

## **Filipino provincial youth's consumption of K-pop and its effects**

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**Abstract:** Korean Wave or Hallyu is the popularization of the South Korean culture all over the world. Through the use of Cultural Proximity, and Uses and Gratification Theories as guide, this research was able to understand the reasons of Filipino provincial youth's consumption of K-pop music, video, and merchandise, and its subsequent effects to their cultural capital, values, and linguistic, and artistic choices. The data from the self-report of 300 Ilokano 3rd and 4th generation K-pop fans, aged 18 to 30 years old was analyzed using correlation analysis. The respondents are mainly Gen Zs, 3rd generation K-pop fans, and females. The top three (3) most popular stans are Blackpink, BTS, and Twice. The findings show their active consumption of Korean popular music, videos and merchandise. Further, varying degrees to which the respondents cite the following reasons as justification of their K-pop consumption are recorded: for entertainment, establishment and reinforcement of social relationships, and personal identity, and surveillance of the characteristics and trends of the South Korean culture.

Reasons for music consumption registered a positive significant relationship with cultural capital, negative significant relationship with values and aesthetic, and no relationship with linguistic. All components of effect documented direct relationship will all of the reasons for K-pop video consumption, except values and diversion with no significant relationship at all. Reasons for merchandise consumption have a positive significant relationship with cultural capital, and the linguistic, and aesthetic effects.

This study forwards the importance of both traditional and new media in fostering intercultural communication and globalization.

**Keywords:** Hallyu, cultural studies, media effects, K-pop, Cultural Proximity Theory, Uses and Gratifications

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## INTRODUCTION

The preeminence of South Korean culture is seen in its conquest of the world through the phenomenon of Korean Wave or *Hallyu*. The Republic of South Korea is able to cultivate an influential soft power that is making its way around the world and gaining more and more recognition. *Hallyu* or the spread of Korean culture has already swept across the rest of Asia. The opening of other countries' borders as well as increased globalization have made it easier for *Hallyu* to be known by the rest of the world.

Globalization is the "heightened form of time or space compression [...] all made possible (and irresistible) by new technologies and new communication potentials" (Maguire 2002: 262) that leads to "the growth of a global consciousness, hence to the consolidation of world society" (Shahzad 2006: 1). As much as globalization is often described in terms of its economic implications (Reich, 1998), economic globalization also means a global culture (Ambirajan, 2000). Media globalization facilitates both the creation and dissemination of information (Matos, 2021; Siochrú, 2004; Lyons, 2005), and people from various cultures interact now more than ever. Gates (2021) claims that globalization is felt by everyone as it is likened to a thread that reaches individuals from all over the world that potentially influences their perspectives, and also paves the way for progress.

The Korean Wave or *Hallyu* refers to the growing attractiveness of the South Korean culture (Lee, 2011) that benefits from a globalized world. Nazon (2017) claims that *Hallyu* is present in many parts of the world that can be attributed to a "formula" by South Koreans that has captivated other countries to interact with them from their music, cuisine, arts and culture. Yang (2012) stated also that *Hallyu* means both the flow and popularity of Korean popular cultural products, especially media content, in other Asian

countries and beyond, as well as exported Korean popular cultural products themselves. Korean popular music heralded the popularity of Korean popular culture outside Korea, and is sustained by strong local consumption. Because of this, globalization, as a pathway for the success of the spread of South Korean culture, gave rise to the Korean wave or *Hallyu* (Lee, 2012).

*Hallyu* started out in the 1990s when the current regime wanted to utilize their culture as an investment as a global export (Lee, 2008). Lee (2008: 181) explains it as "the focus of the South Korean government since it started in 1999 which instrumentalizes culture and associates it with economic value." This type of investment led to the promulgation of using idols and using the music industry to reach their audiences. The Korean Wave has influenced many countries like Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, United States and the Philippines. *Hallyu*'s main audience is the youth, who are enchanted by Korean music, movies, fashion, food and beauty. Bok-rae (2015) also states that in the word *Hallyu*, the hal (韓) + lyu (流), the "lyu" does not only indicate a trend of popular culture but also means disseminating ideologies and exploring if other cultures will embrace them. *Hallyu* was first introduced to China during the late 1990s and the Chinese saw K-pop as "attractive passion." *Hallyu* is a culture industry providing emotional added-service, making it popular to their Chinese audience. Due to its popularity, the Chinese have coined the term "Hanliu 韓流" which was used to describe the growing popularity of the Korean Culture in their country. They also coined the term "Hanmi 韓迷" which refers to the craze or addiction of K-pop by the Chinese people. However, as stated by Kit-tae (2006) of *Korean Times*, not every Asian country has the same outlook when it comes to Korean Wave. This is because each country has its own or different ethos and base on their

consumption or reaction to the product if it is well received or downright unwanted. According to Kim (2017), Taiwan had the best reception with *Daejangguem*, wherein in Japan, *Korea Herald* was the most popular.

*Hallyu* skyrocketed in popularity in 2008. Kim (2015) stated that *Hallyu* is closely linked to Korean idol groups led by K-pop band boom coupled with the advantages brought about by Web 2.0, with prominence on social networking sites and smartphones (Agatep, 2014).

The Philippines is one of the major fandoms of South Korean culture (Deen, 2014). *Hallyu* in the Philippines is evident in the various K-dramas, actors, idols, music videos, merchandise, and fashion capturing the attention of a great number of Filipinos. Igno and Cenidoza (2016) claims an aggressive collective behavior in many Filipino fans that leads them to want to purchase any product associated to their Korean idols whether it be music or merchandise. Capili (2010), a cultural expert, stated that the melody, K-pop artist, production value, and fantasy factor are the four (4) reasons why Filipinos, especially the youth, enjoy, fancy, and are engaged with K-pop especially the music.

