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## From Stage to Heart: K-Pop Concerts and Emotional Attachment in Celebrity Worship

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### *Abstract*

*This study examines the influence of K-Pop Concerts (X1) and Emotional Attachment (X2) on Celebrity Worship (Y) among K-Pop fans using Cultivation theory. This theory explains how intensive exposure, such as concerts, shapes fans' perceptions and attachment to idols. Involving 384 respondents who have attended at least one concert in the past two years, the study found that K-Pop concerts and emotional attachment significantly influence celebrity worship. Collectively, the two variables explained 47.2% of the variance in celebrity worship. These results suggest that K-Pop concerts provide a direct experience between fans and idols, while emotional attachment plays an important role in strengthening fans' psychological connection with idols. Both independently contribute to the level of celebrity worship, reflecting the intensity of fans' connection with idols that goes beyond mere entertainment. This research provides strategic insights for the entertainment industry in creating more meaningful experiences to increase fan loyalty. Moreover, the findings enrich the academic literature on fan behavior in the context of global popular culture, by highlighting the relevance of Cultivation theory.*

**Keywords:** *Cultivation Theory, K-Pop, Celebrity Worship, Emotional Attachment*

### **INTRODUCTION**

K-Pop, or Korean Pop, is a music genre that originated in South Korea and has experienced rapid development since the early 1990s (Gnedash et al., 2021). K-Pop is now a global entertainment industry that influences music trends, fashion, and popular culture in various parts of the world (Ryu et al., 2020). With a combination of catchy music, stunning choreography, and attractive visual appearance, K-Pop has succeeded in attracting the attention of millions of fans from various ages (Safithri et al., 2020; Loh & Gilmour, 2022; Yoon, 2019). This phenomenon is reinforced by the presence of social media and streaming platforms, which allow fans around the world to easily access and share K-Pop content (Kang et al., 2019).

Over time, K-Pop has evolved into more than just a music genre, but a subculture that defines the identity of young people in various countries (Yoon, 2022). This success not only shows the appeal of K-Pop as a cultural product, but also the power of South Korea's soft power in promoting the country's image in the global arena (Lale, 2020). The K-Pop phenomenon has changed the way the world sees the music industry, making it one of the symbols of the dominance of Asian popular culture in the digital era (Mo Koo et al., 2022).

The impact of the spread of K-Pop on global pop culture is vast. In various countries, we can see the influence of K-Pop in fashion, with the emergence of fashion trends inspired by the idols' styles (Bupu & Kasiyan, 2024). In the beauty industry, Korean skincare and makeup products promoted by K-Pop stars have become extremely popular (Wahidah et al., 2023), sparking a global phenomenon known as "K-beauty" (Kwon, 2020). K-Pop's influence even extends to politics and diplomacy, where South Korea uses "Hallyu" or "Korean Wave" as a soft power tool to enhance its image and influence on the international stage (Kunkunrat, 2024).

In recent years, the number of K-Pop concerts in different countries has increased significantly (Irawanty et al., 2024), reflecting the growing popularity of the genre worldwide. Popular K-Pop groups such as BTS, BLACKPINK, and TWICE regularly organize world tours that cover many major cities in North America, Europe, Asia, and even South America. Fans' enthusiasm for K-Pop concerts reflects the strong emotional connection between idols and their fans. Fans, often referred to as "fandoms," come from various cultural backgrounds and ages, but have one thing in common: their love for K-Pop (Guerra & Sousa, 2021). They not only attend concerts to enjoy the music and visual performances, but also to feel close to their idols (Lee, 2022).

Attending a K-Pop concert is a very valuable experience (Ayuni & Dewi, 2023). Concerts are an opportunity for fans to see their idols in person (Lyu, 2024), engage in various inter-fandom engagements such as sharing freebies (Proctor, 2020), and participate in interactive activities, such as fan chants (Lee, 2022) and light stick waves (Moody & Ha, 2022). In addition, concerts are also an important moment to express support and love for idols (Upham et al., 2024), which is often reciprocated by interactions between idols and fans on stage, where idols deliver speeches called *ment* (Anisya, 2023). For many fans, attending K-Pop concerts is an important part of their identity as members of the fandom and creates loyalty (Cheriyah & Hadi, 2022).

