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Research Paper

How does K-pop music influence fashion buying and styling among the fashion students in India: an empirical study

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ABSTRACT

In the most recent times, we have seen the rise in the amount of K-pop (Korean pop) culture/ music and its wide acceptance globally. K-pop is one part of the "Korean Wave"-also called Hallyu, a term referring to the popularity of Korean pop culture and Korean TV shows, music, and movies across Asia and other parts of the world. The K-pop and K-drama craze has reached its zenith and is enthralling audiences everywhere, especially in India, where a passion for Korean culture has taken hold. From social media influencers to high school students, Korean design has emerged as the nation's unmistakable fashion statement. This research paper analyses the influence of K-pop on Fashion students Buying and Styling behaviour in India. A structured questionnaire survey was conducted among Fashion students in India and analysed their approaches to different variables like K-pop music and celebrities as well as their interest in buying and styling inspired from K-pop. Results showed that there is a positive correlation between K-pop music/celebrities and buying and styling patterns of students. The results also showcased that the influence of K-pop celebrities is stronger that when compared to K-pop music.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Fashion is one the fastest growing and changing industries and many factors like politics, environment and culture can impact innovation of the new styles and trends. Now with booming development in technology and the fact that we have access to a great deal of information with the internet,

the mass constantly is expecting something new and unique. Factors like self-expression, likes and dislikes also add up in making these choices.

In recent years, the Korean pop music (K-pop) industry has emerged as a significant fashion influencer, particularly through its highly visible stars who shape their fans' fashion preferences. It has been observed that considerable amount of fashion students follow the K-pop music subculture and also get influenced by them. K-pop music videos now act as virtual runways for fashion, encouraging fans to continue their fashion consumption. K-pop content is primarily viewed on YouTube [1].

In India at present, there are more than 700 colleges offering fashion design programs at diploma, undergraduate, and postgraduate levels, including private colleges, universities and other government institutions like National Institute of Design (NID), National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT), and the Footwear Design & Development Institute (FDDI). More than 25000 students are pursuing the fashion education in India every year.

K-pop is one of the components of the "Korean Wave" which is also known as Hallyu, a phrase refers to the fame of Korean pop movement and Korean TV programmes, music, and films all over Asian continent and rest of the world. K-pop icon groups are a global trend, with mass number of dedicated fans across the globe. Over the past few decades, the K-pop trend has become a socio-cultural passion, continuing to gain popularity as groups like Blackpink, BTS, etc., tend to attain success globally [2]. The Korean wave's profound influence extends to fashion, beauty products, language, and cuisine, reshaping Indian consumption habits and market dynamics. So, through this research, we are trying to understand how this music culture has affected the masses in India and the fashion industry in the sense of buying and styling.

The objectives of this research are framed as follows:

1. To understand how K-pop music popularity and listening has an influence on buying behaviour and styling choices fashion students in India.
2. To examine if there is any impact in buying and styling choices of fashion students due to fashion style or preferences of K-pop celebrities.

2. RELATED WORK



Figure 1. Vivienne Westwood, and Malcolm Mclaren, who Rewrote the Style Concept of Punk

2.1 Music and its Influence in Fashion

Historically many music movements have made a significant contributions and impact on fashion industry [3]. It is clearly understandable how different music movements and culture helped different fashion styles to evolve (as shown in Figure 1) and how music/art can affect the mass psychologically and creates specific behaviour patterns through history [4]. This illustrates and connects the dots of how masses get influenced by music and its culture which they apply it in their daily life mainly in fashion. Music has inspired

fashion designers all over the world to innovate new styles throughout history, it served the fashion industry directly or indirectly most of the time and vice versa [5].

With fast growing technology and globalisation, we have access to almost every culture. We can also see how easy access to digital culture affected the cultures of countries like the Gulf and South Korea to globalise. With high access to the internet, Digital Culture exchange can be observed on platforms like YouTube, Instagram and other platforms [6]. It is understood how globalisation of a culture mainly through digital media can affect creating a new trend and how this pattern can affect a person or masses making choices.