The Filipino youth have been influenced the most by the Korean culture (Alanzalon, 2011). In this paper, a smaller scope of focus on the ethnolinguistic group of *Ilokano* youth residing in Ilocos Norte, the northern part of the Philippines, was investigated with Cultural Proximity, and Uses and Gratification Theories as bases to determine the effects of K-pop to them. It is worth noting that the Province of Ilocos Norte is becoming a hub for K-pop materials and merchandise. There is a booming industry for *Hallyu* in the local context as there are Korean stores that sell various Korean products such as food, music, cosmetic products, clothing, and other items. Further, there is a current deficiency in academic literature with *Ilokanos* as respondents. With all of these research gaps to consider, the

importance of looking into the K-pop consumption and its concurrent effects to the Ilokano youth are highlighted in this study. Specifically, reasons for K-pop music, video, and merchandise are ascertained. Moreover, effects of such consumption to the respondents are determined as well.

This study can contribute significantly in extending the academic discussion on media effects and fan culture. Concepts of communication theories namely Cultural Proximity, and Uses and Gratification by examining the Korean Wave or *Hallyu* in the Filipino provincial youth's context and how could affect fans' behavior could be elaborated on, and given a local perspective. As the first of its own kind, this study is vital because it as an initial inquiry in explaining how *Ilokano* K-pop fans respond to *Hallyu*. Furthermore, the results of the study can provide *Ilokano* K-pop fans a basic understanding of how *Hallyu* could influence their cognitive, attitude, and behavior. Through the results of the study, social scientists could understand the different behaviors of the K-pop fandom and *Ilokano* K-pop fan enthusiasts, how social change occurs in the nexus between culture and globalization, and the shift of the value of culture into an economical aspect. Additionally, this study could offer a new perspective on inter-cultural communication through appreciation and adoption of other cultures, and creating a more globalized world.

This study was anchored on two (2) theories: Uses and Gratification Theory, and Cultural Proximity Theory. Uses and Gratification Theory proposed by Katz (1974) was used to ascertain the reasons of Ilokano youth in consuming K-pop music, videos, and merchandise by looking into their needs that are being satisfied when doing so. Further, the researchers used the following four categories of Uses and Gratification Theory as proposed by McQuail, Bumber and Brown (1972) to elaborate on the reasons on the consumption of Ilokano

youth of K-pop: diversion, personal relationship, personal identity (self-exploration/reference and value reinforcement); and surveillance or information-seeking. Diversion is the entertainment function of K-pop in which K-pop fans listen, watch, and buy K-pop music, videos, and merchandise respectively. Personal relationship is the respondents consuming K-pop in order to develop personal relationships. K-pop fans create a sense of familiarity and companionship because of the shared experience of being a K-pop fan. Personal identity looks into how the respondents mold and/or remold their identity around K-pop. Surveillance is the respondents consuming K-pop for the purpose of understanding or learning about it. It also refers to educating oneself to the culture, lifestyle, and satiating the curiosities that often follows from the consumption of K-pop.

Another theory is Cultural Proximity Theory. This theory was proposed by Straubhaar (1991), and it states that viewers are more likely to select products from their own culture or from countries similar to theirs. Applying this to the current study, the theory focused on looking into how K-pop is relatable to the *Ilokano* youth through their consumption of K-pop music, videos, and merchandise. With this relatability of the Korean culture to *Ilokano* youth, the effects of K-pop consumption are identified. There were four (4) components of Cultural Proximity that this study considered: cultural capital, values, linguistic, and aesthetic. Cultural capital is the knowledge of the *Ilokano* youth about Korean culture including traditions, history, humor, ethical and moral behaviors, traditions and beliefs. Values refer to how K-pop affects their personal and collective behavior as fans and consumers. Linguistic aspect measured how consuming K-pop affected the capability of the *Ilokano* youth to understand, talk and comprehend the Korean language. Lastly, aesthetic

explains how the *Ilokano* youth's perception of beauty, fashion, and style are influenced by their K-pop consumption.

To answer the primary objective of the study, the four (4) categories of reasons for consumption as guided by Uses and Gratification Theory (diversion, personal relationship, personal identity, and surveillance) were correlated to the 4 (four) components of Cultural Proximity Theory (cultural capital, values, linguistic, and aesthetic).

## METHODS

The study employed purposive with criterion sampling method in order to specifically target the population of K-pop fans with the following requirements: identify as a member of the ethnolinguistic group *Ilokano*, 18 to 30 years of age, 3<sup>rd</sup> and/or 4<sup>th</sup> generation K-pop fan, and fan for at least six (6) months. A total of 546 responses were collected using the online survey questionnaire. However, only 300 responses were considered in this study as these were able to satisfy the inclusion criteria of the study. Almost all (97.67%) of the respondents are part of the Generation Z, and an overwhelming majority (76%) of the respondents are fans of the 3<sup>rd</sup> K-pop generation. Females (72%) outnumber the males (25.33%), with top three (3) fan groups of Blackpink, BTS, and Twice.

As this study involved human respondents, an ethics certificate from the university of the researchers was procured first before proceeding with any data gathering procedure. This was to ensure that the study adhered to appropriate and ethical standards with the purpose of safeguarding the dignity, rights and well-being of the individuals who participated in the study. After the issuance of the certificate, the researchers communicated with Facebook K-pop fan group administrators and obtained their

permission for posting the online survey link in their respective groups. An online survey via Google Forms was distributed among the Ilokano K-pop fans in order to collect quantified data to ascertain their reasons for consuming Korean music, video and merchandise, and its subsequent effects. Voluntary participants were informed of the objectives of the research, and had to agree to the Informed Consent Information that was provided to them in order to participate in the study.

An online survey questionnaire served as the main instrument of gathering data from the respondents. It was divided to the following sections: selection criteria, profile of the respondents; consumption; and effects. The first part ensured that only the respondents who satisfied the inclusion criteria were able to answer the survey questionnaire. A respondent must answer *yes* to all of the questions under this section to be able to proceed to the succeeding sections. The next part of the questionnaire asked for the age, sex, fan generation classification, and length of time as a fan. The third and fourth parts of the questionnaire focused on the reasons why the respondents consume K-pop content and its effects to the Ilokano youth respectively. They were asked to signify *strongly agree*, *agree*, *disagree*, and *strongly disagree* to their assessment of item-indicators for K-pop consumption and effects. The questions for the online survey questionnaire were adopted from the study of Alanzalon (2011) and were modified to suit the study's primary objective.