When fans watch their idols perform live, they not only enjoy the music and visual performance, but also feel the physical presence of the idol and elicit emotions from fans (King-O'Riain, 2021). These moments often strengthen the emotional connection between fans and idols (Huang, 2023), making idols more real and reachable compared to when they only see them on screen. Concerts allow for direct interactions, such as eye contact, smiles, or greetings from the idol, which can deepen fans' sense of attachment, reinforcing parasociality, the feeling that they have a more personal and special relationship with their idol (Lyu, 2024).

This research is important to the academic understanding of K-Pop fan behavior as it provides deep insight into how concert experience and emotional attachment contribute to the level of celebrity worship. By examining the relationship between these three variables, this study expands the understanding of the psychological and social dynamics underlying fan engagement in the K-Pop phenomenon. The results of this study can help academics and practitioners understand the factors that influence the intensity of emotional attachment and fan adoration, as well as the implications for the music industry and marketing strategies.

Despite the growing body of research on K-Pop fandom, parasocial interaction, and fan identity, few studies have quantitatively investigated how the direct experience of concerts, combined with emotional attachment, collectively and significantly shape the level of celebrity worship. Most previous research has focused on fandom (Guerra & Sousa, 2021), consumer culture (Ryu et al., 2020), or general fan behavior (Quan et al., 2022), leaving a clear research gap in understanding how offline, embodied experiences like concerts contribute to intensified forms of celebrity worship. This novelty becomes

even more critical in the Indonesian context, where the fandom scene is vibrant and highly engaged, yet remains underexplored in quantitative terms.

Accordingly, the research problem addressed in this study is that although many Indonesian fans invest heavily in concerts and express strong emotional bonds with their idols, little is known about how these experiences and attachments interact to predict celebrity worship. In other words, the problem lies in the lack of empirical evidence on whether live concert experiences and emotional attachment together act as significant determinants of celebrity worship among Indonesian K-Pop fans. This study seeks to fill that gap by examining the interplay of these variables through a quantitative approach.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Cultivation Theory**

Cultivation theory explains that with frequent exposure, audiences are affected by the messages conveyed. Khalid & Wok (2020) found that after being exposed to the Korean Wave for more than two years, respondents believed that they had adopted positive messages in their daily lives. In the context of K-Pop, concerts represent a form of intensive exposure where fans repeatedly encounter the imagery, narratives, and performances of idols. This exposure cultivates a perceived social reality in which idols are seen as close and personally meaningful. The immersive nature of concerts thus provides fertile ground for strengthening emotional attachment, which in turn fuels celebrity worship (Williams & Ho, 2016). By linking media exposure with psychological closeness, Cultivation Theory offers a framework for understanding how live performances shape both emotional and behavioral fan responses.

### **Emotional Attachment**

Emotional attachment refers to the deep and meaningful relationships that form between fans and idols, even in the absence of reciprocal interaction. Pramesthi (2021) explains that fans often experience these attachments as highly personal, despite their one-sided nature. Prior research shows that emotional attachment can be triggered by consistent exposure to idols through media and concerts (Ma et al., 2022) and strengthened through inspirational narratives that idols represent (Kusuma et al., 2020). Moreover, Wirdah et al. (2023) highlight how attachment fosters solidarity and shared experiences within fan communities. While these studies confirm the centrality of emotional attachment in fan–idol relationships, most were conducted in online or general fandom contexts. This study extends the discussion by testing how concert-based attachment specifically predicts celebrity worship among Indonesian fans.

### **Celebrity Worship**

Celebrity worship is an excessive admiration for celebrities, ranging from entertainment–social (casual interest) to intense–personal (deep emotional involvement) and borderline–pathological (obsessive behaviors) (McCutcheon et al., 2016). Lin (2024) found that adolescents' anxiety about appearance is often exacerbated by idol imagery, while Cahyani & Purnamasari (2019) showed that Indonesian K-Pop fans frequently engage in emotional and behavioral expressions of worship. Similarly, McCutcheon & Aruguete (2021) suggest that celebrity worship is increasing globally with the rise of digital culture. These studies demonstrate that worship behaviors emerge in different contexts, but few have systematically examined how concert experiences amplify these behaviors. This research seeks to validate and extend previous findings by exploring how concert attendance, combined with emotional attachment, influences levels of celebrity worship among Indonesian fans.

