on Table 6 above, referring to the t and Sig. columns the partial correlation coefficient (t-test) shows that the independent variable K-Pop culture (X) has a significant effect on the dependent variable student lifestyle (Y) with a significance value of $0.000 < 0.05$. Thus, H_0 is rejected. The calculated t-value is 17.172, which is greater than the t-table value of 2.831. Therefore, it can be concluded that K-Pop culture has a strong and significant influence on student lifestyle. The resulting linear regression model is: $Y = 0.639 + 1.221X$ This indicates that each one-unit increase in K-Pop culture contributes to a 1.221unit increase in student lifestyle significantly. The regression value of 17.127 demonstrates the direct and substantial influence of K-Pop culture

on the lives of UTHM Pagoh students. This high regression value shows that K-Pop culture plays a dominant role in shaping student trends especially in entertainment, fashion, communication and self-image.

These findings align with a study by Depi Mawatdah (2022) who used a qualitative approach through interviews with six students. The study found that the attraction to K-Pop culture stemmed from its unique and appealing fashion and Korean food which differs from local cuisine. These results are consistent with the UTHM Pagoh findings where music and dance were identified as the most influential components of K-Pop culture on student lifestyle. K-Pop music with its modern style, energetic tone and dynamic rhythm has become a top choice among today's students. In Mawatdah's study additional factors influencing student interest in K-Pop included the idols' attractive looks, ideal body posture and diverse music groups and songs. For instance, *BLACKPINK* is one of the most globally popular K-Pop girl bands with a wide fanbase among the younger generation. Their songs and choreography have a major influence on fan lifestyles, particularly in fashion, accessories and hairstyles. Many fans emulate *BLACKPINK*'s appearance as a symbol of modern femininity (Nursalam et al., 2022). This culture can be categorised as fanatical culture which has shown a strong impact on student lifestyle. The study conducted at UTHM Pagoh also confirms that fanatical tendencies have significant effects on students. However, based on the mean score analysis the most influential component of K-Pop culture is music and dance. Music, being a combination of melodies and rhythms produced by various instruments is easily understood and enjoyed by all segments of society. According to Samsudin & Bakar (2018) music is not only a form of art but is closely tied to culture and can stimulate the human mind. In the context of today's youth many engage in various activities while listening to music making them more exposed to K-Pop influence through music and visual performances by Korean artists.

CONCLUSION

Based on the level of Korean Pop (K-Pop) cultural engagement and the lifestyle practices of UTHM Pagoh students, this study illustrates that K-Pop culture has a significant influence on their lifestyle particularly in the aspects of music and dance. Students were found to frequently listen to K-Pop songs and learn the associated dance routines. K-Pop music features catchy melodies and memorable lyrics that evoke joy and positive emotions among students. Moreover, the energetic and innovative choreography has become a major attraction for students who are eager to learn and participate in it. In addition, K-Pop fans often feel a sense of closeness and connection to their idols through social media and online communities fostering a form of social attachment and encouraging them to engage in groups that share similar interests. The study reveals that the level of K-Pop cultural adoption in the lifestyle of UTHM Pagoh students is high. This indicates that the influence of K-Pop culture on student lifestyle is substantial. However, there are also students who do not embrace K-Pop culture for various reasons, including perceptions that it is a waste of time and money or because they are more inclined towards other cultural preferences such as Western or local traditions. Therefore, K-Pop culture should not be viewed merely as a form of youth entertainment but must also be critically examined for its impact on identity formation, thought processes and the values of Muslim students. It is important for educational institutions and the wider community to provide value-based guidance and promote a *tadabbur budaya* approach that is, the evaluation of foreign cultures through the lens of Islamic values and local traditions. This includes encouraging critical thinking among students so that they are not merely passive consumers of culture but develop into thoughtful and ethical cultural filters.

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