The data gathered was computed and interpreted using mean, and descriptive correlational analysis. Mean was used to identify the reasons of K-pop music, video, and merchandise consumption of Ilokano youth. Next, correlation analysis was carried out to identify the relationship between reasons for consumption (independent variable) and effects (dependent variable) to the Ilokano youth.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Reasons for Consumption of K-pop Music by Ilokano fans

A composite mean of 3.07 (Agree) could be seen in the item-indicators of diversion, personal relationship, personal identity, and surveillance as reasons of consumption by the respondents.

**TABLE 1.** *Ilokano K-pop fans' music consumption.*

Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Rating
<b>Diversion</b>		
I listen K-pop music to release stress.	3.58	<i>Strongly Agree</i>
I listen to K-pop music when I am bored.	3.56	<i>Strongly Agree</i>
I listen to K-pop music to procrastinate.	3.17	<i>Agree</i>
<b>Personal Relationship</b>		
I listen to K-pop music because my peers/friends/relatives listen to it too.	2.86	<i>Agree</i>
I listen to K-pop music so that I can talk about it to my peers/friends/relatives.	2.87	<i>Agree</i>
I listen to K-pop music to make friends with other people.	2.20	<i>Disagree</i>
<b>Personal Identity</b>		
K-pop music is helping/has helped me in creating my identity.	3.16	<i>Agree</i>
The K-pop music I listen to is representative of my personality.	3.08	<i>Agree</i>
Listening to K-pop music has allowed other people to understand who I am.	3.00	<i>Agree</i>
<b>Surveillance</b>		
I listen to K-pop music to know what is trending.	2.89	<i>Agree</i>
I listen to K-pop music to satisfy my curiosity about the culture and people of South Korea.	3.17	<i>Agree</i>

I listen to K-pop music to know more about stan/s, idol/s, and fandom/s.	3.29	<i>Strongly Agree</i>
<b>Composite Mean</b>	<b>3.07</b>	<b><i>Agree</i></b>
<b>Statistical Range</b>	<b>Descriptive Rating</b>	
1.00-1.75	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	
1.76-2.50	<i>Disagree</i>	
2.51-3.25	<i>Agree</i>	
3.26-4.00	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	

Respondents strongly agree that they *listen to K-pop music to release stress* (3.58). This suggests that, for the respondents, K-pop is a coping mechanism or a form of stress release to which they feel that they are more at peace when they are engaged with K-pop music. It is also shown that the respondents strongly agree that they *listen to K-pop music when they are bored* (3.56). When the respondents have nothing else to do, they listen to K-pop music to pass the time. Lastly, the respondents agree that they *listen to K-pop when they want to procrastinate* (3.17). When the respondents are dealt with many things to do, they would want to prolong their work they would listen to K-pop music as a way to procrastinate. Avid fans of K-pop music are into this genre because it brings happiness and cheer to the listeners (Leung, 2012).

The respondents agree that they *listen to K-pop music because their peers, friends and family listen to it too* (2.86), and *so that they can talk about it with them* (2.87). These could imply that listening to K-pop is a form of bond, and a way of strengthening their connections and relationships with other people. Because their family members, peers or friends have affinity towards K-pop music, the Ilokano fans listen to K-pop in order to initiate interaction and conversation with them. In contrast, the respondents disagree that they *listen to K-pop music to make friends* (2.20). This could mean that K-pop music is used by the respondents to strengthen existing social relationships, and not form new ones. In congruence, Jang and Song

(2017) claims that their interest on K-pop often encourage K-pop fans to participate actively and invite their friends and family members to encounter and experience Korean culture.

The respondents agree that *K-pop music has helped them in creating their identity* (3.16), *K-pop music that they listen to is a representative of their personality* (3.08), and *listening to K-pop music has allowed other people to understand who they are* (3.00). These could imply that when the respondents listen to K-pop music, they relate themselves with its vibe, and thus creating their persona or character around it. Further, the respondents' persona in terms of their interests, disposition and individuality are indicative of the music that they listen to. Also, outsiders or non-K-pop fans would often brand listeners of K-pop as *K-poppers*, and the former ridicule the latter because the Filipino society's association of male K-pop idols to gays. Rae's (2015) study of K-pop fans posits that fans love to imitate the identity of *Hallyu* stars; they strive to experience the food, clothing, and other material things that *Hallyu* stars show as part of their lifestyle, and the consequences that come with them.

The respondents agree that they *listen to K-pop to know what is trending* (2.89). Most popular music that can be found on social media sites such as YouTube Shorts, TikTok, and Instagram Stories have song listings, and most of them are K-pop songs. Because of these listings, K-pop songs could easily become trends. Listening to such songs, then, could give the Ilokano youth the sense of being on trend with fresh and upcoming music. Furthermore, an article from Bautista (2021) contends that recently, K-Pop has been one of the main drivers of trends on TikTok due to its choreography and the overall refreshing beats it provides. It is also shown in Table 3 that the respondents agree that they *listen to K-pop music in satisfying their curiosity about the Korean Culture and its*

people (3.17). Most of the context or lyrics of K-pop songs portray the different culture of South Korea. K-pop music portray courtship, humor, and even how an individual should socialize to name a few. The respondents strongly agree that they *listen to K-pop music in order to know about their K-pop idols, stans and fandoms* (3.29). Because most K-pop idols try to incorporate their character to their music, the respondents could have a strong affinity towards their idols, and want to know their personal and professional lives. Another implication is that, by listening to K-pop music, the respondents can know the current events and news about their stans, and the fan group/s that they belong to. All of these needs are gratified when the Ilokano K-pop fans listen to K-pop music.