### Theoretical Linkage

Integrating the above, Cultivation Theory explains how concerts serve as a form of repeated media exposure that cultivates an idealized representation of idols. These mediated experiences, reinforced by live performances, construct a shared symbolic reality among fans. Within this reality, communication practices such as fan chants, light stick waves, and direct interactions (e.g., eye contact, ment, or fan service) function as channels of meaning-making that foster stronger emotional attachment. This attachment is not merely psychological but communicative, as it is continuously expressed, negotiated, and reinforced within fan communities and media texts. As attachment intensifies, it develops into forms of celebrity worship, manifested in communicative practices such as content production, collective identity formation, and symbolic loyalty. By linking media exposure (X1), emotional attachment (X2), and celebrity worship (Y), this study situates the phenomenon within the field of communication, highlighting how media messages and live cultural performances shape collective fan behaviors.

### Research Questions

Based on the literature and theoretical framework, this study addresses the following research questions:

- Research Question 1: Does the experience of attending K-Pop concerts significantly influence the level of celebrity worship among fans? Research Question
- 2: How does emotional attachment to K-Pop idols affect the intensity of celebrity worship among fans?

### Concepts

In line with the quantitative approach, all concepts in this study are operationalized through measurable variables, dimensions, and indicators. The study focuses on three main variables: K-Pop Concerts (X1), Emotional Attachment (X2), and Celebrity Worship (Y). Each variable is broken down into dimensions and indicators, measured with statements using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree).

Table 1. Indicator of Research

Variables	Dimensions	Indicator	No.	Statement
K-Pop Concert (X)	Frequency of Exposure	Number of concerts attended	1	As a fan, I must have attended at least 1 concert of my K-Pop idol in the past year
			2	Apart from Indonesia, as a fan I also have to attend my K-Pop idols concerts overseas.
		Duration of time spent	3	I usually spend 2-3 hours for every K-Pop concert I attend.
			4	I usually spend my time from early in the morning preparing for the K-Pop concert that I will attend.
	Experience Intensity	Level of emotional engagement	5	During K-Pop concerts, I feel very emotionally connected to the performance.
			6	My emotional experience during K-Pop concerts is profound and affects me positively.
			7	I feel very happy when K-Pop idols interact with the audience through ment

			8	The fan service I experienced during the concert was very satisfying and memorable
			9	I experienced post-concert depression after attending a concert
			10	I feel very happy when K-Pop idols notice me.
			11	I prepared a banner so that my K-Pop idols would notice my existence.
	Perception Attitude	and Changes in perception of idols after attending concerts	12	After attending a K-Pop concert, my perception of idols has become more positive.
			13	The concert experience made me see K-Pop idols from a different perspective
		Attitude towards promoted values and norms	14	I feel more connected to the values promoted by K-Pop idols after the concert.
			15	After a K-Pop concert, I appreciate the values that K-Pop idols stand for even more.
Emotional Attachment (X)	Affective Attachment	Feelings of Affection towards the idol	16	I feel very emotionally connected to my favorite K-Pop idols
			17	My favorite K-Pop idols are often a source of inspiration and encouragement for me.
			18	I have a deep feeling of affection for my favorite K-Pop idol.
	Psychological Closeness	Perceived emotional closeness	19	My favorite K-Pop idol means a lot to me emotionally
			20	My emotional connection with K-Pop idols feels very close and personal
		The need to keep up to date with idols	21	I always want to know the latest news about my favorite K-Pop idols
			22	I regularly look for the latest information about my favorite K-Pop idols.
			23	I feel sad or lost if my favorite K-Pop idol is not active on social media
			24	I feel sad or lost if my favorite K-Pop idol goes on hiatus or is not active in group activities.
Celebrity Worship (Y)	Entertainment-Social	Attachment to idol's personal life	25	I like talking about my favorite K-Pop idols with friends
			26	I always follow news about my favorite K-Pop idol's personal life
			27	The personal lives of my favorite K-Pop idols are interesting to discuss with friends

