

The impact of k-pop cultural trends on generation z's language, identity, and consumer behaviour to shape global youth lifestyles

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Abstract - This study aims to explore how K-pop cultural trends influence Generation Z (Gen Z) in areas such as language learning motivation, gender identity awareness, consumer behaviour, and cultural engagement. A mixed-methods approach was employed, including qualitative content analysis of K-pop media and quantitative surveys among Gen Z fans in Indonesia and the United States. Analysis revealed that K-pop motivates Gen Z to learn Korean and English through engaging content and social media interactions, while also fostering new gender role perceptions that challenge traditional norms. Additionally, emotional connections with K-pop idols significantly shape Gen Z's consumption patterns, including merchandise and concert attendance. The research highlights the role of K-pop fandom in promoting regional creative economies and cultural exchange, as well as its potential for innovative communication strategies like da'wah content. In conclusion, K-pop serves as a powerful cultural force shaping Gen Z's language skills, identity formation, and consumer behaviours globally.

Keywords: K-pop influence, Generation Z, language motivation, gender representation, consumer behaviour

1. Introduction

The global rise of K-pop, or Korean pop culture, has significantly influenced Generation Z (Gen Z) worldwide, shaping their language learning, identity formation, and consumer behaviour. Originating from South Korea, K-pop's appeal extends beyond music to include fashion, beauty products, and lifestyle trends that resonate strongly with young audiences. This cultural wave has been linked to increased motivation among Gen Z to learn Korean and English languages, adopt new gender role perceptions, and engage in cross-cultural consumption patterns (Youngsun et al., 2024; Arifatuzzahra et al., 2024; Choo et al., 2022).



As K-pop continues to expand its global reach, understanding its multifaceted impact on Gen Z is urgent for educators, marketers, and cultural policymakers. The rapid adoption of K-pop culture raises questions about potential shifts in local cultural identities and consumer habits that could influence economic markets and social values. Moreover, balancing foreign cultural influences with preservation of local traditions is a pressing concern in regions like Indonesia where Islamic ethics also play a role (Karim & Farihah, 2025; Harahap & Yumitro, 2025).

This study defines K-pop cultural trends as the collective influence of Korean music, dramas, fashion, language use, and celebrity endorsements on Gen Z individuals aged approximately 15-25 years. Generation Z refers to the demographic cohort born roughly between the mid-1990s and early 2010s who are digital natives deeply engaged with social media platforms where K-pop content proliferates. Consumer behaviour encompasses purchasing decisions related to merchandise, beauty products, concert tickets, and luxury brands endorsed by K-pop idols (Aprilia et al., 2024; Romo & Sena, 2024; Chen, 2023).

The study draws on theories of cultural globalization and glocalization to explain how global K-pop culture interacts with local identities among Gen Z consumers. Social identity theory helps elucidate how fandom communities foster emotional connections influencing consumption patterns. Additionally, motivational theories in second language acquisition clarify how engagement with K-pop content enhances language learning motivation (Choo et al., 2022; Youngsun et al., 2024; Arifatuzzahra et al., 2024).

Islamic ethical philosophy provides a framework for analysing how Gen Z in Muslim-majority contexts negotiate foreign cultural influences while maintaining moral values (Karim & Farihah, 2025).

Previous research shows that Indonesian Gen Z's interest in learning Korean is driven by K-pop's popularity as a lifestyle trend rather than traditional educational motives (Youngsun et al., 2024). In the U.S., American Gen Z prefers romance-themed and self-empowering content in K-pop that fosters community feelings (Lin, 2025). Studies also reveal that exposure to Korean culture increases brand loyalty toward K-beauty products among Indonesian youth (Harahap & Yumitro, 2025), while emotional engagement with boy bands like NCT significantly shapes consumptive behaviours such as merchandise purchases (Aprilia et al., 2024).

Gender differences appear in consumer behaviour patterns influenced by K-pop culture across China and Spain (Chen, 2023; Romo & Sena, 2024). However, concerns about erosion of local culture have been raised alongside calls for balanced cultural integration grounded in ethical values (Indrawan et al., 2022; Karim & Farihah, 2025).

