

32 **1. Introduction**

33 Music tourism, which is the phenomenon of people travelling to destinations associated
34 with music and/or musicians past and present, has risen exponentially in recent decades (e.g.,
35 Bolderman & Reijnders, 2017; Farsani et al., 2017; Gibson & Connell, 2007; Lashua et al., 2014;
36 Leaver & Schmidt, 2009). It is, strictly speaking, not a new social and cultural phenomenon,
37 since immediate, complex connections between tourism, music and place influenced the mobility
38 of Grand Tour participants, especially those from Britain, since the 17th century. During that
39 time, the particular emphasis on the literary and artistic culture of Europe, such as opera and
40 classical music, heralded the start of music tourism (Gibson & Connell, 2005).

41 With the globalization and commodification of world music (industry), the Western
42 hegemony of popular music and its commercialized industry has long dominated the world
43 music map (Long, 2014). The continued popularity of visits to places such as Elvis Presley's
44 Graceland in Memphis, the origins of the Beatles in Liverpool and Mozart's birthplace in
45 Salzburg exemplify this Western perspective and context (Gibson & Connell, 2007; Long, 2014).
46 The rise of music tourism has not gone unnoticed in academia. Theoretical and systematic
47 investigation of this phenomenon has been conducted since the early 1990s, in a diverse set of
48 disciplines including cultural geography, ethno-musicology (Connell & Gibson, 2005; Krims,
49 2007) and tourism studies (Henke, 2005).

50 Newly emerging sources of contemporary pop music not only bring different dynamics
51 and dimensions of world music but also reflect the ever-increasing dislocation of cultural
52 globalization from the Western context (Cruz et al., 2021). Korean popular music, in the form of
53 so-called K-pop, is an example of one that has created music tourism, in this case, in South
54 Korea (hereafter referred to as Korea).

55 Given this surging cultural phenomenon, previous studies have explored the impacts of
56 music, including K-pop, on interest in celebrities (Chung & Cho, 2017; Kim, 2021; Kim et al.,
57 2019a; Lee & Kim, 2020; Lee et al., 2020), as well as participation in concerts or music festivals
58 (Gibson, 2018; Han, 2017; Jang, 2020; Matheson, 2008). Such personal interest expands to
59 interest in the music’s origin and the country’s language and/or history (Han, 2017; Yoon et al.,
60 2020), and interest in culture, such as cuisine, dress, cosmetics, and industrial products (Cruz et
61 al., 2021; Han, 2017; Seo & Kim, 2020; Yoon, 2019).

62 Other studies have provided examples of the contribution of music to the country of
63 origin’s image, familiarity or place attachment (Bang et al., 2021; Choi et al., 2020; Lee et al.,
64 2015) and stimulation of consumption of its industrial or cultural products (Kwak et al., 2019;
65 Zhang et al., 2020; Yu, 2017). It has been also documented that the spin-off effects of music
66 influence travel to musicians’ hometowns or countries (Connell & Gibson, 2004; Leaver &
67 Schmidt, 2009; Lee et al., 2019; Lee et al., 2018; Long, 2014; Whang et al., 2016).

68

69 *1.1. Problem statement*

70 Despite the increasing volume of literature on music and tourism, four critical research
71 gaps remain. First, there have been few efforts to empirically analyze the effects of music on the
72 attitudes and behavioral intentions of potential tourists. Second, consumption value is now a key
73 concept in understanding consumers’ psychological mechanisms and their outcomes in a more
74 nuanced manner. While the concept has been actively applied in the context of product
75 consumption value (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982; Sheth et al., 1991), green consumption value
76 (Kao & Tu, 2015), food consumption (Choe & Kim, 2018, 2019), and visual media consumption
77 value (Kim & Kim, 2018), there has been no attempt to conceptualize and measure consumption

78 values in the context of music tourism. Therefore, this study attempts to develop an instrument to
79 measure music consumption values.

80 Third, with a few exceptions (e.g., Lee et al., 2019; Lee et al., 2018), the existing
81 academic knowledge about the relationships between music and its fans' attitudes or intended
82 destinations is mostly descriptive (e.g., Connell & Gibson, 2004; Gibson & Connell, 2007;
83 Lashua et al., 2014; Long, 2014; Matheson, 2008), or qualitatively approached using interview
84 methods (e.g., Bolderman & Reijnders, 2017; Farsani et al., 2017) or online fan-generated
85 paratexts (e.g., Cruz et al., 2021). Therefore, there is a need to empirically identify the effect of
86 music on consumption value and further consequences such as tourism destination and personal
87 attitude, in a quantitative manner. Finally, models to identify the outcomes from consumer
88 involvement with K-pop culture have been simple or fragmented between constructs. This study
89 proposes to incorporate diverse constructs including music consumption values, involvement,
90 and its consequences to explore the influence of K-pop consumption value on further
91 consequences including attitudinal and behavioral indicators.

92

93 *1.2. Research objectives*

94 This study aimed to investigate the underlying structural relationships between perceived
95 consumption values of K-pop music, audience involvement, familiarity, and behavioral intention,
96 by using a study sample taken from foreign audiences of K-pop music. This is a timely response
97 to a continuous call for studies to gain a more sound understanding of audiences' perceived
98 aesthetic values and symbolic meanings generated from their personal consumption of popular
99 culture, given the need to examine the antecedents and consequences of audiences' perceived
100 values of popular culture, attitudes, and behavioral intentions.

101 2. Literature review and hypotheses development

102 2.1. K-pop music and its relation to South Korean tourism

103 The Korean wave or *Hallyu* is widely recognized as a social and cultural phenomenon of
104 Korean pop (K-pop) culture that has been widely embraced and has gained unprecedented
105 popularity in the global market (Istad et al., 2022; Kim & Nam, 2016; Lim & Giouvris, 2020). In
106 2019, K-pop music became one of Korea's biggest exports, generating an estimated US\$4.65
107 billion through ticket sales, music downloads and merchandise, which accounted for 0.3% of the
108 country's GDP (Liu, 2020). A leading K-pop boyband, BTS, also known as the *Bangtan Boys*,
109 became the first group since the Beatles to achieve three No. 1 albums on the US Billboard 200
110 chart in less than one year (Istad et al., 2022).

111 According to a recent industry report released by Korea Foundation (Kim, 2022), the
112 number of global K-pop fans exceeds 156 million. A list of K-pop music world tours has been
113 scheduled after the COVID-19 pandemic (Sai, 2022), and it is expected that K-pop music will
114 influence global tourism demand and recovery. Indeed, the Korean government is attempting to
115 integrate its tourism development and promotion with K-pop culture as the core of the nation's
116 creative industries (Kim & Nam, 2016; Trolan, 2017). The popularity of K-pop culture has
117 influenced the inbound tourism market in Korea (Kim et al., 2022; Lim & Giouvris, 2020). A
118 recent survey conducted by the Korea Tourism Organization (KTO) in 2020 indicated that K-
119 pop-related tourism was approximately 7.4% of total inbound tourism in 2019, equal to 1.1
120 million tourists. The average spending of K-pop-related tourists was US\$1,007, indicating that
121 K-pop related tourists contributed US\$1.1 billion to the South Korean economy in 2019 (Hong,
122 2020). Therefore, it is important for the current study to examine and understand the

123 psychological mechanisms of tourists' perceived consumption values of K-pop music and their
124 consequences.