**Reasons for Consumption of K-pop Videos by Ilokano Fans**

Overall, the respondents agree (3.08) with the item-indicators for K-pop video consumption as shown in Table 2 below. With the exception of two (2) item-indicators with *strongly agree* answers for diversion as the reason for their consumption of K-pop videos, the Ilokano youth agree to the rest of the statements signifying their reasons for watching K-pop videos.

**TABLE 2.** *Ilokano K-pop fans’ video consumption.*

Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Rating
<b>Diversion</b>		
I watch K-pop videos to release stress.	3.55	<i>Strongly Agree</i>
I watch K-pop videos when I am bored.	3.47	<i>Strongly Agree</i>
I watch K-pop videos to procrastinate.	2.88	<i>Agree</i>

<b>Personal Relationship</b>		
I watch K-pop videos because my peers/friends/relatives watch them too.	2.90	<i>Agree</i>
I watch K-pop videos so that I can talk about them to my peers/friends/relatives.	2.94	<i>Agree</i>
I watch K-pop videos to make friends with other people.	2.91	<i>Agree</i>
<b>Personal Identity</b>		
K-pop videos are helping/have helped me in creating my identity.	3.07	<i>Agree</i>
The K-pop videos watch are representative of my personality.	3.04	<i>Agree</i>
Watching K-pop videos has allowed other people to understand who I am.	2.97	<i>Agree</i>
<b>Surveillance</b>		
I watch K-pop videos to know the trending Korean fashion.	3.04	<i>Agree</i>
I watch K-pop videos to satisfy my curiosity about the culture and people of South Korea.	3.10	<i>Agree</i>
I watch K-pop videos to be able to make dance covers.	3.06	<i>Agree</i>
<b>Composite Mean</b>	3.08	<i>Agree</i>

Statistical Range	Descriptive Rating
1.00-1.75	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>
1.76-2.50	<i>Disagree</i>
2.51-3.25	<i>Agree</i>
3.26-4.00	<i>Strongly Agree</i>

The respondents strongly agree that they *watch K-pop to release stress* (3.55). K-pop videos do not only portray the idols singing songs, but also show them in their day-to-day life, as guests in game shows and Korean television, and how

they social with their band members. This suggests that the comedic and fun atmosphere of these videos induce laughter and excite the viewers. Thus, K-pop videos are being used by Ilokano fans to release stress from everyday living. This is in congruence with the findings of Alanzalon (2011) where the respondents feel more relaxed and eager to watch these videos because of the artists' attractive physical appearance and funny nature. In addition, the respondents strongly agree that they *watch K-pop videos when they are bored* (3.47). Given that most K-pop videos show pranks and jokes, awkward moments with and between K-pop idols, and other forms of interactions, viewers could easily use such for entertainment purposes. A study by Agatep (2014) suggests that K-pop music videos such as 'Gangnam Style,' with its very unique and upbeat choreography, are used to ease boredom. Further, K-pop videos are even recreated as a form of energizer to make participants attentive during programs or seminars. Furthermore, the respondents agree that they *watch K-pop videos to procrastinate* (2.88). K-pop videos range from interviews, livestreams, funny moments, guest shows and even reality TV with duration from ten (10) minutes to one (1) hour. Due to its entertaining nature, the respondents could have used K-pop videos to divert their attention instead of working on pressing tasks. Leung (2012) states that K-pop videos are multi-layered, culturally-mixed, simultaneously contradictory, and most of all strategically manufactured. This is the reason why most of their audience watch it even if there is a language barrier present, and time should be dedicated in watching them.

It is shown in the table that the respondents agree with the statement *I watch K-pop videos because their peers, friends and family watch them too* (2.90). In addition, the respondents agree that they *watch these K-pop videos in order to talk about it with their peers, friends and*

*relatives* (2.94). When the respondents watch K-pop videos with entertaining or funny scene, they tend to show them and talk about them with their family members or friends to hear their opinion or know their perspective about such videos. When the respondents show or watch K-pop videos with their peers, friends and family, they would often get a reaction or comment about the specific scenario that they are watching. In turn, the Ilokano K-pop fans can engage people in their social circle by using K-pop videos as a topic to talk about with them. These findings are of the same vein with Anderson's (2018) study that found out that idol groups have diversified their images as well as their musical styles that are often shared and discussed among the different fandoms. Furthermore, Nazon (2017) states that introducing K-pop and Korean culture to friends and family creates a chain of reaction because of its novelty, and it can spread easily to other people who are not even fans. In addition, the respondents agree that they *agree that they watch K-pop videos to make friends* (2.91). K-pop videos posted on social media platforms often encourage fans to consume them and give their opinion about them by using the comment section of such platforms (Robillos, 2012). Like-minded individuals could then form friendships and fan communities through these engagements.

The respondents agree that *K-pop videos have helped them in creating their identity* (3.07). When the respondents are watching their K-pop idols in videos, they have the tendency to associate themselves so much to these individuals that they copy and mimic all including idols characteristics (Alanzalon, 2011). Additionally, as the respondents copy and or mimic the values that they see on the K-pop videos that they watch such as friendly interactions between K-pop idols, they also have the tendency to be friendlier towards their peers and family members. Following this, the respondents agree



that they *watch K-pop videos because it is representative of their own personality* (3.04). This could imply that respondents could establish similarities in the elements of K-pop videos that they watch with their personality. Emulation through cosplay in K-pop is also popular in which this is done by fans to showcase their idols' popularity and elevating their reputation. Cosplay could influence the way through which the respondents create their personas around those videos that they watch. K-pop fans are likely to have high concern about their own reputation and create a "mature image via philanthropy" because they recognize that "their behavior reflects back onto the stars and they try to emulate them and give it justice" (Jang & Song, 2017). Lastly, the respondents also agree that *by watching K-pop videos, other people understood who they are* (2.94). As other individuals are made aware that the respondents are K-pop stans, the former would then try to form notions and understanding that the latter have an affinity towards K-pop. Kim (2017) confirms that K-Pop videos do not only represent the life conditions and desires of youth who are its primary consumers, but they also operate as a platform for role models who can influence the fashion, attitudes, and tastes of youth, as many fans follow their stans.