Social media platforms can contribute to cultural diversity and intercultural understanding by exposing EFL university students to different cultural perspectives and encouraging cross-cultural interaction. Such exposure is particularly relevant in contemporary language education, where intercultural competence is increasingly viewed as an important component of communicative ability (Mahmood et al., 2024). Beyond language learning, cultural and linguistic expression can also be examined through literary works, as poetry may reveal tensions between freedom of expression and the preservation of linguistic features, demonstrating the close relationship between language, identity, and artistic expression (Lestari & Alamsyah, 2024).

Digital environments also influence the way younger generations interact with culture, consumption, and identity. In virtual gaming contexts, visual aesthetics and cross-cultural elements can shape users' intentions to purchase virtual items, indicating that digital culture can affect both consumer preferences and cultural perceptions (Dhia & Rijadi, 2024). Similarly, Generation Z possesses distinctive characteristics that require educational approaches emphasizing digital engagement, flexibility, collaboration, and learner-centered experiences (Wajdi et al., 2024). These characteristics are also reflected in their consumption behavior, as social media can influence Generation Z's purchasing decisions concerning sustainable products (Tan & Trang, 2023).

Celebrity culture represents another important dimension of Generation Z's digital and consumer experiences. K-pop and celebrity endorsements can influence luxury-goods purchasing intentions among Spanish Gen Z K-pop fans, demonstrating how popular culture and social media-mediated celebrity influence can shape consumer attitudes across cultural boundaries (González Romo & Pérez Sena, 2024). At the workplace, Generation Z's characteristics are likewise associated

with psychological capital and work commitment, suggesting that this generation's values, attitudes, and psychological resources are important for understanding their professional behavior (Tran et al., 2024). Meanwhile, cinematic representations of Macao illustrate how cultural identity can be constructed through exotic imagination and shared cultural roots, highlighting the continuing importance of media in shaping perceptions of culture and identity (Fan & Zhao, 2025).

The reviewed studies demonstrate that culture, language, education, digital media, consumption, and identity are increasingly interconnected. Social media and other digital platforms provide spaces in which Generation Z encounters diverse cultural representations while simultaneously developing educational, social, professional, and consumer identities. These findings support the importance of integrating intercultural awareness, digital literacy, and culturally responsive approaches into contemporary educational practices.

This study addresses several key questions: How do K-pop cultural trends influence Gen Z's motivation to learn languages such as Korean and English? In what ways does K-pop shape Gen Z's identity construction regarding gender roles and lifestyle? How do emotional connections with K-pop idols affect Gen Z's consumer behaviour across different countries? What challenges arise from the interaction between global K-pop culture and local traditions? Finally, how can ethical frameworks guide Gen Z in harmonizing foreign influences with indigenous values? These problems aim to deepen understanding of the complex socio-cultural dynamics driven by the Korean Wave among young global consumers.

2. Method

2.1 Data Collection

This study employed a mixed-methods approach to comprehensively examine the impact of K-pop cultural trends on Generation Z's language, identity, and consumer behaviour. Quantitative data were collected through online surveys targeting Gen Z participants in countries such as Indonesia, China, Vietnam, and the United States to capture diverse cultural contexts and consumption patterns. Qualitative data were gathered via semi-structured interviews and open-ended questionnaires with selected Gen Z fans to explore deeper motivations behind language learning, identity formation, and emotional engagement with K-pop idols. Secondary data sources including social media content, fan interactions, and marketing materials were also analysed to contextualize survey findings and understand the role of digital platforms in spreading K-pop culture. Due to pandemic-related restrictions, some data collection was conducted entirely online using tools like Google Forms and WhatsApp.

