

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CELEBRITY WORSHIP AND SELF-ESTEEM IN THE K-POP FAN COMMUNITY

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Abstract

K-pop fans often experience celebrity worship which makes them tend to make social comparisons with celebrities they like. Social comparison is one of the factors that influences self-esteem, so that a person can evaluate themselves positively or negatively. This research aims to determine the relationship between celebrity worship and self-esteem in the K-pop fan community. This research is a cross sectional study, with a purposive sampling design. This research was conducted on 94 K-pop fans in Pekanbaru City. The questionnaires used were the Celebrity Attitude Scale (CAS) and the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES). The statistical test used is the Chi Square test with the alternative Continuity Correction test. As many as 61.1% of respondents experienced low celebrity worship and as many as 57.4% of respondents had high self-esteem. Statistical analysis shows p value = 0.039 (p value $< \alpha = 0.05$). This research shows that there is a relationship between celebrity worship and self-esteem. However, more in-depth research is still needed regarding other factors that influence self-esteem which were not examined in this study.

Keywords: *Celebrity Worship, Self-Esteem, K-Pop*

Introduction

Korean pop music or better known as *K-pop* has become an interesting phenomenon to discuss, especially among teenagers to adults. Based on data from KBS World (2022), K-pop fans in the world have exceeded 156.6 million people recorded in December 2021¹. The results of the IDN Times survey (2019) found that 40.7% of *K-pop fans* in Indonesia were aged 20-25 years, 38.1% were aged 15-20 years, 11.9% were over 25 years, and the least were aged 10-15 years, namely 9.3%, while the demographics of Indonesian *K-pop fans* were 92.1% female².

K-Pop is like a culture embraced by teenagers to adults in Indonesia, so it is not uncommon for *K-pop fans* to experience *celebrity worship*. *Celebrity worship* that occurs in *K-pop fans* usually involves one or more celebrities who are very much liked by the individual, making the individual seem inseparable from anything related to the idolized celebrity³.

The loyalty of *K-pop fans* is a positive impact of *celebrity worship* which is believed to provide a sense of love, affection, and zest for life to someone ⁴. Addiction to Korean culture can support *K-popers* to do anything that can reach their idol artists in various ways such as showing their identity as *K-pop fans*, using Korean language that shows them as fans and following the style of their favorite idols ⁵.

The negative impact of *celebrity worship* is that fans have a low level of *body image* if the level of *celebrity worship* is high ⁶. Low *body image* will cause a lack of self-confidence in *K-pop fans*, thus causing feelings of wanting to appear similar to the idols they emulate. Lifestyles that change because they want to follow their favorite idols so that fans who cannot afford plastic surgery will buy beauty products used by their idols or products from South Korea ⁷.

Low self-esteem and poor social relationships in life can affect the level of *celebrity worship* ³. Self-esteem is formed from childhood to adolescence, in accordance with Erikson's developmental theory that adolescence is a time of searching for identity versus identity confusion ⁸. According to Rosenberg (1965) there are two important things that influence the formation of a person's self-esteem, namely reflected *appraisals* and *social comparisons* ⁹. Social comparison is something that is often found in *K-pop fans*, especially in terms of physical appearance ¹⁰.

Celebrity worship should decline and become rare in late adolescence, so that individuals in adulthood should have succeeded in forming self-identity and achieving autonomy, but the phenomenon of idol worship is still rampant in adulthood ². According to McCutcheon *et al.* (2002) one of the reasons underlying *celebrity worship behavior* in adulthood is the failure of the individual in forming self-identity in adolescence, so that idol worship becomes one of the efforts in building their self-identity in adulthood ³.

Based on the above phenomenon, the researcher conducted a preliminary study in the form of *screening* of followers of the Instagram account *K-popers Pekanbaru* (@kpopers.pekanbaru) through a *google form* containing 34 *Celebrity Attitude Scale* (CAS) statements with the aim of finding out whether K-pop fans experience *celebrity worship* or not. The results of *screening 180 K-pop fans* showed that 94 people

experienced *celebrity worship*. Seeing this condition, as a reality that occurs among *K-pop fans*, this study is important to be conducted in order to see the relationship between *celebrity worship* and self-esteem in the *K-pop fan community*.

Method

This type of research is a quantitative correlational research with a *cross-sectional approach*. The population in this study is *followers of the K-popers Pekanbaru* Instagram account (@kpopers.pekanbaru) who participated in the initial *screening* when conducting a preliminary study were 180 people. The sampling technique in this study was *non-probability sampling* with the design used being *purposive sampling*. The sample in this study was the result of *screening* on the followers of *the K-popers Pekanbaru* Instagram account (@kpopers.pekanbaru), namely from 180 people who participated, 94 people experienced *celebrity worship*, so the number of samples was 94 people.