As shown in Table 2, the respondents agree that they *watch K-pop videos to see the trending Korean fashion* (3.04). Most K-pop videos, specially interviews, showcase different clothing and accessories that K-pop idols wear. These idols would often elaborate on their preferences during these interviews. In turn, the respondents could have used them as references for their own fashion styles. In addition, the respondents agree that *watching K-pop videos satisfies their curiosity about the culture and the people of South Korea* (3.10). Given that K-pop videos depict dimensions of South Korean culture which includes fashion, foods, humor,

and even traditions, the respondents could satisfy their need to be informed about the idiosyncrasies of Korean people as dictated by their culture. Furthermore, most of the respondents agree that they *watch K-pop videos to make dance covers* (3.06). K-pop videos showcase K-pop idols dancing well-choreographed and unique dance steps. Ilokano fans would then want to copy these steps. This is the reason why fans would often watch these videos over and over again until they internalize and memorize the choreography for trends and dance challenges. K-pop videos as a way for fans to be informed of trends, and discover their biases is supported by Peralta (2021).

**Reasons for Consumption of K-pop Merchandise by Ilokano Fans**

Table 3 below shows a composite mean of 2.60 (Agree) to the item-indicators of merchandise consumption according to the respondents.

**TABLE 3.** *Ilokano K-pop fans' merchandise consumption*

<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Descriptive Rating</b>
<b>Diversion</b>		
I buy K-pop merchandise to release stress.	2.71	<i>Agree</i>
I buy K-pop merchandise when I am bored.	2.52	<i>Agree</i>
Buying K-pop merchandise makes me happy.	3.05	<i>Agree</i>
<b>Personal Relationship</b>		
I buy K-pop merchandise because my peers/friends	2.38	<i>Disagree</i>

/relatives buy them too.			idol/s, and fandom/s.
I buy K-pop merchandise so that I can talk about them to my peers/friends /relatives.	2.47	<i>Disagree</i>	<b>Composite Mean</b> 2.60 Agree
I buy K-pop merchandise to make friends with other people.	2.48	<i>Disagree</i>	<b>Statistical Range</b> 1.00-1.75 1.76-2.50 2.51-3.25 3.26-4.00
<b>Personal Identity</b>			<b>Descriptive Rating</b> <i>Strongly Disagree</i> <i>Disagree</i> <i>Agree</i> <i>Strongly Agree</i>
Buying K-pop merchandise is helping/has helped me in creating my identity.	2.55	<i>Agree</i>	All item-indicators for diversion as a reason for K-pop merchandise ( <i>I buy K-pop merchandise to release stress</i> , 2.71; <i>I buy K-pop merchandise when I am bored</i> , 2.52, and <i>Buying K-pop merchandise makes me happy</i> , 3.05) registered agree as a descriptive rating. It could be implied that when the respondents are able to purchase their long-awaited K-pop merchandise or products, they feel a sense of satisfaction. This finding is in congruence with Kim et al.'s (2018) that claims that purchases from their respective K-pop idols' merchandise regardless of the price make them feel a sense of calm and accomplishment. Moreover, the respondents would often buy K-pop merchandise when they feel boredom because browsing through physical shops and online stores would eradicate their boredom, regardless of whether the item is within their budget or not. When people are bored, they would open online shopping applications to ease their boredom through window shopping or browsing through products as this would reduce their stress and make them happy (Wongsunopparat, 2022). It is also worth noting that the respondents could feel a sense of satisfaction when they finally get their idols' K-pop merchandize that they have waited long to procure, especially items that would help identify their fandom such as light stick or fashion wear. Kim et al. (2018) asserts that K-pop merchandise make fans happy knowing that they have helped the K-pop idol and/or group they are stanning despite whether the product has practical use or not.
The K-pop merchandise I buy is representative of my personality.	2.57	<i>Agree</i>	
Buying K-pop merchandise has allowed other people to understand who I am.	2.50	<i>Disagree</i>	
<b>Surveillance</b>			
I buy K-pop merchandise to know what is trending.	2.49	<i>Disagree</i>	
I buy K-pop merchandise to satisfy my curiosity about the culture and people of South Korea.	2.60	<i>Agree</i>	
I buy K-pop merchandise to know more about stan/s,	2.77	<i>Agree</i>	

The respondents *buy K-pop merchandise because their peers, friends and family buy them too* (2.71). This could imply that the Ilokano youth's social circle has a huge influence on their purchase of K-pop merchandise. They could have been taught or made aware by their peers on when, where and how to buy K-pop, and persuaded to start their own collection of K-pop merchandise. It was found that 85.7% of the research population in the study conducted by Agatep (2014) that friends support each other by buying K-pop products and exchanging or trading it with their peers and friends who have an extra K-pop idol product in their possession. In addition, the respondents *buy K-pop products in order to talk to their peers, friends and relatives* (2.52). K-pop merchandise is a great conversation starter such as their outfits or the newest photocards and accessories. Fans talk about their purchases and exchange information about the products such as prices, where they bought it, and what kind of items or K-pop idols they have on their photocards. Furthermore, the respondents disagree that *they buy K-pop products to make friends with other people* (2.48). This would mean that the respondents do not buy K-pop merchandise in order to make friends as their priority. Instead, the respondents buy K-pop merchandise for their own satisfaction and sense of fulfillment.

The respondents agree that *buying K-pop products helps them in creating their identity* (2.55), and *K-pop merchandise that they buy is representative of themselves* (2.57). When the respondents buy K-pop merchandise, they would wear or use them as merchandise range from clothing to beauty products from their K-pop idols. Using such products is a way to imitate their idols. Thus, creating their personal identity around and through K-pop merchandise. K-pop bias, or the K-pop idol fans stan the most, have a big influence in the way their fans create their personality because the fans would

want to emulate their personal reality that is very much similar to their idols. However, the respondents disagree that *when buying K-pop merchandise people understand who they are* (2.50). This would imply that other people or non-K-pop fans do not necessarily understand right away who the Ilokano K-pop fans are and what they are trying to do, portray and look like. This is because most K-pop products are still not conventional or well-known in the Ilokano community, and are only known in the present by K-pop fanatics. K-pop fans express their desires, values, and identity by consuming the subject, and they sometimes follow whatever their chosen stars do but often ridiculed because they do expressions that are not the norms in their community (Jang & Song, 2017).