2.2 Data Analysis

Quantitative survey data were analysed using statistical software such as SPSS for descriptive statistics, reliability testing, and structural equation modelling (SEM) to identify relationships between cultural identity facets and consumption intentions. Qualitative interview transcripts and open responses underwent thematic content analysis to identify recurring themes related to language motivation, gender perceptions, lifestyle changes, and consumer behaviour influenced by K-pop. Triangulation of quantitative and qualitative results allowed for a nuanced understanding of how emotional connections with idols translate into purchasing decisions and cultural identity shifts among Gen Z. Additionally, secondary data from social media were examined through content analysis techniques focusing on textual, visual, and conceptual elements that resonate with Gen Z audiences. This multi-layered analytical approach ensured robust insights into the complex socio-cultural dynamics driven by K-pop trends.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Results

The motivation of Indonesian Generation Z (Gen Z) to learn Korean is strongly influenced by the widespread popularity of K-pop as a lifestyle trend rather than traditional academic or career-driven reasons. Unlike older generations who may approach language learning with formal goals, Gen Z's engagement with Korean is deeply tied to their fandom culture and social identity, where K-pop serves as a gateway to exploring Korean language and culture in an informal, enjoyable way (Youngsun et al.,



2024). This shift reflects a broader cultural orientation where language learning is integrated into daily entertainment and social interaction rather than solely educational contexts.

3.1.1 Social media platform

K-pop content itself plays a crucial role in enhancing this motivation. Songs often include English lyrics alongside Korean, and music videos frequently feature English subtitles, making the content accessible and appealing to Indonesian youth who are simultaneously exposed to both languages (Arifatuzzahra et al., 2024).

Moreover, K-pop idols actively engage with fans through social media platforms using English, which has become the lingua franca within global fandom communities. This interaction encourages Indonesian Gen Z fans to improve their English skills as a practical tool for communication within these online spaces, further increasing their motivation to learn English alongside Korean (Faiza, 2020; Valerio-Ramos et al., 2023).

Social media platforms such as YouTube, TikTok, Instagram, and Twitter serve as dynamic environments where fans not only consume K-pop content but also participate in fan communities that require English proficiency for effective communication. These platforms provide immersive experiences that combine visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learning styles, making language acquisition more engaging compared to traditional classroom methods (Ridlo et al., 2024; Faiza, 2020).

The interactive nature of these communities fosters self-directed learning where fans pick up vocabulary, phrases, and cultural nuances through repeated exposure and peer interaction. However, this motivation is not without challenges. Some studies note that while K-pop inspires enthusiasm for language learning, it can also lead to distractions from academic priorities if not managed well (Sinaga et al., 2024).

Additionally, Indonesian Gen Z's use of Korean words often involves code-switching or mixing with Bahasa Indonesia and English, sometimes resulting in incomplete understanding of grammar or meaning due to limited formal instruction (Wirawati, 2019).

Despite this, the use of Korean terms within peer groups strengthens social bonds and identity among fans who share similar cultural interests. The influence of K-pop on language motivation also intersects with broader cultural dynamics. While it promotes openness to foreign languages and cultures, there are concerns about maintaining local cultural identity amid this global trend. Islamic ethical perspectives emphasize the importance of balancing acceptance of foreign influences like K-pop with preservation of local traditions and values (Karim & Farihah, 2025).

This balance is crucial for Indonesian Gen Z as they navigate their cultural identities in a globalized world. Indonesian Gen Z's motivation to learn Korean is primarily driven by K-pop's role as a trendy lifestyle phenomenon that integrates language learning into entertainment and social interaction. The presence of English in K-pop content and idol-fan communication further motivates simultaneous English learning. Social media platforms amplify this effect by providing interactive spaces for immersive language practice. While challenges such as distraction from studies and partial language comprehension exist, the overall impact is a positive shift toward more engaged and culturally connected language learners. Maintaining cultural balance remains an important consideration as these trends continue to evolve (Arifatuzzahra et al., 2024; Youngsun et al., 2024; Faiza, 2020; Valerio-Ramos & Hernández-López, 2023; Karim & Farihah, 2025).

3.1.2 Identity Formation

K-pop significantly influences Generation Z's identity formation by fostering a blend of global and national cultural identities, particularly evident among Vietnamese youth where both identities positively shape attitudes toward Korea and increase consumption intentions for Korean lifestyle products (Choo et al., 2022).