2.2 K-Pop Culture and its Influence in Fashion

The K-pop and K-drama craze has reached its zenith and is enthralling audiences everywhere, especially in India, where a passion for Korean culture has taken hold. From social media influencers to high school students, Korean design has emerged as the nation's unmistakable fashion statement. The year 2020 became the major milestone for K-pop culture, where it achieved an impressive growth of 44.8% and was considered as a rapidly growing market in that year. The mass is very enthusiastic towards this musical culture with a very strong fandom to the music or the artists [1].

K-pop is one of the major elements with groups such as BlackPink and BTS (see Figure 2) achieving of the Korean Wave, commonly referred as Hallyu, a word that describes the global popularity of Korean pop culture, which includes TV dramas, music and films, across Asian and the rest of the world. K-pop icon groups have emerged as a worldwide phenomenon, attracting a vast and devoted fan base internationally. Over the past few decades, the K-pop phenomenon has evolved into a significant socio-cultural trends, with groups such as BlackPink and BTS achieving remarkable global success and contributing growing popularity. K-pop culture started during 1990s and rapidly extended to countries in Asia like Japan, China etc., then later gaining popularity worldwide [1], [2].



Figure 2. BTS (Bangtan Boys) Korean Pop Band

When K-pop culture has become increasingly famous all over the Globe, furthermore many fans got influenced by its values. Fans have discovered a way to feel psychologically satisfied without becoming famous by intensely associating with their idols [7]. Fans actively seek out connections between themselves and their K-POP heroes as they search for them and project their idols' physical traits, life experiences, and moral principles into their favourite things.

Based on the motivation from their favourite K-pop icon, several fan groups collected donations to do social work to help the underprivileged community. This K-pop subculture has propelled Korean consumer goods, spanning food, clothing, and cosmetics, to international prominence, with India witnessing a remarkable surge in demand [8].

The uniqueness of Korean fashion from that of others' is that the distinctive showcase of the mixed patterns without worrying about the issue of mismatching of fashion components [9].

Their way of trying new styles, motifs and designs surely amaze the viewer or the audience. In a study [10] on the university students of Indonesia the researchers found out that students admire and follow K-pop fashion because of its easy adaptable features and contemporary fashionable, simple and passionate look. The popular styles that they like are hotpants, shirts, suits, which are best suited for their body types.

In a study which investigated the influence of Korean wave (focusing on K-pop and K-drama) on Vietnamese university students and their consumer behaviour, it was found that a high degree of correlation between the duration Vietnamese students devote on Korean shows or hearing to K-pop music, and their spending on Korean cosmetics. This shows that for Vietnamese students, higher the time is devoted for the Korean wave, then higher they spend on Korean cosmetic products [11].

Studies on the influence of Chinese consumers' motivation towards viewing K-dramas and their online buying intention show that several factors like viewing behaviour, cultural interest, K-drama appeal, cultural resemblance, relational social factors etc., are significant influencing factors for Chinese consumers to view K-drama; and these variables positively influenced the interest on Korean culture and Korean products, because Korean and Chinese culture has similar cultural values [12]. Similarly, Lee & Yu (2018) find out the several attributes of K-drama viz. 'production', 'favourite actor' and 'theme', which guide the willingness, watching motivation and the buying interest of Korean products on Chinese users and it is observed that the attribute 'theme' had higher degree of influence towards viewing K-dramas [13].

Chen (2011) states that Korean pop culture influence youths in China to adopt the Korean socio-cultural factors related to food consumption, clothing style, and cosmetic applications ; and the Korean wave's (K-dramas and K-pop) diffusion into different Asian countries has significant effects on buying behaviour towards Korean lifestyle products, food items, even there is a significant increase in enrolling for Korean language learning courses [14]. Examine the association of Korean Wave factor with the market mix factors, towards the buying intention towards Korean beauty products by women in Malaysia and find that marketing mix factors significantly influence the buying interest of Malaysian women towards the Korean cosmetics and beauty products and the strongest factor which influence the purchase intention is product quality [15].