The respondents disagree that *they buy K-pop products to know what is trending* (2.49). This could mean that because the respondents look up trending products first before they buy it, Ilokano K-pop fans are already armed with the smart decision of knowing about the product first before purchasing it. However, there are instances wherein promo items such as hoodies have extras or freebies when fans buy at web stores of K-pop group fashion and clothing lines. According to Fuentes (2020), Filipino K-pop fans often shop online because of the lack of physical stores or merchandise sellers in the country. Nevertheless, doing so, fans are able to visit online stores that showcase K-pop idol clothing preferences which helps them to know more about the products and their idols. In addition, the respondents agree that *they buy K-pop merchandise to satisfy their curiosity about the culture and people of South Korea* (2.60). When Ilokano youth buy K-pop merchandise, they also buy the South Korean culture as merchandise include clothing, food, ornaments and accessories, and *samgyupsal* or Korean barbeque. Patronizing such has become a trend nowadays, and more and more

people enjoy eating at food establishments that cater to Korean food. Thus, people are learning how Koreans typically enjoy their mealtime, and other things specific to the South Korean culture. In the Philippines, a *hypebeast* is a person that typically follows winter Korean fashion. With this, the Ilokano youth are further learning about the fashion of the country. Similarly, the respondents agree that they *buy K-pop merchandise to know more about their stans, idols and fandoms* (2.77). When fans buy clothes from Korean online web stores like *Chingu Fashion*, they are able to see on full detail on which idols use those specific types of clothing. If one buys accessories, for instance, they will also see which idols used them, which concert or music video they can be seen wearing them, and even a statement on why the idols wore them. K-pop merchandise is helpful for the Ilokano youth to satisfy their need to be informed about the stans and fandoms. This is because K-pop merchandise are goods related to K-pop idols, which can have logos, photos, or other elements of K-pop idols printed on them (Conghao, 2022). The Ilokano K-pop fans could use them to know more about their idols by purchasing them. This is one of the major reasons of the Hallyu Wave success because each piece of merchandise contains a symbol of the fandom/s the fans belong to which they are proud to be a part of.

**Effects of K-pop Music to the Ilokano Youth**

Table 4 below shows the relationship between K-pop music consumption and its concurrent effects in terms of influences in the Ilokano youth’s cultural capital, values, linguistic, and aesthetic choices. The data presents that K-pop music consumption has certain effects to the respondents’ cultural capital, values, and aesthetic choices in varying degrees.

**TABLE 4.** *Effects of K-pop music consumption to the Ilokano youth*

Music	Cultural Capital		Values		Linguistic		Aesthetic	
	r value	p value	r value	p value	r value	p value	r value	p value
Diversion	-0.050	0.385	-0.099	0.088	-0.118	0.041	-0.079	0.170
Personal Relationship	0.218*	0.000	-0.060	0.0298	-0.028	0.067	-0.096	0.097
Personal Identity	0.464*	0.000	-	0.123*	0.033	0.098	-	0.119*
Surveillance	0.430*	0.000	-	0.123*	0.033	-0.112	-	0.134*

\*\*Correlation is significant at 0.05

\*Correlation is significant at 0.01

All reasons for consumption such as personal relationship (0.218; strength: moderate), personal identity (0.464; strength: moderate), and surveillance (0.430; strength: moderate) registered as positive significant relationship with the respondents’ cultural capital with the exception of diversion. These indicate a direct relationship between cultural capital to their personal relationship, personal identity, and surveillance as effects of the respondents’ consumption of K-pop music. This means that the more the Ilokano fans listen to K-pop music in order to strengthen their personal relationships, create their personal identity, and know the current news and trends, the more their knowledge and information about South Korean culture improve, and vice versa. Further, it could be claimed that since K-pop music carry in it South Korean people’s non-material culture such as forging friendships, values and ethical behavior, and their societal truths, K-pop music could have an effect to the way the Ilokano youth deal with other people, form and re-form their identity, and be updated with current South Korean events.

Only two (2) out of four (4) reasons for K-pop music consumption registered a negative significant relationship with values specifically personal identity (-0.123; strength: moderate), and surveillance (-0.123; strength: moderate). These point to the inverse relationship between the Ilokano youth’s consumption of K-pop music for their personal identity and surveillance

and their values as a person. This study then argues that the more the respondents use K-pop music for personal identity and surveillance, the less effect would be on their values, and vice versa. Through the respondents' consumption of K-pop music with the creation of their identity in mind, and being updated with current happenings online and offline, there would be less tendency for the Ilokano youth to learn the South Korean values and integrate them in their lives as part of their personal identity. The opposite could also be valid: the less concerned the Ilokano K-pop fans of using music for their personal identity and surveillance, the more that they would adopt Korean values and behavior. According to the study conducted by Labrador (2019), K-pop's influence on teens such as spending too much time watching and listening to K-pop music videos and Korean drama, and searching information about K-pop idols would often result to them forgetting their habitual activities, such as household chores, family and community activities and even planned exercises.

The study recorded no correlation between reasons for consumption and the respondents' consideration to the Korean language. This lack of significance could be attributed to how the respondents might not internalize the lyrics of K-pop music while listening to them; instead, they focus on the beat and rhythm of the songs. This is in congruence with the study of Agatep (2014) wherein the respondents are more interested on listening to the beat and rhythm rather than the lyrics and what the song means. Moreover, Evason (2016) claims that the South Korean communication pattern is generally indirect and quite verbose. Korean speakers tend to rely less on words and are attentive to a speaker's posture, expression and tone of voice to draw meaning. Speech can be ambiguous as they often understate their point. With these, it could be argued that Ilokano K-

pop fans fall short of understanding and even being encouraged to learn the Korean language as they struggle in mimicking the communication pattern present in K-pop music and understanding the lyrics of the song.