This generation, often referred to as the MZ generation, demonstrates openness to transcultural phenomena through K-pop, embracing hybrid cultural identities without experiencing significant identity confusion or conflict. As digital natives, they naturally accept the globalization of K-pop and integrate it into their cultural attitudes, reflecting a fluid and multifaceted sense of self that combines local traditions with global influences (Kim, 2025; Yoon, 2018).

K-pop's role in youth subcultures extends beyond music to include fashion, language styles, and lifestyle behaviours, which contribute to new forms of identity expression. For example, Korean

dramas and idol culture introduce novel lifestyle practices and language use that may challenge local cultural preservation by encouraging adoption of foreign norms and aesthetics (Shang, 2025).

Despite these challenges, many young people negotiate these influences creatively, forming hybrid identities that allow them to participate in global culture while maintaining connections to their heritage (Lidzhieva, 2021; Lee, 2022). This hybridity is not seen as a threat but rather as an enriching process that broadens perspectives and fosters cultural creativity.

However, concerns remain about the potential erosion of local cultures amid the rapid spread of K-pop. Studies highlight the importance of balancing acceptance of foreign cultural elements with reinforcement of local values through media literacy education and collaborative efforts between global and local cultural stakeholders (Fatimah & Rahma, 2025; Karim & Farihah, 2025).

Islamic ethical perspectives emphasize moral character development and self-control as essential for young people to filter external influences while preserving spiritual and cultural identity (Karim & Farihah, 2025). This balance is crucial for sustaining cultural diversity in an increasingly interconnected world.

Moreover, K-pop fandoms sometimes experience role conflicts due to overlapping nationalistic sentiments and transnational cultural consumption. Fans may navigate complex emotional attachments that intertwine patriotism with admiration for Korean culture, leading to diverse coping strategies ranging from compromise patriotism to resistance star-worship (Xia, 2023).

These dynamics illustrate how identity formation within K-pop communities involves negotiating multiple layers of belonging—local, national, and global—highlighting the nuanced ways Gen Z constructs their identities in a globalized media landscape.

K-pop shapes Generation Z's identity by promoting hybrid cultural identities that integrate global openness with national pride. While it introduces new lifestyle behaviours that may challenge traditional cultures, it also offers opportunities for creative identity negotiation and cross-cultural understanding. Maintaining a balance between embracing global trends and preserving local values is essential for healthy identity development among Gen Z in diverse contexts (Kim, 2025; Choo et al., 2022; Shang, 2025; Yoon, 2018).

3.1.3 Consumer Behaviour

Emotional engagement with K-pop idols plays a crucial role in shaping Generation Z's consumer behaviour across different countries, driving strong purchasing intentions and brand loyalty. In Spain, K-pop celebrity endorsements significantly influence luxury goods purchases among Gen Z fans, with female fans showing particularly high responsiveness to these endorsements. Over half of surveyed Spanish Gen Z participants reported buying products endorsed by their favourite idols, highlighting the deep emotional connection and loyalty fans feel toward both the idols and the associated brands (Romo & Sena, 2024).

This effect is amplified by social media, where fans follow luxury brands endorsed by K-pop stars, making celebrity endorsement a powerful marketing strategy targeting young consumers.

In China, young female consumers exhibit emotional-driven purchasing behaviours linked to K-pop culture that often transcend traditional buying patterns. Their consumption is motivated more by emotional attachment to idols and fandom activities than by rational decision-making, leading to impulse buys of merchandise and related products (Chen, 2023).

This emotional connection fosters a unique consumer profile where fandom identity strongly influences spending habits, reflecting how cultural engagement can reshape conventional consumer behaviour models.

Indonesian Gen Z also demonstrates increased brand loyalty toward Korean beauty (K-beauty) products due to their exposure to Korean culture through K-pop. This exposure affects not only perceived product value but also lifestyle identity, as using K-beauty items becomes part of expressing affiliation with Korean pop culture (Mutiarra et al., 2025).

The boy band NCT further exemplifies this influence; their social media interactions and content engagement directly impact Indonesian Gen Z's consumptive behaviour by creating a sense of closeness and personal connection that motivates purchases of merchandise and concert tickets (Aprilia et al., 2024).



These interactions highlight the importance of digital platforms in sustaining fan engagement and driving consumption.