125

126 2.2. *Perceived values of K-pop music and audience involvement*

127 One of the most widely adopted concepts of 'perceived values' has its roots in the field of
128 marketing and consumer behaviors, examining consumers' perceived value of retail products
129 (e.g., toys or clothing) in relation to price and quality (Zeithaml, 1988). This has since been
130 applied in a variety of research contexts including tourism and hospitality, as systematically
131 reviewed by Sánchez-Fernández and Iniesta-Bonillo (2007). A more recent and relevant effort, in
132 the context of film tourism – a form of popular culture tourism sharing commonalities with music
133 tourism (Gibson & Connell, 2007) – investigated audiences' evaluations of the attributes or
134 elements of popular media programs as precursors to an intention to visit and participate in on-
135 site experiences (Connell & Gibson, 2004; Farsani et al., 2017; Henke, 2005). Coined by cinema
136 and media studies, *production values* refer to the professional attributes of a media production
137 that include but are not limited to video and audio quality, lighting, and the amount and quality
138 of special effects in TV and film productions, from a producer's perspective (Kim, 2012b; Kim
139 & O'Connor, 2011).

140 Similar to media products such as TV series and films (Kim, 2012a; Kim & Assaker,
141 2014), the aesthetic values of music, as a source of artistic and musical expression, create
142 consumption values for music as perceived by audiences from a consumer perspective. At its
143 core, music is an aural experience, but has inherently visual and more permanent, physical
144 artefacts, such as performers, instruments, and stages or locations that provide additional
145 aesthetic values to the overall experience of music consumption (Gibson & Connell, 2007).

146 Thus, audiences' perceived consumption values relating to K-pop music are defined in this study
147 as a personalized evaluation of K-pop music's attributes and elements from a consumer
148 perspective, characterized by video and audio quality, special effects and lighting, visual dance
149 performance, the story and message of the song, and/or the appearance of the singers.

150 Originating in media and communication studies, audience involvement refers to "the
151 degree to which audience members engage in reflection upon, and parasocial interaction with,
152 certain media programs, thus resulting in overt behavior change" (Sood, 2002, p. 156). Audience
153 involvement is complex and multidimensional. Some studies (Roger & Sood, 2000; Sood, 2002)
154 theoretically and empirically confirmed the interrelationships of five sub-dimensions of audience
155 involvement: critical reflection, referential reflection, affective or emotional interaction,
156 cognitive interaction, and behavioral interaction.

157 In tourism studies, Kim and Assaker (2014) were the first to empirically examine the
158 structural relationships between perceived values for Korean TV media programs, audience
159 involvement, and tourist experiences, using inbound international film tourists to Korea. They
160 confirmed that audience involvement in the context of tourism was three-dimensional, by
161 highlighting the significance of cognitive dimensions such as critical reflection.

162 A more recent study by Kim and Kim (2018) also re-confirmed three dimensionalities of
163 audience involvement: emotional involvement, referential reflection, and behavioral
164 involvement, in the context of Korean TV drama consumption by mainland Chinese audiences.
165 One noticeable additional finding was that the efficacy of perceived values on behavioral
166 dimensions of audience involvement was indirect only when emotional involvement and
167 referential reflection was ignited, and subsequently intensified through the process of viewing a
168 TV series or drama.

169 Despite limited prior empirical studies, music consumption also involves cognitive,
170 emotional and embodied experiential processes in which an individual audience member engages
171 with continued, instantaneous responses to a variety of music content; the so-called perceived
172 *consumption values of music*, such as lyrics and singers or musicians in terms of ongoing
173 feelings, emotions, pleasures, nostalgia and catharsis (Gibson & Connell, 2007; Lashua et al.,
174 2014; Long, 2014; Matheson, 2008; Wood & Smith, 2004). At the center of this personalized,
175 private process and experience, emotional reaction, response, or involvement, becomes a crucial
176 tool in constructing a connection between oneself and the music (Connell & Gibson, 2004; Long,
177 2014; Sinclair et al., 2019). An individual can negotiate between a sense of self and the
178 emotional narratives of music, through which he or she can map music stories with strong
179 emotional content onto the stories of other individuals by formulating enduring affective and
180 emotional ties to the consumed music and the musicians who perform it (Henke, 2005;
181 Hesmondhalgh, 2013; Leaver & Schmidt, 2009).

182 It is not easy to draw definite conclusions because of the limited previous empirical
183 studies on popular music consumption and audience involvement. However, it is reasonable to
184 propose the following hypotheses.

185
186 *H1 and H2: Perceived values of K-pop music have a direct positive effect on audiences’*
187 *emotional involvement (H1) and audiences’ referential reflections (H2).*

188

189 *2.3. Interrelationships between emotional involvement, referential reflection, and behavioral*
190 *involvement*

191 When audiences as consumers exhibit a strong emotional involvement with popular
192 cultural products such as media programs and music, they become not only more proactive in

193 relating the media or music contents or themes to their own personal lives but also behaviorally
194 engage with them by talking to or about mediatized characters and/or performers with regard to
195 behavioral efforts or pursuits including travelling. Each manifestation involves the characteristics
196 of ‘referential reflection’ and ‘behavioral involvement’, respectively (Roger & Sood, 2000;
197 Sood, 2002).

198 The interrelationships between the sub-dimensions of the audience involvement concept
199 have been empirically tested and re-confirmed, predominantly in the context of popular culture
200 tourism, celebrity tourism, and film tourism (Kim & Assaker, 2014; Kim et al., 2018; Kim &
201 Kim, 2018; Kim et al., 2019a; Yen & Croy, 2016). The role of emotional or affective
202 involvement in shaping behavioral involvement in the broader contexts of tourism was also
203 examined (Biswas et al., 2021; Kim et al., 2019b). For instance, Kim et al. (2019b) confirmed
204 that emotional involvement was a significant contributor to behavioral involvement in the
205 context of nostalgia tourism associated with the Hong Kong cinema.

206 In a similar vein, affective signifiers of audience involvement with music consumption
207 are naturally connected to behavioral consequences such as talking more about beloved singers
208 or songs, buying new releases, and spending more time listening to them. Such personalized
209 emotions and symbolic meanings and/or values, which are accumulated during affective
210 consumption, are transformed to more active behavioral pursuits. The relationship between
211 emotional and behavioral involvement by dedicated K-pop fans can thus be explained by self-
212 empowerment in consuming new music culture and pursuing symbolic negotiation with cultural
213 icons (Kim, 2021; Yoon et al., 2020), and the globalization of pop culture (Cruz et al., 2021
214 Laffan, 2021).