The measuring instrument used to measure the level of *celebrity worship* is *the Celebrity Attitude Scale (CAS)* by Matlby (2002) which has been adapted into Indonesian with a total of 34 statement *items*, 8 of which are *filler items*. CAS has good reliability and validity with a *Cronbach's alpha value* of 0.93. The reliability coefficient is close to 1.00, which means that this research scale has a fairly high reliability¹². The measuring instrument for the self-esteem variable is *the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES)* which contains 10 statement *items*. The self-esteem measuring instrument created by Rosenberg is a measuring instrument that is considered standard and has a Gutman rxxi reliability level of 0.92. After being translated into Indonesian by Azwar (2011), it has a reliability value of 0.778¹³.

Data analysis in this study used univariate analysis to explain the characteristics of respondents, the level of *celebrity worship* and the level of self-esteem of respondents. Bivariate analysis to determine the relationship between *celebrity worship* and self-esteem used the *Chi-Square test and the Continuity Correction* alternative test with a confidence level limit of 5% ($\alpha = 0.05$). This study has been freed from implementation and has received approval from the Nursing and Health Research Ethics Committee of

the Faculty of Nursing, University of Riau with the ethics exemption number 1280 / UN19.5.1.8 / KEPK.FKp / 2023.

Results

1. Respondent Characteristics

Table 1 Respondent Characteristics

Characteristics	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender		
1. Man	4	4.3%
2. Woman	90	95.7%
Age		
1. 12-17 years (Early Adolescence)	1	1.1%
2. 18-21 years (Late Teens)	44	46.8%
3. 22-27 years (Early Adulthood)	48	51.1%
4. 28-40 years (Middle Adult)	1	1.1%
Last education		
1. JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL	3	3.2%
2. SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL	48	51.1%
3. PT	43	45.7%
Employment Status		
1. Students	57	60.6%
2. Work	24	25.5%
3. Not Working	13	13.9%
Total	94	100%

Based on the table above, it was found that the majority of respondents were female, as many as 90 (95.7%) respondents. The age range was the most at the age of 22-27 years (early adulthood) as many as 48 (51.1%) respondents. The last education was mostly found at the high school level, as many as 48 (51.1%) respondents, with the majority being students as many as 57 (60.6%) respondents.

2. Celebrity Worship Overview

Table 2 Overview of Celebrity Worship

Characteristics	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Low	58	61.1%
Tall	36	37.9%
Total	94	100

Based on table 2 regarding the description of *celebrity worship*, as many as 58 (61.1%) respondents were at a low level of *celebrity worship*.

3. Self-Esteem Picture

Table 3 Self-Esteem Overview

Characteristics	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Low	40	42.6%
Tall	54	57.4%
Total	94	100

Based on table 3 regarding the description of self-esteem, it shows that as many as 54 (57.4%) respondents have high self-esteem.

4. The Relationship between *Celebrity Worship* and Self-Esteem

Table 4 Relationship between *Celebrity Worship* and Self-Esteem

Celebrity Worship	Pride						P value (Continuity Correction)
	Low		Tall		Total		
	n	%	N	%	N	%	
Low	30	51.7	28	48.3	58	100	0.039
Tall	10	27.8	26	72.2	36	100	
Amount	40	42.6	54	57.4	94	100	

Based on the table above, it was found that 28 (48.3%) respondents with low *celebrity worship* had high self-esteem and 26 (72.2%) respondents with high *celebrity worship* also had high self-esteem. The results of the statistical test showed a $p\text{ value} = 0.039$ which means $p\text{ value} < \alpha = 0.05$, so H_0 was rejected and H_a was accepted, meaning that there is a relationship between *celebrity worship* and self-esteem in the *K-Pop fan community* in Pekanbaru City.

Discussion

1. Respondent Characteristics

The results of the study that have been conducted show that out of 94 respondents, the majority are female, namely 90 (95.7%) respondents experience *celebrity worship*. Women are more interested in Korean popular culture than men with an average of spending time watching Korean content between 5 to 6 hours a week, while men only spend between 1 to 2 hours a week¹⁴. Women are also more expressive in showing what they like, compared to men who are less expressive,

even some like *K-pop* secretly because of the stereotype from most people that men should not like music *genres* accompanied by choreography ¹⁵.

Based on the results of the study, it shows that as many as 48 (51.1%) respondents are in the early adulthood age group (22-27 years). Early adulthood is a time when someone will face various problems and decisions that affect their lives. Individuals in adulthood must be fully responsible for themselves and prepare to find work, find a partner, build relationships with the opposite sex, form a family, take care of the household, and carry out other developmental tasks ¹⁶.