Celebrity endorsement extends beyond music-related products. For example, Chanel's collaboration with K-pop idol Jennie has significantly influenced Indonesian Gen Z's purchase intentions for luxury fashion items. Jennie's role as a brand ambassador accounts for over 67% of the intention to buy Chanel products among young Indonesians aged 12-25, demonstrating how idol endorsements can effectively bridge pop culture and high-end consumer markets (Salsabilla & Salya, 2023). This crossover appeal underscores the commercial power of K-pop idols in diverse product categories.

Marketing strategies leveraging co-branding with K-pop groups also tap into Generation Z's Fear of Missing Out (FoMO), triggering impulse buying behaviors. A study on Nabati's collaboration with girl group Aespa found that co-branding combined with FoMO significantly drives impulse purchases among Indonesian Gen Z consumers, contributing over 40% to this behavior (Zainiyah et al., 2025).

Exclusive packaging and digital marketing further enhance this effect, showing how integrated marketing approaches capitalize on fandom dynamics. These findings illustrate that emotional engagement with K-pop idols creates strong consumer-brand relationships characterized by loyalty and high purchase intentions across various markets. Social media acts as a critical channel for sustaining these connections through interactive content and direct idol-fan communication. While female fans often show heightened sensitivity to idol endorsements, the broader Gen Z demographic exhibits evolving consumption patterns shaped by cultural affiliation and emotional investment in K-pop (Romo & Sena, 2024; Aprilia et al., 2024; Mutiara et al., 2025; Salsabilla & Salya, 2023; Chen, 2023; Zainiyah et al., 2025). This trend highlights the need for marketers to design emotionally resonant campaigns that align with Gen Z's values and digital behaviours to effectively capture this influential consumer segment.

3.1.4 Cross-Cultural Challenges

K-pop fosters global connectivity among Generation Z but also presents significant cross-cultural challenges, particularly in balancing foreign cultural influences with local traditions. In Indonesia, where Islamic values strongly shape social norms, the rapid spread of Korean Wave culture (Hallyu) has raised concerns about the erosion of local cultural identity and religious values. Studies show that while K-pop increases interest in foreign languages, creativity, and arts appreciation among Indonesian youth, it also risks diminishing traditional cultural practices if not balanced with local values grounded in Islamic ethics. Islamic philosophy emphasizes moral character development and self-control as essential tools for young people to filter external influences while maintaining their spiritual and cultural identity, allowing them to remain open to globalization without losing their heritage (Karim & Fariyah, 2025).

The interaction between Islam and K-pop culture among Indonesian Muslim youth reveals diverse responses ranging from complete opposition to full integration of fan identity with religious beliefs. Some Muslim fans perceive tensions between K-pop's lifestyle and Islamic values, leading to partial or complete rejection of certain content. Others find ways to reconcile their fandom with their faith, demonstrating that identity negotiation is complex and multifaceted (Mulya, 2021). This dynamic highlights the need for ethical frameworks that guide cultural integration by respecting religious principles while allowing space for global cultural participation.

Concerns about cultural preservation are echoed in broader Southeast Asian contexts where K-pop's influence extends beyond music to fashion, lifestyle, and language styles that may challenge local customs. The rise of K-pop has been viewed by some as a cultural threat that could weaken indigenous traditions and social cohesion (Qothrunnada & Nurjanah, 2024).

However, this challenge also presents opportunities for creative adaptation; for example, Islamic da'wah (religious outreach) has begun utilizing K-pop content to engage Gen Z effectively, blending popular culture with religious teachings to reinforce moral values in a relatable way (Aini, 2024; Rovilla, 2024). This approach demonstrates how local communities can harness global trends constructively rather than merely resisting them.

In other Muslim-majority countries like Malaysia and Pakistan, similar tensions arise between the universal appeal of Korean dramas and pop culture and the desire to preserve local cultural and religious identities. Fans often experience dilemmas navigating conflicting expectations from their communities versus their enthusiasm for Korean entertainment. Media literacy is emphasized as a critical tool to foster critical engagement with global media content, helping youth appreciate cross-cultural exchange without compromising indigenous traditions (Mujani et al., 2022).