Sembiring & Prabandari (2021) find that the K-pop followers in Indonesia prefer the Korean restaurants for their groups' celebrations which has a favourable influence on buying decisions towards the Korean food products in the Korean restaurants in Indonesia [16]. Ocheing & Kim (2019) examined the influence of Korean wave among the literate consumers in East Africa and found that basic knowledge on Korean language positively impacts their attitude towards the Korean nation, since it increases the understanding of the Korean socio-cultural values; and further it created a positive influence towards the Korean products [17]. Investigated the association between telecasting of K- pop music, films in other countries on the export of Korean products such as fashion products, beauty and cosmetics, automobile, food items etc. and found that telecasting of K-pop music and films in other countries had a significant positive impact on the exports of Korean products [18].

2.3 K-Pop Culture and its Influence among Indian Youth

In India, the Korean Hallyu effect was first started in Manipur, Northeast India. Due to the prohibition on Bollywood and Hindi channels in the early 2000s, K-dramas and K-movies were popular among Manipuri households.

Korean government made several interventions to spread the Korean wave in India and in the year 2012, one of the important interventions done was the founding of the Korean Culture Centre India (KCCI) [19].

A leading music channel in India, launched a special music programme in India in September 2016, specifically focusing on the 'K-pop' music after a huge demand from the K-pop fans. Further, through internet-driven experience, K-pop engages social media platforms like YouTube etc., to connect and associate with the K-pop fans and the K-pop celebrities launch their personal social media broadcasting apps to share their videos related to music, dance, lifestyle and also to interact with their fans all over the world. This higher degree of engagement through these social media and the lack of private music industry in India has made the K-pop music very much popular in India [20].

Further adding to this, the internet revolution in India and millions of internet users population enabled the Korean wave to grow rapidly and bigger in size. Many leading social media platforms and OTT platforms started including main segments for Korean contents like K-pop, K-dramas, K-movies etc., in their portfolios. In a specific case of COVID-19 pandemic lock down period, millions of Indians engaged in watching the K-dramas, K-movies or K-pop either through Television channels, social media platforms or music apps. Few reasons to mention for the popularity of Korean pop culture might be due to the different variety of categories, stimulating story, mesmerizing melodies and lively choreography along with other factors of Korean culture [21].

The K-pop and K-drama craze has reached its zenith and is enthralling audiences everywhere, especially in India, where a passion for Korean culture has taken hold. From social media influencers to high school students, Korean design has emerged as the nation's unmistakable fashion statement. Korean chic deviates from established fashion trends with its vibrant hues and daring pairings. Indian youth have adopted K-pop-inspired boots and EXO-inspired boy hats as a result of the lasting fashion impact of K-pop acts like BTS, Black Pink, EXO, and Red Velvet. Pleated plaid skirts, heart-collared crop tops, sneakers and t-shirts with ramen bowls—all inspired by K-pop aesthetics—have won over ardent Indian fans. The popularity of Korean dramas will expand by 370% in 2020, as seen by the rise of Korean content on websites like Netflix India. On social media, fashion gurus like Radhika Bangia actively promote Korean fashion by compiling outfits with K-pop influences. The enormous impact of Korean culture on Indian design is still thriving today [21].

Study on K-drama consumption in India show that effect of visual content on the Indian youths on behavioural and lifestyle changes found more within female viewers related to adaptations of unique gestures, and habit and also the study find that few food brands which are associated with the Korean culture emphasise food is an essential part of K-drama led to increased purchase of Korean utensils like chopsticks, bowls, kitchen utensils, and Korean noodles [22].

3. METHODOLOGY

Based on the discussions done in the literature review the research framework as shown in Figure 3 and the hypotheses of the study are as follows:

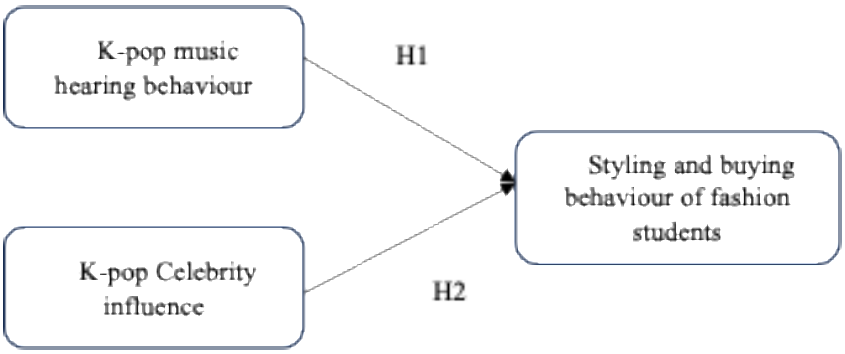

Figure 3. Research Model

3.1 Hypotheses

Based on the above, the hypotheses of this study are formulated as follows:

- H1: K-pop music hearing behaviour positively influences styling and buying patterns of fashion students in India
- H2: K-pop Celebrities positively influences styling and buying patterns of fashion students in India

3.2 Research Methodology

This study follows a quantitative research method and a non-random convenience sample technique. The sample respondents are students who are studying fashion degrees courses from different parts of India. A structured questionnaire was administered and sent to students who are studying fashion

degree courses across India through and the sample size of this was 72. The questionnaire has four sections first section contains demographic questions and introductory questions related to K-pop culture; second section having 3 item statements related to K-Pop music listening behaviour; third section having 4 item statements related to K-pop Celebrity influence and fourth section having 5 item statements related to K-pop buying and selling. All the item statement are measured using five-point Likert Scale in the ranging from Strongly Agree (SA) to Strongly Disagree (SDA).

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Results

4.1.1 Demographic Descriptive

The Demographic Descriptive of the 72 respondents consisted of 87 (87%) females and 10 (10%) males and 3 (3%) others. For age group 40 respondents (55.6%) belong to 21-24 years of age; 29 respondents (40.3%) belong to 17-20 years of age and 3 respondents (4.2%) belongs to 25-28 years of age.

4.1.2 Simple Percentage Descriptive

Simple percentage analysis was done to understand the descriptive status of the opinions of the respondents towards K-pop music hearing behaviour, K-pop celebrity influence and buying & styling behaviour of youths.

Table 1. Simple Percentage Frequency and Percentage Data

Variables	Response Type	SA	A	N	DA	SDA	TOT
a) K-pop music hearing behaviour							
K-pop music very much influences me	Frequency	13	28	24	6	1	72
	Percentage	18%	39%	33%	8%	1%	
Listening to K-pop music is important to me	Frequency	15	23	21	11	2	72
	Percentage	21%	32%	29%	15%	3%	
I follow K-pop celebrities because of K-pop music	Frequency	14	23	26	6	3	72
	Percentage	19%	32%	36%	8%	4%	
Average	Percentage	19%	34%	33%	11%	3%	
b) K-pop celebrities influence							
K-pop celebrities influence my K-pop listening choices	Frequency	15	26	20	9	2	72
	Percentage	21%	36%	28%	13%	3%	
K-pop celebrity fashion choices very much influence me	Frequency	12	29	23	5	3	72
	Percentage	17%	40%	32%	7%	4%	
I regularly look at K-pop celebrity social media	Frequency	15	19	22	13	3	72
	Percentage	21%	26%	31%	18%	4%	
I am very much influenced by K-pop celebrity fashion	Frequency	13	28	19	12	0	72
	Percentage	18%	39%	26%	17%	0%	
Average	Percentage	19%	35%	29%	14%	3%	
c) Buying and styling behaviour of young adults							
I am updated with latest fashion styles of K-pop	Frequency	15	22	24	0	11	72
	Percentage	21%	31%	33%	0%	15%	
My fashion and styling changed after K-pop	Frequency	9	21	22	0	20	72
	Percentage	13%	29%	31%	0%	28%	
Purchased apparel influenced by K-pop	Frequency	5	23	20	0	24	72
	Percentage	7%	32%	28%	0%	33%	
Purchased accessories influenced by K-pop	Frequency	10	25	20	0	17	72
	Percentage	14%	35%	28%	0%	24%	

Style influenced by K-pop	Frequency	8	23	22	0	19	72
	Percentage	11%	32%	31%	0%	26%	
Average	Percentage	13%	32%	30%	0%	25%	