215 This study assumes that individuals who have a high level of emotional involvement and
216 referential reflection with regard to K-pop music (and performers) are more likely to re-arrange
217 their personal schedules to continue in engaging with K-pop music. When audiences develop a
218 strong emotional connection with K-pop music, their referential reflection will be further
219 intensified and thus they will be more likely to develop an intimate connection with their real
220 lives and/or problems. Therefore, the following hypotheses were proposed:

221
222 *H3 and H4: Emotional involvement has a direct positive association with referential reflection*
223 *(H3) and behavioral involvement (H4).*

224 *H5: Referential reflection has a direct positive association with behavioral involvement.*

225

226 *2.4. Audiences' behavioral involvement, familiarity, and behavioral intention*

227 The close relationship between involvement and behavioral intention has been well
228 documented in various research contexts and geographical settings. Behavioral involvement, for
229 example, plays a significant role in predicting one's planning and implementing of leisure
230 activities (Christenson et al., 2006; Zabriskie & McCormick, 2003) and shopping intentions
231 (Huang et al., 2010). Previous studies also revealed that a higher level of behavioral involvement
232 with food significantly influenced not only consumers' food-related activities (Hunt et al., 2012)
233 but also their behavioral intention to visit relevant destinations for food-related activities and
234 experiences in situ (Choe & Kim, 2019).

235 More relevant to the current study, behavioral involvement has been examined as a
236 significant, direct precursor of behavioral intention, including intention to visit a related tourism
237 destination. For example, enduring behavioral involvement in the context of nostalgia and film

238 tourism can stimulate a high degree of connection and familiarity with a filmed location and
239 subsequently influence one's intention to visit that location (Kim et al., 2019b).

240 Similarly, behavioral involvement with beloved music and performer(s), while
241 consuming popular music, positively influences behavioral intention. Audiences often
242 experience a familiar, intimate yet imagined connectedness between themselves and the music
243 and performer(s) (i.e., singers) that results in a variety of behavioral intentions such as
244 purchasing intention for the beloved music and performer(s)-related merchandise (e.g., Connell
245 & Gibson, 2004; Lee et al., 2018; Leaver & Schmidt, 2009; Saldanhar, 2002; Sinclair et al.,
246 2019; Yen & Croy, 2016; Yen & Teng, 2015). Some studies further suggest that the higher the
247 behavioral involvement audiences develop with K-pop culture, the greater the likelihood of
248 intention to participate in shopping or concerts (Kim & Park, 2020; Zhang et al., 2020).

249 Likewise, ongoing behavioral involvement with K-pop music and/or singers can trigger
250 keen interest in and familiarity with the homeland of K-pop music and singers as a prospective
251 tourism destination, and influence travel intentions. The studies discussed above justify
252 additional hypotheses as follows:

253
254 *H6a, H6b, and H6c: Behavioral involvement has a positive effect on familiarity (H6a), shopping*
255 *and travel intention (H6b), and food consumption intention (H6c).*

256 257 *2.5. Moderating role of sex, age, and ethnicity*

258 As the popularity of music extends beyond the musicians' hometowns or country
259 boundaries, K-pop's appeal is transnational. Compared to males and older generations, females
260 and young generations tend to consume music from exotic and racialized other cultures, as they
261 are more open to absorbing cultural or fashion trends (Ajitha & Sivakumar, 2019; Toder-Alon, et

262 al., 2019). A previous study in the fashion context suggested that females display higher
263 emotion-oriented consumption behavior (De Grazia & Furlough, 1996), while psychological
264 needs also revealed a significant difference between generations (Rocha et al., 2005).

265 Furthermore, Western fans and Asian fans have different interpretations of K-pop
266 cultures, attitudes, and behavioral pursuits because of the dissimilarities in race, geo-cultural
267 background, cultural distance, language, and historical commonalities (Istad et al., 2022; Yoon et
268 al., 2020). For example, Caucasian fans like K-pop bands' choreographies, fresh and energetic
269 nature, lower levels of commercialization, and have an interest in Orientalism, even though they
270 do not understand the lyrics or storylines and have heterogeneous cultural backgrounds (Yoon et
271 al., 2020). Since intra-Asian fans are more familiar with Asian stereotypes and cultures, and
272 geographically close to Korea, they show a higher level of immersion in postmodern cultural
273 icons. This discussion led to the following hypotheses:

274
275 *H7: Sex (H7a), age (H7b), and ethnicity (H7c) show a significant role in moderating paths in the*
276 *proposed structural model.*

277

278 **3. Research Methodology**

279 *3.1 Research design and measurement scale development*

280 To achieve the research objectives, which included identifying the structural relationships
281 between, and moderating roles of sex, age, and ethnicity in the proposed conceptual framework,
282 this study adopted a quantitative research approach. The data were collected using a self-
283 administered online survey questionnaire. The measurement items for the questionnaire were
284 developed via a literature review, in-depth interviews, and pilot tests. Through a meticulous
285 literature review, a pool of items was created to measure audiences' perceived consumption

286 values of K-pop music. These items, which included features of the singers, fanship,
287 performance quality, background, interest in mimicking singers or singing, and interest in lyrics,
288 were modified from previous studies on K-pop and fan culture (Bang et al., 2021; Bae et al.,
289 2017; Kwak et al., 2019; Laffan, 2021; Oh et al., 2014; Seo & Kim, 2020; Zhang et al., 2020)
290 and popular media and film tourism (Kim & Kim, 2018; Lee et al., 2019; Rajaguru, 2014).

291 Items relating to emotional involvement, referential reflection, and behavioral
292 involvement were specifically extracted from previous film tourism or celebrity studies that
293 introduced and tested the concept of audience involvement in tourism (Kim & Assaker, 2014;
294 Kim & Kim, 2018; Kim et al., 2019a; Yen & Croy, 2016; Yen & Teng, 2015). Items to elucidate
295 familiarity were selected based on previous studies (Lee, 2020; Whang et al., 2016; Yen & Croy,
296 2016), while those for shopping and travel intention were adapted from a variety of other studies
297 (Bang et al., 2021; Huang et al., 2010; Kwak et al., 2019; Li, 2014; Yang et al., 2012; Yen &
298 Teng, 2015; Whang et al., 2016; Yu, 2017; Zhang et al., 2020). Finally, items to indicate food
299 consumption intention were also chosen from previous research (Choe & Kim, 2018; Kwak et
300 al., 2019; Lee, 2018; Yu, 2017).

301 Following the selection of the above initial pool of measurement items, in-depth
302 interviews were held with ten experienced K-pop music fans, recruited by purposive sampling
303 via the personal network of one of the authors, to check the validity of the measurement items
304 and to identify possible new items that might have been missed in the first phase of the literature
305 review. This led to the addition of 10 items based on the context of K-pop music. Subsequently,
306 a pilot test was administered to 50 American participants, using an online survey company called
307 MTurk, as the US is one of the largest K-pop markets outside Korea. Two screening questions,

308 including the level of interest in K-pop music and awareness of two or more K-pop singers or
309 bands, were applied.

310 The pilot test showed that the mean scores on 21 items, representing the perceived values
311 of K-pop music ranged from 4.38 to 5.62, using a 7-point Likert scale. The mean values were
312 determined for seven items on emotional involvement (M=4.32 to M=5.80), four items on
313 referential reflection (M=4.20 to M=4.66), five items on behavioral involvement (M=3.94 to
314 M=5.04), four items on familiarity (M=4.94 to M=5.16), ten items on intention to shop and
315 travel (M=4.20 to M=4.82), and three items on intention to consume food (M=5.34 and M=5.80).
316 These items were deemed to be satisfactory in terms of face validity and content validity, due to
317 the high level of agreement of items relating to important constructs, and were thus included in
318 the questionnaire for the main survey.