Policymakers and educators are encouraged to develop balanced media strategies that promote both cultural exchange and preservation. Beyond religious considerations, K-pop also influences symbolic boundaries related to ethnicity, race, and social inclusion in diverse urban settings such as Paris, Manchester, and Philadelphia. While K-pop can sometimes be perceived as culturally foreign or exclusionary, many young adults use it as a resource to reshape social boundaries toward new forms of inclusion across local and global levels (Cicchelli et al., 2022).

This suggests that despite challenges in integrating foreign cultures with local traditions, K-pop can also serve as a unifying force promoting intercultural understanding. Educational initiatives play a vital role in addressing these cross-cultural challenges by integrating local wisdom into curricula alongside global popular culture. Citizenship education programs aim to develop students' balanced understanding of both local heritage and global trends like K-pop, strengthening cultural identity amid globalization (Pernando, 2024). Such efforts help young people critically navigate the complexities of cultural integration while preserving their unique identities.

While K-pop promotes global connectivity among Gen Z, it raises important cross-cultural challenges related to preserving local traditions and ethical considerations—especially within Islamic contexts like Indonesia. Balancing openness to foreign cultures with adherence to religious values requires moral development frameworks emphasizing self-control and critical engagement. Creative strategies such as incorporating K-pop into Islamic da'wah demonstrate potential pathways for harmonizing these influences. Media literacy education and culturally sensitive policies are essential for fostering healthy cultural integration that respects diversity while embracing globalization's opportunities.

3.2 Discussion

K-pop has emerged as a powerful cultural force shaping Generation Z's language learning motivations, identity construction, and consumer behaviour on a global scale. The integration of Korean and English languages within K-pop content facilitates bilingual engagement that aligns closely with Gen Z's digital social practices, where platforms like YouTube, TikTok, and Instagram serve as spaces for both entertainment and language exposure. This bilingualism not only motivates fans to learn Korean and English but also supports the development of new linguistic repertoires through fan interactions, translations, and community-building activities, fostering a sense of belonging among global youth (Arifatuzzahra et al., 2024; Samosir & Wee, 2022; Cruz et al., 2019).

Language learning driven by K-pop is thus not merely academic but deeply tied to identity formation and social participation in transnational fan communities. Identity construction among Gen Z reflects a complex blend of global cultural openness and localized identity retention. Rather than replacing local cultures, K-pop acts as a medium for transcultural negotiation where young people incorporate Korean cultural elements into their own identities while maintaining national or ethnic distinctiveness.

For example, Vietnamese and Indonesian youth show increased interest in Korean language and culture alongside strong attachments to their local traditions, illustrating how globalized cultural flows can coexist with national identity (Kim & Cho, 2024; Choo et al., 2022; Karim & Fariyah, 2025). This hybridity is further supported by digital natives' comfort with cultural fluidity, enabling them to navigate multiple cultural spheres simultaneously without experiencing identity confusion.

Consumer behaviour among Gen Z is deeply intertwined with emotional connections to K-pop idols, amplified by social media platforms that create immersive fan experiences. These platforms enable direct interaction between idols and fans through live streams, comments, and fan-generated content, which strengthens para-social relationships and drives brand loyalty. Emotional engagement motivates purchasing decisions across diverse markets—from luxury fashion endorsed by idols to

lifestyle products like K-beauty—highlighting the commercial power of fandom culture (Youngsun et al., 2024; Choo et al., 2022).

Social media also facilitates co-branding strategies that leverage fans' Fear of Missing Out (FoMO), triggering impulse buying behaviours that marketers actively exploit (Cruz et al., 2019). However, the influence of K-pop raises important questions about maintaining local cultural integrity amid globalization pressures. In contexts such as Indonesia, where Islamic values strongly shape social norms, there are concerns about the erosion of local culture due to uncritical adoption of foreign trends. Studies emphasize the need for ethical frameworks grounded in moral character development and self-control to help Gen Z balance openness to global cultures with preservation of spiritual and cultural identity (Karim & Fariyah, 2025). This balance is crucial for preventing cultural homogenization while allowing young people to benefit from cross-cultural exchange.