Intense-Personal	Tendency to imitate idol behavior	28	I often try to imitate my favorite K-Pop idol's dressing style in concert.
		29	I feel strongly influenced by what my favorite K-Pop idols say or do.
		30	The behavior and lifestyle of my favorite K-Pop idols often influence the way I think and act.
	Intensity of feeling towards the idol	31	I am willing to spend a lot of money to buy merchandise for my favorite K-Pop idols.
		32	I am willing to spend a lot of money to buy concert tickets for my favorite K-Pop idols
		33	I feel emotionally attached to my favorite K-Pop idols and think of them often.
		34	My feelings for my favorite K-Pop idol are very strong and intense
Borderline-Pathological	Involvement in idol-related activities	35	I feel so obsessed with my favorite K-Pop idol and can't stop thinking about them
		36	I feel my life would be very empty without the presence of my favorite K-Pop idols
		37	The presence of my favorite K-Pop idols is very important in my life, and I feel lost if they are not around.

## METHOD

This research methodology aims to collect and analyze data that explains the relationship between the experience of attending K-Pop concerts, fans' emotional attachment, and the level of celebrity worship. Through a quantitative approach and survey method, this study measures variables such as the frequency of concert attendance, intensity of emotional attachment, and level of celebrity worship among K-Pop fans. Thus, this methodology provides empirical insights that can answer the research question regarding how K-Pop concert experiences affect fans' emotional attachment and, in turn, the intensity of their celebrity worship.

This study is quantitative research with a survey approach. Quantitative research was chosen because the focus is to measure and analyze the relationship between variables that can be expressed numerically (Creswell & Creswell, 2023), namely K-Pop concert experience, emotional attachment, and the level of celebrity worship. The survey approach allows data collection from a large sample efficiently and provides a more representative picture of behavioral patterns (Nardi, 2018) and perceptions among K-Pop fans.

The population in this study consists of K-Pop fans who have attended at least one K-Pop concert, as they have direct experience relevant to the main elements of the study. The sampling technique used is purposive sampling, where respondents are selected based on the following criteria (Campbell et al., 2020):

1. Must be at least 18 years of age. The age limit was chosen because individuals at this age are considered legally mature (Tuada Perdata, 2011), allowing them to give informed consent and fully understand the implications of their participation in the

- study. In addition, older participants tend to have a more stable understanding of emotional attachment and celebrity worship compared to adolescents (Cahyani & Purnamasari, 2019; Yugiputri & Halim, 2022).
2. Must be active in the K-Pop fan community. *Active* was defined by membership in online fan groups (e.g., Twitter fanbase or WhatsApp fanbase) and/or participation in fan activities such as streaming events, merchandise exchange, or content creation. This operationalization minimizes bias in measuring community involvement.
  3. Must have attended at least one K-Pop concert in the last 12 months.

The sample size of 384 respondents was determined using the formula for an infinite population, with a 95% confidence level, a 5% margin of error, and an assumed population proportion of 0.5. The 0.5 proportion was chosen because it produces maximum variance, thereby ensuring the largest and most representative sample size (Swarjana, 2022). Thus, this sample size is considered adequate to allow valid statistical analysis and provide comprehensive insights into the relationship between K-Pop concerts, emotional attachment, and celebrity worship.

The research instrument was a structured questionnaire with items rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). Variables were operationalized into dimensions and indicators as described in the Literature Review section. Instrument quality was assessed through validity and reliability tests. Validity test was conducted using corrected item–total correlations. All items across the three variables (X1 = 15 items, X2 = 9 items, Y = 13 items) showed correlation coefficients above the r-table (0.361, N=30,  $\alpha=0.05$ ), indicating that all items were valid. Reliability test used Cronbach’s Alpha. Results confirmed internal consistency with  $\alpha$  values exceeding 0.7: Concert Experience ( $\alpha = 0.88$ ), Emotional Attachment ( $\alpha = 0.90$ ), and Celebrity Worship ( $\alpha = 0.92$ ). These results indicate that the instrument has excellent reliability.

Data analysis included descriptive statistics, correlation, and multiple regression (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). Descriptive analysis summarized respondent characteristics and the distribution of scores. Correlation analysis examined the relationships between variables, such as the link between concert experience and emotional attachment, as well as between emotional attachment and celebrity worship. Regression analysis tested the influence of independent variables (X1 and X2) on the dependent variable (Y).