From the Table 1, it is observed that for i) K-pop Music hearing behaviour, at an average 19% strongly agree, 34% agree, 33% neither agree nor disagree, 11% disagree and 3% strongly disagree about their K-pop Music hearing behaviour. So, majority 53% (19% strongly agreed and 34% agreed) of the respondents have agreed that they listen to K-pop music and influenced by it. ii) for K-pop Celebrity Influence, at an average 19% strongly agree, 35% agree, 29% neither agree nor disagree, 14% disagree and 3% strongly disagree about their K-pop Celebrity Influence. So, majority 54% (19% strongly agreed and 35% agreed) of the respondents have agreed that they are influenced by K-pop Celebrities. iii) for Buying and Styling Behaviour of Young Adults, at an average 13% strongly agree, 32% agree, 30% neither agree nor disagree, 0% disagree and 25% strongly disagree about the K-pop influence in their buying and styling behaviour. So, majority 45% (13% strongly agreed and 32% agreed) of the respondents agree about the K-pop influence in their Buying and Styling Behaviour.

4.1.3 Analysis of Variance – ANOVA

ANOVA test was conducted to investigate the significant differences between gender categories and the K-pop music hearing behaviour, K-pop celebrity influence, buying & styling variables.

Table 2. ANOVA – Gender vs the Variables

Variable	Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
K-pop Music influence	Between Groups	.190	2	.095	.135	.874
	Within Groups	48.776	69	.707		
	Total	48.967	71			
K-pop celeb influence	Between Groups	2.046	2	1.023	1.547	.220
	Within Groups	45.620	69	.661		
	Total	47.666	71			
Buying and styling	Between Groups	8.168	2	4.084	3.561	.034
	Within Groups	79.137	69	1.147		
	Total	87.304	71			

The results are as shown in Table 2 and it is observed that i) for K-pop music listening behaviour $F(2,71) = .874$, $p>.05$, there is no significant difference between the gender groups; ii) for

K-Pop Celeb influence $F(2, 71) = .220$, $p>.05$, there is no significant difference between gender groups and iii) for Buying and styling $F(2, 71) = .034$, $p<.05$, there is a significant difference in the gender groups.

4.1.4 Correlation between Variables

Correlation analysis was done to understand the correlation between the variables K-pop music influence, K-Pop Celeb influence, and Buying and Styling.

Table 3. Correlation Analysis

Variables	K-Pop Music Influence	K-Pop Celeb Influence	Buying And Styling
K-pop Music influence	1		
K-pop celeb influence	.725**	1	
Buying and styling	.536**	.715**	1

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed); N = 72;

As shown in Table 3, the results of correlations among the K-pop music influence, K-Pop Celeb influence, and Buying and Styling are given. The results show that i) there is a positive significant relationship (r=.725**, p<.01) between K-pop music hearing behaviour and K-pop celebrity influence; ii) there is a positive significant relationship (r=.536**, p<.01) between K-pop music hearing behaviour and buying and styling; iii)) there is a positive significant relationship (r=.715**, p<.01) between K-pop celebrity influence and buying & styling among the fashion students.

4.2 Regression Analysis

Linear Regression analysis was done to test the hypotheses of this study, and the results are as shown in Table 4 and Figure 4.

Table 4. Regression- Buying and Styling

Model	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	.521	.312		1.671	.099
K-pop Music influence	.051	.163	.038	.312	.756
K-pop celeb influence	.930	.165	.687	5.628	.000

Dependent Variable: Buying and styling

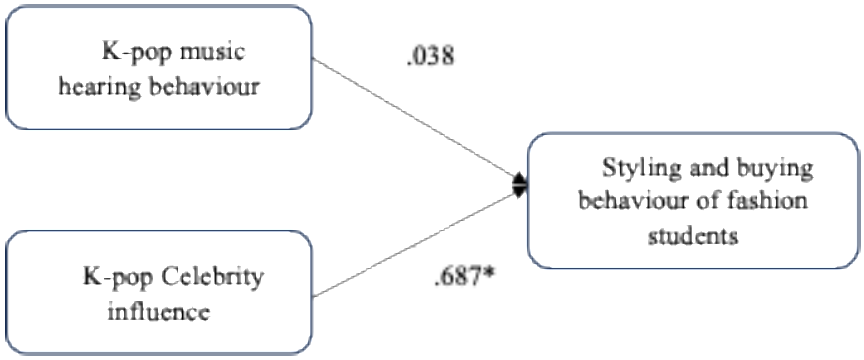

Figure 4. Regression Analysis

The result shows that K-pop music hearing behaviour had not much significant positive effect (β= .038, t = .312, p >.05) on buying and styling behaviour of fashion students. This result does not support the hypothesis H1. The result shows that K-pop celebrities had a significant positive effect (β= .687, t = 5.628, p <.05) on buying and styling. This result supports hypothesis H2, that there is a significant influence of K-pop celebrities on fashion students buying and styling patterns.