The transcultural nature of K-pop consumption also challenges traditional centre-periphery dynamics in cultural globalization. Fan translation practices play a key role in making Korean content accessible globally while enabling fans to reinscribe their own identities within these mediated spaces. This consumer-as-translator phenomenon highlights how globalization is increasingly shaped from the periphery rather than imposed from dominant Western centres (Cruz et al., 2019). It also underscores the active role of youth as cultural agents who negotiate meanings rather than passive consumers.

Educationally, K-pop's impact extends beyond language learning into broader sociolinguistic consumption patterns where indirect engagement with Korean culture leads to direct interest in language acquisition. Experienced fans often act as language brokers for newcomers by providing translations and glossaries that facilitate deeper cultural understanding (Samosir & Wee, 2022).

This chain consumption effect expands linguistic repertoires and fosters an anthropological stance toward culture that enriches identity formation. Overall, these dynamics illustrate the complex socio-cultural impact of K-pop on young consumers navigating an increasingly interconnected world. The phenomenon exemplifies how popular culture can simultaneously promote bilingualism, hybrid identities, emotional consumerism, and ethical considerations around globalization. Marketers aiming to engage Gen Z must therefore design culturally sensitive strategies that respect local values while leveraging the emotional power of fandoms. Likewise, educators and policymakers should support media literacy initiatives that empower youth to critically engage with global content without losing their unique cultural heritage. This multifaceted influence positions K-pop not just as entertainment but as a significant agent in shaping 21st-century youth culture worldwide.

K-pop significantly shapes youth culture worldwide by expanding linguistic repertoires and fostering hybrid identities that blend local and global cultural elements. This phenomenon promotes bilingualism and emotional consumerism, as young fans develop strong emotional connections to idols and fandoms, influencing their consumption patterns and lifestyle choices, especially among females in China and Indonesia 48. K-pop also acts as a stress-relief mechanism, providing Filipino youth with emotional catharsis, social connection, and resilience amid societal pressures 5. However, concerns arise about cultural displacement, unrealistic beauty standards, and consumerism, prompting calls for media literacy initiatives to help youth critically engage with global content while preserving their cultural heritage 18. The diasporic Korean youth experience K-pop as both an ethnic and global cultural form that aids identity work through nostalgia and global media engagement 2. Marketers targeting Gen Z must design culturally sensitive strategies respecting local values while leveraging fandoms' emotional power, and educators should support balanced media approaches to sustain indigenous traditions alongside global influences 16810.

K-pop's influence on youth culture worldwide is multifaceted, expanding linguistic repertoires and fostering hybrid identities that blend local traditions with global cultural elements. This cultural phenomenon promotes bilingualism as fans often incorporate Korean language into their daily lives, enhancing their communication skills and cultural awareness. Emotional consumerism is a key aspect, especially among young females in China and Indonesia, who develop strong emotional bonds with idols and fandoms, driving unique consumption patterns such as purchasing merchandise and adopting fashion trends inspired by K-pop 426. In the Philippines, K-pop serves as a stress-relief mechanism, offering emotional catharsis, social connection, and resilience amid academic and societal pressures, highlighting its role beyond entertainment to mental well-being 8. Despite these positive

impacts, concerns about cultural displacement, unrealistic beauty standards, and excessive consumerism have emerged, prompting calls for media literacy programs that empower youth to critically engage with global content while preserving their indigenous cultural heritage [110](#). Marketers targeting Gen Z must therefore craft culturally sensitive strategies that respect local values while leveraging the emotional power of fandoms; simultaneously, educators and policymakers should promote balanced media approaches to sustain local traditions alongside global influences [168](#). The diasporic Korean youth experience K-pop as both an ethnic and global cultural form that connects nostalgia for their ancestral homeland with contemporary global media engagement, aiding identity formation in complex multicultural contexts [3](#). Overall, K-pop acts not only as entertainment but as a significant agent shaping 21st-century youth culture by promoting bilingualism, hybrid identities, emotional engagement, and ethical considerations around globalization.