The study has recorded only two (2) significant correlations between reasons for K-pop music consumption and aesthetic as an effect: personal identity (-0.119; strength: moderate), and surveillance (-0.134; strength: moderate). The negative relationship means that the more the respondents use music for their personal identity and surveillance, there would be less tendency for them to adopt K-pop style and fashion, and vice versa. Williams (2016) states that, "Fans, like any other member of society, do not merely react to stimuli in the environment. Rather, they handle the meanings of specified identities interpretively." This could imply that K-pop music consumption for personal identity and surveillance does not translate to overt manifestations such as how the respondents choose their clothing, shoes, and accessories. Given that music is merely auditory, and has no visual representation, K-pop fans resort to formulating their own interpretation of their personal aesthetic. This is in contradiction to emo, reggae, or jazz blues which integrate fashion closely resembling the meaning, beat and interpretation of the songs classified under these genres.

### **Effects of K-pop Videos to the Ilokano Youth**

The relationship between reasons for K-pop video consumption and effects in the respondents' cultural capital, values, linguistic, and aesthetic choices are shown in Table 5 below.

**TABLE 5.** *Effects of K-pop video consumption to the Ilokano Youth*

Videos	Cultural Capital		Values		Linguistic		Aesthetic	
	r value	p value	r value	p value	r value	p value	r value	p value
Diversi on	0.17 7**	0.00 2	0.07 5	0.19 7	0.49 9**	0.00 0	0.31 0**	0.00 0
Persona l Relatio nship	0.57 6**	0.00 0	0.30 0**	0.00 0	0.63 3**	0.00 0	0.67 3**	0.00 0
Persona l Identity	0.73 1*	0.00 0	0.50 3**	0.00 0	0.80 2**	0.00 0	0.86 4**	0.00 0
Surveill ance	0.78 3*	0.00 0	0.63 1**	0.00 0	0.83 6**	0.00 0	0.93 0*	0.00 0

\*\*Correlation is significant at 0.05

\*Correlation is significant at 0.01

All reasons for K-pop video consumption registered a positive significant relationship with cultural capital: diversion (0.177; strength: moderate), personal relationship (0.576; strength: high), personal identity (0.731; strength: high), and surveillance (0.783; strength: high). This study contends that K-pop videos has a direct relationship in influencing the cultural capital, or the knowledge of the Ilokano youth about the South Korean culture. Further, the more the respondents use K-pop video for entertainment, forging and strengthening of their personal relationships, creation of personal identity, and surveillance, the more that their cultural capital increases, and vice versa. It is shown in the study of Levkowitz et al. (2015) that K-pop fandom gives fans a strong sense of identity and camaraderie by sharing their experiences and details that they found out about their K-pop idols and their fandoms, and in turn, the South Korean culture.

Three (3) out of four (4) reasons for K-pop video consumption have registered to have a significant relationship with values except diversion. Personal relationship (0.300; strength: moderate), personal identity (0.503; strength: high), and surveillance (0.631; strength: high) have a direct relationship with the Ilokano youth's reasons for consumption of K-pop videos. This means that the more the respondents use videos for their

personal relationship, personal identity, and surveillance, the more that they could adopt South Korean beliefs, perspectives, and standards of behavior, and vice versa. It could be inferred from the data that because of watching K-pop videos for the respondents' personal relationship and identity, and surveillance, they could be equipped with knowledge on how to bond with their fellow peers and fandom by watching their idols and mimicking them. People find it wholesome when Korean idols respect the elderly and, in turn, they emphasize in behaving well when in front of their grandparents (Goldshtein & Gideoni, 2003).

All reasons for K-pop video consumption registered a positive significant relationship with linguistics: diversion (0.499; strength: moderate), personal relationship (0.633; strength: high), personal identity (0.802; strength: high), and surveillance (0.836; strength: high). This study argues that watching K-pop videos could affect the Ilokano youth's comprehension and utilization of the Korean language when videos are used for entertainment, establishing personal relationship, and identity, and knowing the current events. A positive relationship signifies that as the reasons for video consumption are more cited by the respondents, their propensity towards the Korean language also increases, and vice versa. This can be attributed to how the Ilokano youth could utilize subtitles when watching K-pop videos. Subtitles could assist in the respondents' understanding of jokes, why a character behaved in a particular way, and specific cultural situations depicted in K-pop videos, and sequentially, their feeling of being entertained. Bentley (2018) states that K-pop can make a person be able to understand the Korean language due to subtitles or translated text in K-pop vlogs combined with listening to native speakers.

All factors in the reasons for consumption registered a positive

significant relationship with aesthetic and fashion in terms of Ilokano youth consuming K-pop videos. diversion, (0.310; strength: moderate) personal relationship (0.673; strength: high), personal identity (0.864; strength: high) and surveillance (0.930; strength: high). It could be inferred from the data that the more the respondents use K-pop videos for entertainment, development of their personal relationships and identity, and surveillance, they would tend to adopt the appearance or style of K-pop icons more, and vice versa. It could be said that the consumption of K-pop videos by the Ilokano youth as a way to pass the time, bond with their family, mimic their idols, and see the trending clothing that K-pop idols wear as depicted in K-pop videos has a direct effect to their fashion and style choices. This could be connected to how the respondents can experiences K-pop culture by watching its portrayals in K-pop videos. Similar results could be seen in the study of Levkowitz et al. (2015) where 95% of fans had never been to Korean; however, they could have experienced the Korean culture through watching Korean TV dramas, and other Korean content.

**Effects of K-pop Merchandise to the Ilokano Youth**

The respondents were gratified when they buy K-pop merchandises such as clothes and accessories and do these products affect them in terms of their relationships, their knowledge of the Korean culture and language to certain extents.