319 The final questionnaire consisted of three sections. The first part of the questionnaire
320 contained three screening questions that were used to confirm (1) awareness of K-pop singers or
321 bands, (2) level of interest in K-pop music, and (3) ability to name K-pop singers/bands. The
322 second part of the questionnaire was designed to measure the respondents' socio-demographic
323 details and K-pop experience. The third part consisted of items representing perceived
324 consumption values of K-pop music, emotional involvement, referential reflection, behavioral
325 involvement, familiarity, intention to shop and travel, and intention to consume food. All the
326 items in the section were measured using a seven-point Likert scale from "strongly disagree" (1)
327 to "strongly agree" (7).

328

329 *3.2. Sampling and data collection*

330 The primary focus of this study was on regular consumers of K-pop music residing in the
331 United States, which comprised 95% of the respondents, a significant proportion of the sample.

332 However, for a more comprehensive understanding, the study also included foreign consumers
333 from other Western countries who were aware of and interested in K-pop music. Data collection
334 was implemented in December 2020 and January 2021 using an MTurk-led online panel survey.
335 To select appropriate participants, an attention check question was used. Respondents were
336 requested to write the names of K-pop singers or bands, as well as indicating the number of
337 singers or bands they were aware of. As a result, five sets of responses were ruled out, because
338 they did not provide names even though they provided numbers in response to the question
339 asking about the number of singers or bands they knew. Two questions related to age: one
340 question was presented on the first page as a categorical question, while the other appeared on
341 the last page as an open-ended question. In addition, questionnaires that were completed in less
342 than 2 minutes were excluded. A total of 720 questionnaires were completed. Of these, 22
343 respondents who did not meet the criteria of the attention check and/or ticked the same number
344 for all questions, were eliminated, as they were considered to be insincere responses.
345 Consequently, 698 questionnaires were accepted for further data analysis.

346

347 *3.3. Data analysis*

348 A univariate normality test was conducted to assure the validity and reliability of the
349 collected data. The values for skewness and kurtosis of all items were smaller than $|2|$ and
350 $|10|$ (Kline, 2005), while a Q-Q plot showed the location of the dot on the line. In addition,
351 since the sample sizes for each variable were at least 690, normality as per the Central Limit
352 Theorem was assumed. The collected data were thus satisfactory with regard to normality. In
353 addition, the collected data were randomly divided into two datasets for cross-validation. The
354 first half of the dataset was used for exploratory factor analysis to identify the underlying factor

355 structure, while the second half of the dataset was used for confirmatory factor analysis to verify
356 the identified constructs. Structural equation modeling was then conducted to test the structural
357 relationships of the proposed conceptual model. Lastly, the moderating roles of sex, age, and
358 ethnicity were investigated via multi-group analysis.

359

360 **4. Results**

361 *4.1. Profiles of the respondents*

362 Table 1 illustrates the profiles of the respondents with regard to sociodemographic
363 details, information on consuming K-pop music, and previous experience traveling to Korea.
364 Firstly, 52.7% of the respondents were females. Age groups were bracketed into 30-39 years
365 (43.8%), 29 years or below (26.7%), 40-49 years (18.8%) and 50 years or older (10.7%). With
366 regard to educational level, the highest percentage was observed in the category of
367 college/university (62.5%), followed by postgraduate school or above (15.0%). Married
368 respondents made up 52.4% of the respondents. With regard to the country of residence of the
369 respondents, US citizens (95.4%) were dominant, and among US respondents the highest
370 percentages were in California (14.4%), and New York and New Jersey (10.4%). For ethnicity,
371 the highest percentages were Caucasian (69.5%), followed by Asian American (11.9%) and
372 Black American (10.6%). The most common occupation was company employee (50.9%),
373 followed by professional (12.8%) and sales/service employees (5.6%).

374 The information on prior knowledge of K-pop music and travel experience to Korea is
375 summarized as follows. When asked if they knew about the Bangtan Boys (BTS), one of the
376 most famous K-pop bands, 98.9% of the participants answered 'yes'. In regard to the number of
377 K-pop singers or bands they knew, 41.1% responded that they knew six or more. With regard to

378 time spent listening to K-pop music per week, they answered “30 minutes to 1 hour” (31.8%),
379 “1.1 to 3 hours” (26.4%), and “more than 3 hours” (19.8%). Regarding their level of interest in
380 K-pop music, answers included “somewhat interested” (64.2%) and “strongly interested”
381 (35.8%). Most respondents (60.3%) indicated “Internet, DVD or others” as a method to listen to
382 K-pop music, while 29.5% stated “smartphone”. With regard to satisfaction with listening to K-
383 pop music, 95.3% stated they were “somewhat satisfied” or “strongly satisfied”.

Table 1. Profiles of the respondents (N = 698)

Variables	Categories	Frequencies	Percentage (%)	Variables	Categories	Frequencies	Percentage (%)
Sex	Female	368	52.7	Ethnicity	Caucasian	485	69.5
	Male	328	47		Asian America	83	11.9
	Others	2	0.3		Black American	74	10.6
Age	29 or below	186	26.7		Hispanic American	35	5
	30-39	306	43.8		Others	21	3
	40-49	131	18.8		Occupation	Company employee	355
	50 or older	75	10.7	Business owner		40	5.7
Educational level	High school or less	72	10.3	Civil servant		12	1.7
	Current College/University student	85	12.2	Professional		89	12.8
	College/University	436	62.5	Housewife		13	1.9
	Postgraduate school or above	105	15	Technician		25	3.6
Marital status	Single	310	44.4	Student		33	4.7
	Married	366	52.4	Sales/service employee		39	5.6
	Others	22	3.2	Teacher		27	3.9
Country	US	666	95.4	Retired		8	1.1
	Europe	31	4.5	Others		57	8.1
	Others	1	0.1	0		408	58.5

Residence state in the U.S. (n=666)	California	96	14.4	Number of visits to locations associated with K-Pop music in Korea	1	81	11.6
	New York and New Jersey	69	10.4		2 or more	209	29.9
	Florida	48	7.2	Number of K-pop singers or bands that you know	2	54	7.7
	Texas	51	7.7		3	134	19.2
	Others	402	60.4		4	143	20.5
Awareness of Bangtan Boys (BTS)	Yes	690	98.9		5	80	11.5
	No	8	1.1		6 or more	287	41.1
Interest in K-pop music	Strongly interested	250	35.8	Satisfaction with listening to K-pop music	Strongly dissatisfied	1	0.1
	Somewhat interested	448	64.2		Somewhat dissatisfied	1	0.1
Method used to listen to K-pop music	TV	53	7.6		Neutral	31	4.4
	Satellite TV channel	18	2.6		Somewhat satisfied	354	50.7
	Smartphone	206	29.5	Strongly satisfied	311	44.6	
	Internet, DVD or others	421	60.3	Number of trips to Korea for holidays	0	384	55
Time spent watching K-pop music videos in one week	Less than 30 minutes	221	31.7		1	89	12.8
	30 minutes to 1 hour	231	33.1		2 or more	225	32.2
	1.1 to 3 hours	143	20.5				
	More than 3 hours	103	14.7				