4.3 Discussion

From the data analysis results for K-pop, 53% of the respondents have agreed that they listen to K-pop music and influenced by it, 54% of the respondents have agreed that they are influenced by K-pop Celebrities, and 45% of the respondents agree about the K-pop influence in their Buying and Styling Behaviour. This shows that reasonable amount of fashion students follow the K-pop subculture and get influenced by that. This provides a good opportunity for the fashion retailers to target this niche market segment, and they can develop and market fashion products related to K-pop subculture.

It is also observed among the fashion student gender groups that there is no significant difference in K-pop music listening behaviour and K-Pop Celeb influence. This shows that the gender groups in fashion students equally hear K-pop music and influenced by K-pop celebrities. But their buying and styling behaviour differs among the gender groups, which means that male, female and other gender groups' buying and styling behaviour differs significantly. So the fashion retailers should consider these findings and should develop fashion products and styling features which specifically cater to these gender groups separately and also come up with the promotional strategies to target these types of gender groups.

The results also show that there is a positive significant relationship among K-pop music hearing behaviour, K-pop celebrity influence, buying and styling of fashion students. This means all these three variables have strong relation and association among them. So the fashion retailers should come up with strategies which encourage and motivates the fashion students to hear K-pop music.

Also, the regression result shows that among the variables K-pop music hearing behaviour and K-pop celebrity influence, the later one is the strong predictor of the buying and styling behaviour of the fashion students. So the fashion retailers may engage K-pop celebrities as their brand ambassadors and should include K-pop celebrities in their promotional strategies both in advertisements and in packaging to attract these niche segments.

5. CONCLUSION

The aim of this study is to understand how K-pop music popularity and listening has an influence on buying behaviour and styling choices fashion students in India and to examine if there is any impact in buying and styling choices of fashion students due to fashion style or preferences of K-pop celebrities. It is observed K-pop music hearing behaviour, K-pop celebrity influence and buying & styling behaviour of fashion students has a strong relation and association among themselves. Also between the K-pop music hearing behaviour and K-pop celebrity influence, the K-pop celebrities influences the buying & styling behaviour of fashion students in India. This study provided interesting insights both for academicians and fashion retail managers. These insights will provide fashion retailers to come with various strategies related to product development, segmentation and targeting and promotion to target the niche segment of fashion students in India. In future, this study may be carried out in other segment of students from high schools, or students who are pursuing other degree courses apart from fashion.

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Author Contributions Statement

Name of Author	C	M	So	Va	Fo	I	R	D	O	E	Vi	Su	P	Fu
M. Krishnakumar	✓		✓	✓	✓					✓		✓		
Poornima Nair	✓	✓			✓			✓	✓					
Gona Puneeth	✓	✓			✓			✓	✓					
Namitha	✓	✓			✓			✓	✓					

C : **C**onceptualization
M : **M**ethodology
So : **So**ftware
Va : **Va**lidation
Fo : **Fo**rmal analysis
I : **I**nvestigation
R : **R**esources
D : **D**ata Curation
O : Writing - **O**riginal Draft
E : Writing - Review & **E**diting
Vi : **Vi**sualization
Su : **Su**pervision
P : **P**roject administration
Fu : **Fu**nding acquisition

Conflict of Interest Statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

Informed Consent

All authors have noticed and confirmed the submission and possible publishment of the manuscript.

Ethical Approval

Formal ethical approval was not required as the study involved voluntary, non-invasive participation, adhering to ethical research guidelines. This study does not involve any AI generated contents.

Data Availability

The dataset is confidential but may be available upon reasonable request, subject to ethical considerations.

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