The results of the research that has been conducted show that the highest level of education was high school/equivalent, namely 48 (51.1%) respondents. High school is a time of adolescence experiencing the transition to adulthood and are in the phase of building self-identity, finding meaning in life and trying to develop emotionally intimate interpersonal relationships ¹⁶. Adolescents who are building self-identity begin to have values and opinions about their lives and are also influenced by strong groups, so that adolescents turn to celebrity fans in order to be accepted in the group. Identification with celebrities as socially successful figures provides reference values and self-esteem for adolescents ¹⁷.

Based on the results of the research that has been conducted, it shows that as many as 57 (60.6%) respondents are students. Students have a lot of time to access social media both for academics and for entertainment, so the longer the time spent accessing content about *K-pop* on social media, the higher the level of *celebrity worship* ¹⁸.

2. *Celebrity Worship Overview*

The results of the research that has been conducted show that more respondents are at a low level of *celebrity worship*, namely 53 (56.4%) respondents. The lowest dimension of *celebrity worship* is *social entertainment*, in this dimension fans are already able to sort out each information and determine which is a priority and which is not, so they can think logically ¹⁹.

The low level of *celebrity worship* is also influenced by age, where in this study the age range of respondents was mostly in early adulthood. At the early

adulthood level, celebrity worship activities carried out by fans are decreasing, because they start to have priorities regarding real life, not only ending up on social media ²⁰. *Celebrity worship* usually peaks in adolescence and decreases in late adolescence to early adulthood ².

3. Self-Esteem Picture

The results of the study that have been conducted show that as many as 54 (57.4%) respondents have high self-esteem. The age when first liking a celebrity or *K-pop idol* is a benchmark for the formation of self-esteem, where when individuals start to like in early adulthood, individuals have succeeded in forming a self-identity ³. Similar to this study, most of the respondents were in early adulthood, which means that self-esteem in respondents has been formed.

Respondents in this study were members of the *K-pop fan community* in Pekanbaru City. High self-esteem in K-pop fans is caused by individuals having joined the community of their favorite idol celebrities, so that when fans have entered the community of their idol celebrities, their self-esteem will be good^{21,22}.

4. The Relationship between *Celebrity Worship* and Self-Esteem

The results of this study indicate that there is a relationship between *celebrity worship* and self-esteem in the *K-pop fan community* in Pekanbaru City. One of the factors that influences a person's level of self-esteem is social comparison ⁹. Social comparison is something that is often done by *K-pop fans* ¹⁰. Someone who wants to be considered competent and valuable often compares themselves to others. When someone finds a good character picture and fits their ideal in their favorite celebrity, they tend to follow their favorite celebrity and look for information about them to increase their self-esteem. Fans who see the positive side of their idol celebrities such as their self-confidence, hard work, and daily behavior will learn to appreciate themselves more ²³⁻²⁶.

According to North (2011), individuals with *celebrity worship* in the *entertainment social dimension* do not have a significant relationship with self-esteem, but in the *intense personal feeling dimension* there is a positive relationship with self-esteem ²⁶. The *intense personal feeling category* of *celebrity*

worship shows that fans have strong feelings and need to know everything about the celebrities who are their idols ²⁷.

Individuals with *borderline pathological dimensions* have a negative relationship with self-esteem, which means that the higher *the celebrity worship on the borderline pathological dimension*, the lower the level of self-esteem ²⁸. Low self-esteem occurs when fans watch their favorite celebrities as a way to escape from their problems and because celebrities can be a pleasant escape from an annoying life, so fans pay more attention to news about their favorite celebrities than other news ^{29,30}. Low self-esteem is indicated by low self-acceptance due to a lack of internal resources, so individuals seek external sources to get support and confirmation regarding their self-assessments ¹⁷. According to Reeves (2012) individuals who lack internal resources tend to do *celebrity worship* ¹⁷.

Conclusion

Based on the research that has been conducted, it was found that most of the respondents were female with an age range of 22-27 years. The last education of the respondents was mostly found at the high school/equivalent level, with the majority of students. This study also found that most of the respondents were at a low level of *celebrity worship* with a high level of self-esteem, and there was a relationship between *celebrity worship* and self-esteem in the *K-pop fan community* in Pekanbaru City with a *p value* = 0.039 (*p value* < α = 0.05).

The limitation of this study is the data collection through *online methods* with the help of *Google Form*, which allows for bias when filling out the research questionnaire. This study broadly focuses on *social comparisons* carried out by *K-pop fans* as one of the factors influencing self-esteem. There are still *reflected appraisals factors* that are not discussed in this study based on Rosenberg's theory. It is hoped that further researchers will be able to develop other factors that may influence a person's level of self-esteem.

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