Prior to regression, classical assumption tests were conducted:

1. Normality test (Kolmogorov–Smirnov) confirmed that data were normally distributed ( $p > 0.05$ ).
2. Multicollinearity test showed no multicollinearity, with tolerance values  $> 0.10$  and VIF values  $< 10$ .
3. Heteroskedasticity test (Glejser) showed no heteroskedasticity ( $p > 0.05$ ).

All analyses were conducted using SPSS, which facilitated statistical calculations and data visualization (Rahman & Muktadir, 2021). The results of these analyses were then used to test the hypotheses and answer the research questions, providing empirical evidence of how K-Pop concert experiences shape emotional attachment and, in turn, intensify celebrity worship among fans.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This study aims to examine the effect of K-Pop concerts and emotional attachment on celebrity worship behavior on 384 respondents who meet the criteria, including (1) respondents must be 18 years and over; (2) active in the K-Pop fan community; (3) and

have attended at least one K-Pop concert in the last two years. Of the total 384 respondents, the majority were female, as many as 75% (288 respondents), while men totaled 25% (96 respondents). This is in accordance with the tendency that K-Pop fans in Indonesia are generally dominated by women (Isril & Yulianto, 2024). This can also be attributed to the visual appeal, emotions, and musical styles that tend to attract women in the K-Pop fan demographic. Respondents have diverse employment backgrounds. The majority are students as much as 60% (230 respondents). Respondents who work as office employees account for 20% (77 respondents), while those who work as freelancers account for 10% (38 respondents). In addition, there are 6% (23 respondents) who are housewives, and the remaining 4% (16 respondents) do not work or do not have a job. This data shows that K-Pop fans come from various occupational groups, with the dominance of young people who are still studying.

Of the total 384 respondents, the largest age group is in the range of 18-24 years, which is 70% (269 respondents). This group is the younger generation who are known to have high enthusiasm for K-Pop culture. They tend to be the most active fan segment, both in attending concerts, buying merchandise, and following idol activities on social media. Then from a total of 384 respondents, 62.5% (192 respondents) have watched concerts more than twice within the last two years. Respondents in this category show a high level of participation in concert activities, indicating deep involvement and a large investment to support their idols in person. 40% (154 respondents) belong to an official fanclub such as buying a membership on an official platform. Respondents who are not members of an official fanclub but follow their idols' activities through social media or local fan communities account for 60% (230 respondents). This data indicates that although many fans are not members of official fanclubs, they still connect with their idols through other platforms that are more accessible and affordable.

In determining the percentage used, researchers looked at the number of respondents as many as 384 people with the highest measurement scale value of 5 and the lowest value of 1.

Table 2. Percentage of three variables

<b>Variables</b>	<b>%</b>
K-Pop Concert	60.24
Emotional Attachment	60.02
Celebrity Worship	59.90
Average	<b>60.053</b>

Based on the analysis results, the overall average percentage of the three main variables of this study is 60.053%, with the K-Pop Concert variable recording the highest value of 60.24%, followed by Emotional Attachment at 60.02%, and Celebrity Worship at 59.90%. This shows that the experience of watching K-Pop concerts is the most dominant element in building fan engagement with their idols, which then triggers emotional attachment and celebrity worship patterns. Although the percentage difference between variables is very slight, these results reflect a close relationship between the three variables, with a moderate average score indicating a significant level of engagement among respondents towards K-Pop culture. This analysis confirms the importance of live experiences such as concerts as a key foundation in shaping fans' emotional and behavioral connections to their idols.

Interestingly, in this study there are statements that reflect the varying intensity of fans' experiences with celebrities. On the intensity of experience dimension, the statement "I experience post-concert depression after attending a concert" has the highest score with

63%. This statement describes the deep emotional impact fans feel after attending a concert. This experience is known as post-concert depression, where fans feel sad or empty after the euphoria they experienced during the concert (Krenz Yap, 2020). This indicates that concerts not only provide an immediate experience, but also leave a deep emotional effect that continues after the event is over. The emergence of post-concert depression shows that the fan–idol relationship goes beyond the consumption of music and performance. It demonstrates how concerts act as immersive communication events that temporarily blur the distance between fans and idols. When this mediated closeness ends abruptly, fans experience a strong sense of loss, which reflects the depth of emotional attachment cultivated during the concert. This finding confirms that K-Pop concerts are not just entertainment spaces, but arenas where meaning, identity, and belonging are constructed collectively.