**TABLE 6.** *Effect of K-pop merchandise consumption to the Ilokano youth*

Merchandise	Cultural Capital		Values		Linguistic		Aesthetic	
	r value	p value	r value	p value	r value	p value	r value	p value
Diversion	0.349**	0.000	0.088	0.127	0.452**	0.000	0.486**	0.000
Personal Relationship	0.228**	0.000	0.092	0.113	0.287**	0.000	0.407**	0.000
Personal Identity	0.299**	0.000	0.092	0.113	0.287**	0.000	0.497**	0.000
Surveillance	0.260**	0.000	0.046	0.426	0.317**	0.000	0.376**	0.000

\*\*Correlation is significant at 0.05

\*Correlation is Significant at 0.01

All reasons for K-pop merchandise consumption registered a moderate positive significant relationship with the Ilokano youth’s cultural capital: diversion (0.349), personal relationship (0.228), personal identity (0.299), and surveillance (0.260). A direct relationship between reasons and cultural capital as an effect of the respondents’ consumption of K-pop merchandise would mean that as the former is the more cited by the Ilokano youth, the more they would know about South Korean social knowledge, and vice versa. According to Kim et al. (2018), fans buy merchandise even without practical use. Fans buy them for their personal collection and they feel tranquility upon the completion of such collection. Merchandise could also foster interaction between fans and non-fans when they do not understand the written or symbolic messages included in products. Alanzalon (2011) confirms that “individuals with friends who speak Korean would often ask for their help in deciphering texts and messages.” Also, K-pop merchandise are trends of the current Korean society. By buying such, the Ilokano youth could satisfy their need to survey “in” products related to their biases and fandoms.

This study recorded no correlation between reasons for merchandise consumption and the respondents’ values. This could be attributed to how there is no apparent personal beliefs and characteristics involved in physical products inspired by K-pop idols and bands like photocards, hug pillows, accessories, and the like except for the price and the people who made or transact with them. This is substantiated by Ardhiyansyah (2021) as merchandise do not have a form of characteristic embedded in them; however, there is sentimental value for individuals who are fans of these idol-related products.

All reasons for consumption registered a positive significant

relationship with the Ilokano youth's comprehension and utilization of the Korean language considering K-pop merchandise consumption. Diversion (0.452; strength: moderate), personal relationship (0.287; strength: moderate), personal identity (0.287; strength: moderate), and surveillance (0.317; strength: moderate) all have a direct relationship with linguistic as an effect of consumption. This would mean that the more the reasons are referred to by the respondents for their K-pop merchandise consumption, the more that they would be encouraged to learn and understand the Korean language, and vice versa. Levkowitz et al. (2015) maintain the existence of fan-made subtitles for K-pop videos and music. This would mean that individuals are learning K-pop for their fandoms, and to easily consume other K-pop contents. Other means of Korean language learning could also appear in the way fans would refer vague words or phrases to their friends who can understand and speak Korean (Alanzalon, 2011).

All reasons for consumption registered a positive significant relationship with aesthetic as an effect of the Ilokano youth's consumption of K-pop merchandise. Diversion (0.486; strength: moderate), personal relationship (0.407; strength: high), personal identity (0.407; strength: moderate), and surveillance (0.376; strength: moderate) have direct correlation with the respondents' appearance and style inspired by K-pop icons. This implies that as the reasons are more applicable for the respondents, the higher the tendency for them to apply Korean fashion and style to their personal choices, and vice versa. This study then forwards that individuals who consume K-pop merchandise are greatly affected on their fashion choices. K-pop merchandise could also be customized K-pop fan items such as personalized accessories and clothing. Merch swap parties could be conducted by fans across various fandoms to trade and exchange

one-of-a-kind pieces. By doing so, K-pop fans create their own style that could be influenced by their idols and fandoms. Fan creation was discussed by Li et al. (2014) in which that K-pop fan content creation in an online community is reciprocal among members through the interactive process of giving, receiving and repaying useful content; therefore, creating stronger bonds within their fandoms and even patronizing a form of aesthetic that closely resembles or imitates their K-pop idols fashion. Additionally, online communities make sharing and circulating knowledge about the Korean culture easier for K-pop fans. K-pop fans have access to identity-relevant media resources such as K-pop idol's fashion and lifestyle. Thus, they are able to enact their identity within the information they easily accessed. User generated content (UGC) videos and opinion-sharing show significant fan identity cues because the K-pop fans are more actively engaged in social interactions which then leads to more meaningful fan group identification (Zhao, 2021).

## CONCLUSION

In general, it could be concluded that the Ilokano youth fans are active consumers of Korean popular music, videos and merchandise. They are exposed to K-pop media contents, which means that K-pop has a strong presence towards the Ilokano youth and that there are many Ilokano youth who are fans of K-pop content and they often consume these contents on a day-to-day basis. Further, it was also found that there are more female fans than males in Ilocos Norte, Philippines. This means that K-pop contents that prioritize female fan service are more favored by the Ilokano youth. Also, the *Ilokano* youth consume K-pop to divert their attention and be entertained, to be close to their peers, friends and even families, to create bonds



with other people, and learn values and characteristics of the South Korean culture. Lastly, cultural capital, linguistic, values and aesthetic as effects of K-pop consumption could affect the *Ilokano* youth, but only to a certain extent.

This research has several limitations. Firstly, this study only included *Ilokano* youth as respondents. Consideration to other Filipino ethnic and age groups was not given. Secondly, K-pop fans from the past 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> generations were not considered. Thirdly, this study did not involve new fans or fans of K-pop for less than six (6) months. Lastly, the study is limited to the self-reports of the respondents as the main source of data. It is then recommended for further studies that other forms of data gathering aside from using online survey questionnaire should be considered such as focus group discussion to supplement the self-report of the respondents. Further studies could be conducted separately for K-pop music, video, and merchandise to come up with a more comprehensive view on the cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioral effects of K-pop consumption to Filipino fans. Aside from quantitative studies, qualitative research specifically phenomenological approach is recommended to explore the lived experiences of K-pop fans, their encounters, and escapades of being individuals who are avid consumers of K-pop content.

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