386 4.2. Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) of the measurement model (first half of the data set, $n =$
387 349)

388 To cross-validate the measurement scale, the collected data were randomly divided into
389 two datasets. EFA was conducted with principal components factor extraction and promax
390 rotation methods by using the first half of the dataset ($n=349$). Items with communalities below
391 0.45 and/or factor loadings of less than 0.45 were considered for removal (Comrey & Lee, 1992).
392 The factors with eigenvalues greater than 1.0 were derived. Firstly, since six items for perceived
393 consumption values of K-pop music had communalities below 0.45 and factor loadings of less
394 than 0.45, they were discarded. Thus, a total of 15 items were rerun for exploratory factor
395 analysis. The reliability alphas for all domains exhibited a range of 0.79 to 0.88, showing internal
396 consistency of items within each domain. The values of the KMO measure of sampling adequacy
397 (0.90) and Bartlett's test of sphericity showed that $\chi^2 = 1132$ ($p = 0.000$), which indicated
398 acceptable factor structure. As shown in Table 2, domains extracted for the perceived
399 consumption values of K-pop music were named "character and visual performance value",
400 "imitation and attachment value," and "message and vocal value." Grand means for the three
401 domains were 5.69, 5.18, and 5.36, respectively.

402 A series of EFAs for other constructs showed two items on emotional involvement, two
403 items on behavioral involvement, and one item on intention to consume food had communalities
404 below 0.45 and/or factor loadings of less than 0.45. After discarding these items, EFAs were
405 rerun. These constructs generated single-factor solutions where the factor structures explained
406 the variance in a range between 65.67% and 80.83%. The reliability alphas for all constructs
407 ranged from 0.76 to 0.92, indicating internal consistency of items within each construct. Grand

408 means for the three domains were 4.91, 4.88, and 4.68, respectively. The detailed information is
409 presented in Table 2.

Table 2. EFA result for consumption values of K-pop music scale and other constructs (n = 349)

Domains and items	Communality	Factor loading	Mean
Domain 1: Character and visual performance value (Eigenvalue: 6.33; Variance explained: 42.22%; Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.88$; Grand mean = 5.69)			
Outstanding dance/physical performances by the K-pop singers	0.65	0.83	5.82
Fashion style and items of K-pop singer(s) (e.g., dress, accessories, and hairstyle)	0.64	0.77	5.64
Aesthetically pleasing visual images on the screen (e.g., picturesque camera angles, cinematographic)	0.61	0.77	5.73
Appearance of singer(s)	0.61	0.71	5.77
Collaboration and synchronization in singing and dancing by group singers	0.49	0.69	5.65
Beautiful backgrounds featured on K-pop music videos and TV shows	0.51	0.57	5.62
Quality of the stage for singing and dancing	0.55	0.55	5.60
Domain 2: Imitation and attachment value (Eigenvalue: 1.76; Variance explained: 11.71%; Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.83$; Grand mean: 5.18)			
Personal attachment to locations in K-pop videos/TV shows (depiction of places that appeal to me)	0.70	0.87	5.00
Interest in imitating dance (e.g., easy to follow)	0.68	0.79	5.20
Interest in imitating singing (e.g., easy to follow)	0.60	0.65	5.23
Reflection of contemporary pop culture assets (e.g., reflecting youth preferences)	0.56	0.53	5.30
Domain 3: Message and vocal value (Eigenvalue: 1.13; Variance explained: 7.52%; Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.79$; Grand mean: 5.36)			
Ability to sing a song (e.g., voice, pitch, volume)	0.62	0.79	5.62
Enhanced emotional involvement and identification with songs and lyrics	0.66	0.72	5.32
Originality of K-pop song's story (lyrics)	0.61	0.69	5.16
Interesting and touching messages in the song lyrics	0.71	0.60	5.33

Domains and items	Community	Factor loading	Mean
Domain 1: Emotional involvement (Eigenvalue: 3.72; Variance explained: 74.32%; Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.92$; Grand mean: 4.91)			
My favorite singers in K-pop are like old friends.	0.77	0.88	4.64
I really miss K-pop and my favorite singer(s) whenever I am unable to listen to it.	0.77	0.88	4.78
I feel that K-pop and my favorite singers keep me company.	0.75	0.87	5.15
When listening to K-pop (or watching K-pop shows), I feel that I am a part of the song story.	0.71	0.85	4.92
I feel comfortable listening to K-pop (or watching a K-pop show), because it is as if the star singers are my friends.	0.71	0.84	5.06
Domain 1: Referential reflection (Eigenvalue: 3.19; Variance explained: 79.67%; Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.91$; Grand mean: 4.88)			
K-pop seems to understand and cover the kinds of issues that I want to know more about.	0.82	0.91	4.95
I feel that K-pop presents things as they really are in life.	0.82	0.90	4.89
I feel that K-pop portrays real life lessons and practices that I can personally relate to.	0.78	0.88	4.95
When a K-pop singer(s) expresses an opinion, it helps me make up my own mind about the issue.	0.77	0.88	4.74
Domain 1: Behavioral involvement (Eigenvalue: 2.23; Variance explained: 74.39%; Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.82$; Grand mean: 4.68)			
I arrange my daily/weekly schedule for K-pop so as to have a regular relationship with it.	0.79	0.89	4.24
I sometimes make remarks to my favorite singer(s) while listening to K-pop (or watching K-pop shows).	0.78	0.88	4.62
If there is a story about K-pop or my favorite singer(s) in a newspaper, magazine, or on the Internet, I am determined to read it.	0.66	0.81	5.18
Domain 1: Familiarity (Eigenvalue: 2.95; Variance explained: 73.69%; Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.88$; Grand mean: 5.38)			
I feel that my perception of image of Korea is more favorable because of K-pop.	0.77	0.88	5.40
I feel friendlier towards Korea because of K-pop.	0.76	0.87	5.39
I feel more familiar with Korea because of K-pop.	0.72	0.85	5.44
I feel closer to Korea because of K-pop.	0.69	0.83	5.30
Domain 1: Intention to shop and travel (Eigenvalue: 5.91; Variance explained: 65.67; Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.93$; Grand mean: 4.93)			
I'd like to participate in a tourism program to stay overnight at K-pop events in Korea.	0.78	0.88	4.81
I'd like to participate in a tour program to visit a studio of a TV network company in Korea.	0.77	0.88	4.80
I'd like to visit K-pop music video-shooting locations someday soon after COVID-19.	0.75	0.87	4.75
I'd like to visit a shopping place to buy products that are displayed on screen or accessories that singers wear.	0.71	0.84	4.93
I'd like to participate in a fan meeting in Korea if an opportunity arises.	0.70	0.83	4.99
I'd like to stay a hotel where K-pop stars stay.	0.65	0.81	4.75
I'd like to visit a shopping place to buy Korean products if my favorite K-pop singers endorse them.	0.61	0.78	5.11
I'd like to visit a shopping place to buy Korean cosmetic products (e.g., BB cream) during a tour in Korea.	0.53	0.73	4.94
I'd like to visit Korea regardless of the travel distance or cost.	0.42	0.65	5.25
Domain 1: Intention to consume food (Eigenvalue: 1.62; Variance explained: 80.83%; Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.76$; Grand mean: 5.59)			
I'd like to visit a Korean restaurant in my country.	0.81	0.90	5.69
I'd like to buy Korean food (e.g., kimchi, beer, soju, chicken, snack, noodle, canned food).	0.81	0.90	5.49