In contrast, the statement with the lowest score of 57% was “I prepare a banner so that my K-Pop idol notices my existence.” This indicates that although fans attend concerts, they do not notice my presence. This shows that although fans attend concerts, not all of them feel the need to show their presence specifically through preparing banners or other tools to be noticed by idols. This means that some fans feel that their presence at the concert is enough without needing special recognition or attention from celebrities.

On the intensity of experience dimension, these two statements provide a description of how deeply fans experience their idols. Post-concert depression describes the deep feelings that occur after a concert, while banner preparation shows the physical and visible ways that fans use to attract attention. This suggests that more emotionally memorable concert experiences are likely to leave a longer-lasting impact compared to the physical efforts that may be made in the moment.

Based on regression analysis conducted on 384 respondents, it was found that there is a significant and strong relationship between the experience of attending K-Pop concerts as well as emotional attachment with the tendency of celebrity worship behavior. This result is important because it shows how fans’ personal experiences, both through live concerts and deep emotional attachment, contribute to the level of adoration they have for celebrities. In the current era, where pop culture, especially K-Pop, is very popular, understanding the factors that influence celebrity worship is becoming increasingly relevant.

Table 3. Model summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.687	.472	.469	3.558

The model summary analysis shows an R Square value of 0.687, which indicates a fairly strong correlation between the variables of K-Pop concerts and emotional attachment to celebrity worship behavior. This means that there is a fairly strong relationship between these two independent variables and a person's tendency to worship celebrities. This positive correlation indicates that the higher the level of involvement in concerts and the emotional attachment fans feel, the more likely they are to engage in celebrity worship behavior. In other words, these two factors play an important role in shaping how high or low a person engages in celebrity worship.

In addition, the R Square value of 0.472 indicates that about 47.2% of the variation in celebrity worship behavior can be explained by these two main variables, namely K-Pop concerts and emotional attachment. This is a considerable number, which confirms that almost half of celebrity worship behavior can be predicted through these factors. The

remaining 52.8% of the variation in celebrity worship behavior may be due to other variables that are not explained in this model.

Table 4. Coefficients table

Model		Unstandardized B	Coefficients Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	5.556	1.858		2.991	.003
	K-Pop Concert	.514	.032	.601	16.123	.000
	Emotional Attachment	.377	.045	.314	8.431	.000

In the coefficients table, the constant value of 5.556 indicates a basic tendency in celebrity worship, which may already exist in some individuals even without the influence of concerts or emotional attachment. This means that even if fans do not attend concerts or do not have high emotional attachment, there is still a basic level of celebrity worship that is not explained in the following research, such as being influenced by the ability to entertain (Halim & Kiatkawsin, 2021). The unstandardized B value of 0.514 on the K-Pop concert variable (X1) indicates that each one-unit increase in the K-Pop concert variable will increase celebrity worship by 0.514, assuming that other variables remain constant. This shows that the experience of attending K-Pop concerts has a very important role in shaping celebrity worship. The intense and direct concert experience allows fans to feel euphoria and enthusiasm in watching their idols perform, where after attending a K-Pop concert, the higher the fans' feelings of celebrity worship.

Conversely, emotional attachment to celebrities also has a positive influence on celebrity worship, with an unstandardized B value of 0.377. This means that the higher the emotional attachment fans feel towards their idol, the more likely they are to worship the celebrity. This emotional attachment can be a sense of pride, a sense of affection, or even a feeling of emotional connection, all of which reinforce the urge to worship or emulate the idol, the following can be further researched in depth. In the regression test, the significance values for the K-Pop concert and emotional attachment variables are 0.000 each, indicating that the influence of these two variables on celebrity worship is significant at the 95% confidence level. This means that there is a statistically justifiable relationship between concert experience and emotional attachment to celebrity worship behavior, so these results can be trusted as a valid explanation for the relationship between the variables studied.