4. Conclusion

The impact of K-pop cultural trends on Generation Z significantly shapes their language learning motivations, identity formation, and consumer behaviour. Exposure to K-pop encourages Gen Z to learn Korean and English, driven by the appeal of idols and interactive social media content, making language acquisition more engaging and socially relevant. K-pop also fosters a hybrid cultural identity among Gen Z, blending global openness with local cultural retention, as seen in Vietnamese and Indonesian contexts where both global and national identities influence consumption attitudes. Consumer behaviour is strongly affected by emotional connections to idols, leading to increased brand loyalty and purchasing intentions for products like K-beauty and luxury goods endorsed by K-pop celebrities across diverse markets. However, the influence of K-pop raises concerns about potential erosion of local culture, highlighting the need for balanced cultural integration that respects local traditions while embracing globalization. Future strategies should focus on culturally sensitive marketing, ethical promotion of foreign cultures, and supporting Gen Z in navigating these transcultural dynamics to maintain their cultural identity alongside global engagement.

K-pop cultural trends profoundly influence Generation Z's language learning motivations, identity formation, and consumer behaviour across diverse global contexts. Exposure to K-pop encourages Gen Z to learn Korean and English, driven by the appeal of idols and interactive social media content that make language acquisition more engaging and socially relevant. In Indonesia, for example, K-pop's popularity motivates young people to learn Korean as part of embracing a trendy lifestyle, while English learning is enhanced through fandom interactions on platforms like YouTube and TikTok where English often serves as a lingua franca. This bilingual engagement not only facilitates communication within global fan communities but also broadens linguistic repertoires, supporting identity construction through shared cultural participation.

K-pop also fosters hybrid cultural identities among Gen Z by blending global openness with local cultural retention. In countries like Vietnam and Indonesia, young consumers navigate between embracing Korean pop culture and maintaining their national identities, resulting in complex consumption attitudes that reflect both global influences and local values. This hybridity allows youth to participate in a globalized culture while preserving unique cultural elements, though it also raises concerns about potential erosion of local traditions. The emotional connections fans develop with idols strongly influence consumer behaviour, leading to increased brand loyalty and purchasing intentions for products endorsed by K-pop celebrities. For instance, Spanish Gen Z fans show high purchasing intentions for luxury goods promoted by K-pop idols, with female fans particularly influenced by these endorsements. Similarly, Indonesian Gen Z consumers demonstrate strong brand loyalty toward K-beauty products linked to the Korean Wave, highlighting how cultural exposure translates into tangible economic impact.

Despite these positive effects on language learning and consumer engagement, the influence of K-pop raises important concerns about cultural displacement and the risk of losing local heritage. Studies emphasize the need for balanced cultural integration that respects indigenous traditions while embracing globalization. Media literacy initiatives are crucial to empower youth to critically engage



with foreign content without compromising their cultural identity. From an ethical perspective grounded in Islamic philosophy, Indonesian Gen Z is encouraged to harmonize local values with global influences by developing moral character and self-control to filter external cultural impacts effectively. This approach supports maintaining spiritual and cultural identity amid rapid globalization.

Marketers aiming to engage Gen Z must design culturally sensitive strategies that respect local values while leveraging the emotional power of fandoms. The success of K-pop celebrity endorsements in driving consumer behaviour underscores the importance of understanding fan emotions and social media dynamics in marketing campaigns targeting this demographic. At the same time, educators and policymakers should promote balanced media approaches that sustain indigenous traditions alongside global influences, helping youth navigate transcultural dynamics thoughtfully [148](#). Overall, K-pop functions not only as entertainment but as a significant agent shaping 21st-century youth culture worldwide by promoting bilingualism, hybrid identities, emotional engagement with brands, and ethical considerations around globalization.

Future strategies should focus on supporting Gen Z in managing these transcultural experiences—encouraging language learning motivated by genuine interest rather than mere trend-following; fostering hybrid identities that integrate rather than replace local cultures; promoting ethical marketing practices; and implementing media literacy programs that build critical thinking skills. Such efforts will help ensure that Generation Z can enjoy the benefits of global connectivity through K-pop while maintaining a strong sense of their own cultural heritage and identity.

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