414 *4.3. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) of the measurement model (second half of the data set, n*
415 *= 379)*

416 A CFA was performed to confirm the factor structure and validate the perceived
417 consumption values of K-pop music and other constructs. As shown in Table 3, the results of the
418 CFA showed an acceptable level for the overall fit indices ($\chi^2(788) = 1589.81$ ($p < 0.001$), CFI =
419 0.93, TLI = 0.92, GFI = 0.84, RMSEA = 0.05). The standardized factor loading of each item
420 ranged from 0.67 to 0.89, exceeding the threshold value of 0.50. All average variance extracted
421 (AVE) values and construct reliability values were higher than 0.52 and 0.79, respectively,
422 supporting convergent validity. In addition, the AVE values of each construct were greater than
423 the square of correlation coefficients for the inter-constructs, thus confirming discriminant
424 validity.
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426
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Table 3. Composite reliability (CR), the square root of the average variance extracted (AVE) and correlations between constructs

	CR	AVE	CVV	IAV	MVV	EI	RR	BI	FL	ST	FC
CVV	0.90	0.52	0.72								
IAV	0.84	0.57	0.68***	0.76							
MVV	0.82	0.53	0.42***	0.67***	0.73						
EI	0.95	0.79	0.42***	0.62***	0.62***	0.89					
RR	0.90	0.70	0.44***	0.64***	0.75***	0.78***	0.84				
BI	0.88	0.71	0.38***	0.6***	0.59***	0.8***	0.75***	0.84			
FL	0.90	0.68	0.53***	0.57***	0.55***	0.60***	0.54***	0.57***	0.82		
ST	0.94	0.64	0.43***	0.58***	0.58***	0.72***	0.68***	0.76***	0.68***	0.80	
FC	0.72	0.56	0.32***	0.32***	0.34***	0.30***	0.27***	0.35***	0.51***	0.56***	0.75

$\chi^2(788) = 1589.81$ ($p < 0.001$); CFI = 0.93; TLI = 0.92; RMSEA = 0.05; GFI = 0.84.

Notes: CVV=character and visual performance value; IAV= imitation and attachment value; MVV= message and vocal value; EI= emotional involvement; RR= referential reflection; BI= behavioral involvement; FL= familiarity; ST= intention to shop and travel; FC= intention to consume food.

*** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$.

428

429 4.4. Structural equation modeling

430 In Table 4, the SEM results demonstrate a satisfactory level of fit for overall fit indices
431 ($\chi^2(769) = 2374.42$ ($p < 0.001$), CFI = 0.93, TLI = 0.92, RMSEA = 0.06, GFI = 0.85). The results
432 supported ten out of twelve hypotheses. Fig. 1 shows the direct path for the structural model.
433 Hypotheses 1a and 2a were tested by examining the effect of character and visual performance
434 value on emotional involvement ($\beta = -0.16$, $t = -1.62$, n.s) and referential reflection ($\beta = -0.11$, t
435 $= -1.40$, n.s.) and were not supported. The hypothesized associations between imitation and
436 attachment value, emotional involvement and referential reflection were significant at the 0.001
437 and 0.05 levels, respectively ($\beta = 0.67$, $t = 6.21$, $p < 0.001$; $\beta = 0.17$, $t = 2.06$, $p < 0.05$). These
438 results support hypotheses 1b and 2b. Since the influence of message and vocal value on
439 emotional involvement and referential reflection were significant with positive signs ($\beta = 0.70$, t
440 $= 7.71$, $p < 0.001$; $\beta = 0.58$, $t = 7.39$, $p < 0.001$), hypotheses 1c and 2c were supported.

441 For the relationship of emotional involvement to referential reflection, since a significant
442 and positive path was found ($\beta = 0.58$, $t = 12.83$, $p < 0.001$), Hypothesis 3 was accepted. The
443 influence of emotional involvement on behavioral involvement was significant and positive ($\beta =$
444 0.41 , $t = 6.39$, $p < 0.001$), and referential reflection significantly affected behavioral involvement
445 ($\beta = 0.64$, $t = 9.45$, $p < 0.001$), leading to acceptance of hypotheses 4 and 5. The hypothesized
446 paths for the relationships of behavioral involvement to familiarity ($\beta = 0.34$, $t = 10.07$, $p <$
447 0.001), intention to shop and travel ($\beta = 0.89$, $t = 23.11$, $p < 0.001$), and intention to consume
448 food ($\beta = 0.53$, $t = 18.00$, $p < 0.001$) were significant and positive, supporting Hypotheses 6a, 6b,
449 and 6c.

450 *4.5. Multi-group analysis*

451 To examine the moderating role of sex, age, and ethnicity, respondents were separated
452 into different groups (female vs. male, 39 or below vs. 40 or older, and Caucasian vs. others).
453 Three respective measurement invariance analyses were then conducted separately on the
454 identified conceptual models in this study. First, the non-restricted model and full metric
455 invariance model were compared with the observed significant chi-square difference by using
456 CFA. The full metric invariance model was supported for the model of age and ethnicity,
457 whereas the full metric invariance model was not supported for the model of sex. Therefore, the
458 invariance constraints across the two sex groups were released one by one, based on parameter
459 changes. The partial metric invariance model with five constraints released was supported for
460 further analysis (Table 5).

461 Table 6 shows the result of structural invariance analyses. All of the model fit indices
462 showed a satisfactory level. However, an insignificant chi-square difference was observed in the
463 three models. Therefore, the groups are not different at the model level, but they may be different
464 at the path level. Table 7 shows the results of the invariance tests for the paths in three
465 moderating models, leading to the rejection of hypotheses 7a, 7b, and 7c.