When a person experiences intense feelings such as post-concert depression, it shows that the relationship they have built with the celebrity has gone beyond mere entertainment, and has touched deeper emotional aspects (Makarim, 2023), which are difficult to replace by everyday experiences accompanied by the realization that the concert is over and must return to reality (Murzen, 2024). This is also in line with the concept that emotional attachment can act as a bridge that brings fans closer to celebrities, even when the interaction is one-sided (Kowert & Daniel, 2021). Fans with high emotional attachment often see celebrities as inspiring or encouraging, even without direct interaction from the idol (Quan et al., 2022). They may feel an inner connection, where fans feel that the celebrity understands them or represents their aspirations.

From a managerial perspective, the results of this study demonstrate the importance for the entertainment industry and celebrity managers to provide deep emotional experiences for fans, both in concert and through interactions on social media. In addition, emotional

experiences such as those gained from concerts should be reinforced with various pre-and-post-concert activities, so that fans continue to feel their attachment to celebrities in the long run. For example, organizers can hold fan meet-up events after the concert or provide exclusive content for fans who attend, so that a sense of attachment is maintained. Given these results, this study shows how important emotional experiences are in forming and strengthening the bond between fans and celebrities. The results also provide input for celebrity managers in creating events that not only provide entertainment, but also build deeper emotional closeness, so that fans feel more connected to their idols.

## **CLOSING**

This study shows that the experience of attending K-Pop concerts (X1) and emotional attachment (X2) have a significant influence on celebrity worship behavior (Y) among K-Pop fans. Based on cultivation theory, K-Pop concerts serve as a medium of intensive exposure that reinforces fans' idealized perceptions of their idols. The more often fans attend concerts, the greater their chances of engaging in a deeper emotional connection with idols. This can be seen from the results of the regression analysis, where K-Pop concerts have a greater influence on celebrity worship ( $B = 0.514$ ) than emotional attachment ( $B = 0.377$ ).

Emotional attachment itself, although not the most influential variable, plays an important role in strengthening the personal relationship between fans and idols, which is often based on a sense of psychological closeness and affection towards idols. This emotional connection allows fans to feel a strong connection, even if the relationship is one-way. These two variables collectively explain 47.2% of the variation in celebrity worship behavior, suggesting that the combination of the live experience of the concert and the depth of emotional attachment are important factors in establishing celebrity worship behavior.

These results confirm that K-Pop concerts are not just entertainment, but also an effective medium in building a deep emotional connection between fans and idols. At the same time, emotional attachment strengthens loyalty to the point of worship, making idols the main figure in fans' lives. Thus, K-Pop concert experience and emotional attachment together contribute to the increase of celebrity worship among K-Pop fans.

The results of this study provide some important recommendations. The entertainment industry can design concerts and activities that strengthen fans' emotional attachment to idols through live interactions and exclusive content. Fan communities can use these results to strengthen solidarity through experience sharing programs and education on managing healthy emotional attachments. Academics can use these findings for further studies, particularly regarding the impact of celebrity worship on fans' mental health. In addition, the government can support cultural collaborations that strengthen the national image and provide education to prevent the negative impacts of excessive emotional attachment. These recommendations are expected to support the development of the K-Pop industry, the fan community, and the well-being of society.

Beyond practical recommendations, this study also contributes theoretically by extending the application of Cultivation Theory to the domain of popular culture and fandom studies. The findings demonstrate that cultivation processes are not limited to mass media exposure, but can also be reinforced through live cultural performances such as K-Pop concerts. This shows that concerts function as both mediated and lived experiences that construct symbolic realities, intensify emotional attachment, and drive celebrity worship. Thus, the study enriches the theoretical understanding of how media exposure in digital pop culture is embodied in offline fan practices.

This study is not without limitations. First, the sample was limited to Indonesian fans, which may affect the generalizability of the findings to other cultural contexts. Second, the study relied on self-reported survey data, which may introduce response bias. Third, the model only explained 47.2% of the variance in celebrity worship, leaving 52.8% unexplained, suggesting that other factors such as personality traits, peer influence, or media consumption patterns may also play a role.

Future studies could explore the remaining 52.8% variance by including additional variables such as personality, social identity, or media exposure patterns. Qualitative approaches such as in-depth interviews or ethnographic methods could also provide richer insights into the lived experiences of fans, particularly regarding phenomena like post-concert depression. Comparative studies across different cultural settings may also highlight how cultural context shapes the relationship between concert experiences, emotional attachment, and celebrity worship.

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