Table 4. Direct Path for the Structural Model (N = 698)

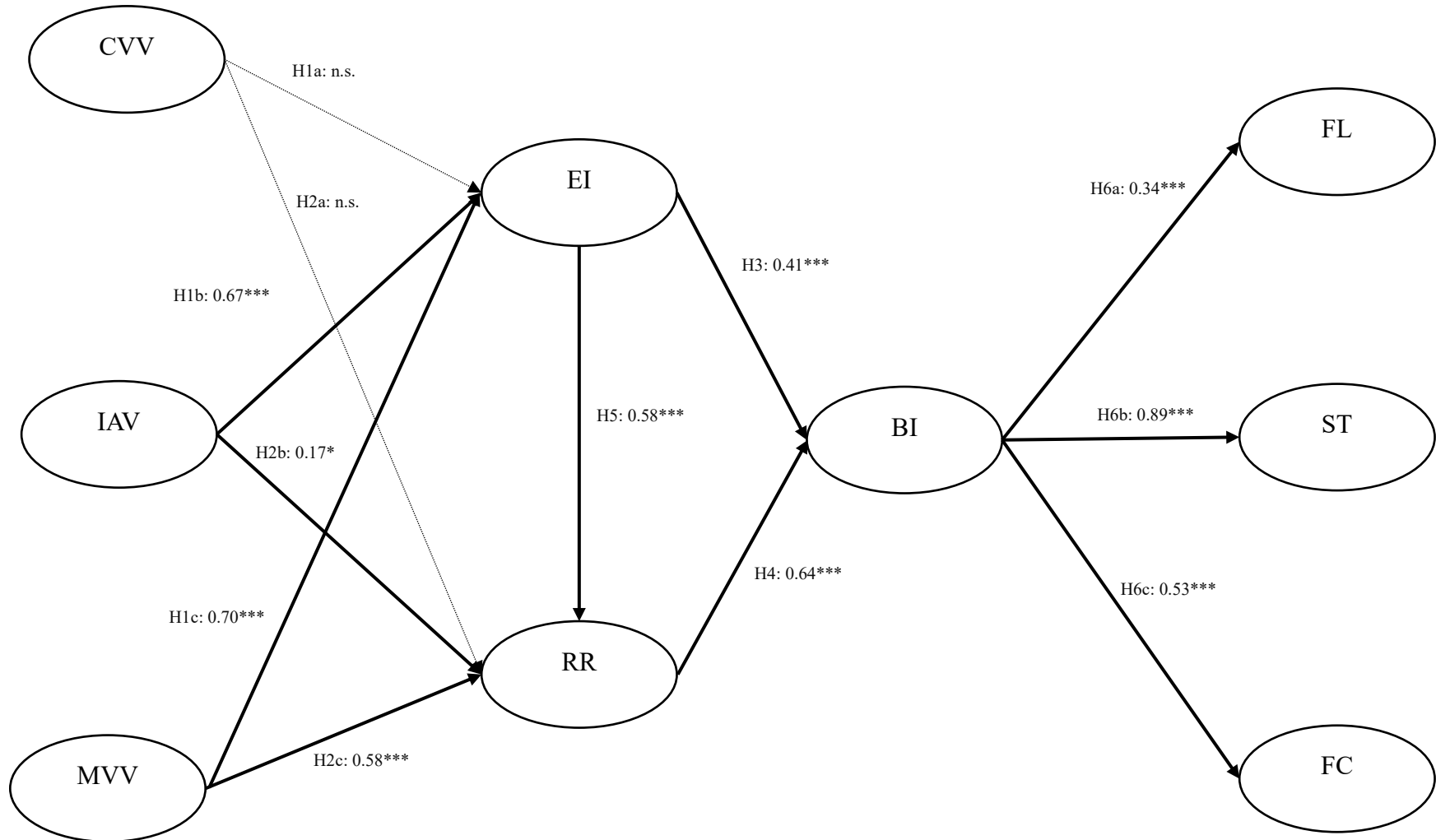
Hypothesis	Regression paths			Standard coefficient	t-value	Decision
H1a	CVV	→	EI	-0.16	-1.62	Reject
H1b	IAV	→	EI	0.67	6.21***	Accept
H1c	MVV	→	EI	0.70	7.71***	Accept
H2a	CVV	→	RR	-0.11	-1.40	Reject
H2b	IAV	→	RR	0.17	2.06*	Accept
H2c	MVV	→	RR	0.58	7.39***	Accept
H3	EI	→	RR	0.58	12.83***	Accept
H4	EI	→	BI	0.41	6.39***	Accept
H5	RR	→	BI	0.64	9.45***	Accept
H6a	BI	→	FL	0.34	10.07***	Accept
H6b	BI	→	ST	0.89	23.11***	Accept
H6c	BI	→	FC	0.53	18.00***	Accept

$\chi^2(769) = 2,374.42$ ($p < 0.001$); CFI = 0.93; TLI = 0.92; RMSEA = 0.06; GFI = 0.85.

*** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$.

468

Figure 1. Structural model explaining the role of music consumption values and their consequences (N = 698)



469

470 Note: CVV=character and visual performance value; IAV= imitation and attachment value; MVV= message and vocal value; EI= emotional
471 involvement; RR= referential reflection; BI= behavioral involvement; FL= familiarity; ST= intention to shop and travel; FC= intention to consume
472 food.

473

474

Table 5. Measurement invariances for sex, age, and ethnicity

	Female vs. Male			39 or below vs. 40 or older			Caucasian vs. Others		
	χ^2 (df)	$\Delta\chi^2$ (df)	CFI (RMSEA)	χ^2 (df)	$\Delta\chi^2$ (df)	CFI (RMSEA)	χ^2 (df)	$\Delta\chi^2$ (df)	CFI (RMSEA)
Non-restricted	3211.6 (1496)		0.92 (0.04)	3067.93 (1496)		0.93 (0.04)	3174.65 (1496)		0.92 (0.04)
Full metric invariance of CFA model (L(X)Y=IN*)	3274.0 (1529)	62.4 (33) ^a	0.92 (0.04)	3090.6 (1529)	22.67 (33) ^c	0.93 (0.04)	3222.21 (1529)	47.56 (33) ^c	0.92 (0.04)
Partial metric invariance of CFA	3234.5 (1526)	22.9 (30) ^b	0.92 (0.04)						

*IN = invariance.

^a: Chi-square difference test: $\Delta\chi^2$ (df) > $\chi^2_{.01}$ (33) = 59.89. Therefore, the full metric invariance model was not supported.

^b: Chi-square difference test: $\Delta\chi^2$ (df) < $\chi^2_{.01}$ (30) = 53.49. Therefore, the partial metric invariance model was supported (with five items of invariance constraints released).

^c: Chi-square difference test: $\Delta\chi^2$ (df) < $\chi^2_{.01}$ (33) = 59.89. Therefore, the full metric invariance model was supported.

475

476

Table 6. Structural invariance tests of paths for sex, age, and ethnicity

Models		χ^2	df	$\Delta\chi^2$ (df)	CFI	TLI	RMSEA
Female vs. Male	Partial metric invariance model (L(X)Y = IN)	3581.8	1568		0.91	0.90	0.04
	Full path invariance model (L(X)Y = IN, GA = IN. BE = IN)	3594.7	1580	12.9 (12)	0.91	0.90	0.04
39 or below vs. 40 or older	Full metric invariance model (L(X)Y = IN)	3470.07	1571		0.91	0.91	0.04
	Full path invariance model (L(X)Y = IN, GA = IN. BE = IN)	3487.82	1583	17.75 (12)	0.91	0.91	0.04
Caucasian vs. Others	Full metric invariance model (L(X)Y = IN)	3583.24	1571		0.91	0.90	0.04
	Full path invariance model (L(X)Y = IN, GA = IN. BE = IN)	3596.55	1583	13.31 (12)	0.91	0.90	0.04

Chi-square difference test: $\Delta\chi^2$ (df) < $\chi^2_{.05}$ (12) = 21.03; Therefore, groups are not different at the model level.

477

478

479 **5. Discussions and implications**

480 *5.1. Discussion*

481 The findings of this study produced several significant discussion points. First, the
482 perceived character and visual performance values in K-pop music were not significant in
483 explaining emotional involvement and referential reflection. This is inconsistent with previous
484 studies that indicated favorite characters are a core anchoring point between audiences and
485 performers through empathy, identification, and social interaction (Frost, 2010; Kim & Kim,
486 2018). One possible interpretation may be that the characteristics and personalities of favorite
487 male pop stars from the Western perspective are different from those of K-pop boy singers or
488 bands. Although the Western public has paid greater attention to and been immersed in the K-
489 pop music (Cruz et al., 2021; Gibson, 2018; Lee & Kim, 2020), masculinity of male pop stars or
490 musicians may be still advocated in mainstream Western societies. This may explain why
491 Western tourists may not be ready to accept the femininity or soft masculinity of K-pop boy
492 bands, given that K-pop boy singers or bands in particular are stereotypically associated with
493 wearing feminine-style makeup, performing feminine-style dancing, or wearing skinny-fit shirts
494 (Laffan, 2021; Monocello & Dressler, 2020).

495 Second, the perceived imitation and attachment values had a positive influence on the
496 degree of emotional involvement and referential reflection. This finding is consistent with prior
497 studies in the context of film tourism (Kim & Assaker, 2014; Kim et al., 2018; Kim et al., 2019b;
498 Yen & Teng, 2015). In addition, this study also theoretically and statistically confirmed that
499 perceived messages and vocal values, as a dimension of the perceived consumption values of K-
500 pop music, arouse feelings of involvement. Audiences tend to apply the stories and lyrics of K-
501 pop music to personal situations in their daily lives and consider media personalities as close

502 friends, which is similar to the case of Korean TV series consumption by foreign audiences (Kim
503 & Kim, 2018; Yu, 2017). This finding supports the original idea of parasocial interaction, which
504 states that audiences experience a psychological relationship with performers through the media,
505 and consequently interact with personas, developing illusions of intimacy, friendship, and
506 identification (Chung & Cho, 2017; Farsani et al., 2017; Zhang et al., 2020).

507 Third, the effects that emotional involvement has on referential reflection and behavioral
508 involvement were supported. These results confirm previous studies that revealed a significant
509 and positive effect between audiences' emotional involvement and referential reflection and
510 behavioral involvement in the context of film tourism with particular attention to Korean TV
511 series and dramas (Bae et al., 2004; Kim & Kim, 2018; Kim et al., 2019a; Yu et al., 2017). This
512 finding is important for future K-pop music studies and the K-pop music industry, given that it is
513 the first attempt to examine and empirically prove the effect of emotional involvement with K-
514 pop music on the two sub-dimensions of audience involvement: referential reflection and
515 behavioral involvement. Therefore, the perceived values of and emotional involvement with K-
516 pop music among Western audiences play a crucial role in enhancing overall K-pop music
517 experiences.

518 Fourth, audiences who expressed high levels of referential reflection demonstrated
519 positive behavioral involvement. This result was confirmed by previous tourism studies that
520 established the positive influence of referential reflection on behavioral involvement (Kim &
521 Assaker, 2014; Kim & Kim, 2018). In addition, the positive effects of behavioral involvement on
522 familiarity, intention to shop and travel, and intention to consume food were verified. This result
523 is particularly meaningful, considering that the majority of previous K-pop studies have focused
524 on exploring the K-pop phenomenon and its effect on destination image change (Bae et al., 2017;

525 Lim & Giouvriss, 2020; Oh & Lee, 2014; Seo & Kim, 2020; Yoon, 2019) rather than
526 investigating the underlying mechanism and structures through which the consumption values of
527 K-pop music, audience involvement, familiarity and behavior intention interact. This study has
528 theoretically and empirically identified the indirect effect of the perceived consumption values of
529 K-pop music on audiences' behavioral involvement through their emotional involvement and
530 referential reflection.

531 Last but not least, the concept of audience involvement has long been treated as an
532 important construct in the field of media and audience studies with regard to the uses and effects
533 of popular culture (e.g., music concerts, TV shows) and as a metaphor for proactive consumers
534 who are deemed to purposefully search for and experience popular cultural products to fulfil
535 their needs and expectations (e.g., Chung & Cho, 2017; Rubin et al., 1985; Sood & Rogers,
536 2000). Since its introduction to the field of tourism studies (Kim, 2012a), several previous
537 studies have confirmed the robust reliability and validity of audience involvement by
538 determining a significant relationship between audience involvement and behavioral intention in
539 various contexts of pop culture tourism (Biswas et al., 2021; Kim & Kim, 2018; Kim et al.,
540 2019a; Li, 2014; Yen & Teng, 2015). Thus, the adoption of audience involvement in this study
541 makes an original, significant contribution to a more holistic understanding of the underlying
542 dynamics and complexities in the context of K-pop music consumption and its close relationship
543 with tourism, with wider implications for relevant stakeholders in tourism and creative
544 industries.

545 *5.2. Theoretical implications*

546 This study contributes to the nexus between music and tourism research in several ways.
547 First, it determined three underlying domains of the perceived consumption values of K-pop
548 music: ‘character and visual performance value’, ‘imitation and attachment value’, and ‘message
549 and vocal value’. In addition, this was the first empirical study to examine the effect of perceived
550 consumption value of music on behavioral involvement in the context of K-pop music, through a
551 theoretical lens of audience involvement. The results of this study thus enhance our knowledge
552 about how K-pop audiences formulate their behavioral involvement through cognitive and
553 affective processes by their overall evaluation of perceived consumption values and audience
554 involvement. The importance of audiences’ perceived value of K-pop music in strengthening
555 audience behavioral involvement was identified.

556 Second, this study found that character and visual performance value did not explain
557 audiences’ emotional involvement and referential reflection. That may be explained by the
558 cultural differences between Korea and the Western countries used in research samples, with a
559 predominance of US participants. For example, expectations and perceived consumption values
560 of K-pop singers or bands vary between Korea and Western countries. K-pop boy bands in
561 particular are associated with femininity or soft masculinity, but Western societies expect traits
562 of traditional masculinity from male celebrities (Istad et al., 2022; Monocello & Dressler, 2020).

563 Third, this study indicated that both imitation and attachment value, and message and
564 vocal value positively affected emotional involvement and referential reflection. This result
565 confirmed the efficacy of the perceived consumption values of K-pop music on audience
566 involvement. In addition, this study was novel in revealing that the message and vocal value of
567 K-pop music created audiences’ emotional involvement and referential reflection. As a majority

568 of music fans tended to follow songs or imitate memorable lyrics, the results of this study
569 demonstrated the important role of the message and vocals in K-pop music in explaining
570 audience involvement, such as the songs' stories, touching messages in song lyrics, and the
571 singers' vocal abilities. This involvement and referential reflection stimulate motivation to
572 engage in music tourism.

573 Fourth, investigating the moderating effects of sex, age and ethnicity on K-pop
574 consumption values and their consequences indicated that the structural model was consistent
575 regardless of these variables. Therefore, K-pop fans are homogenous beyond sex, age or
576 ethnicity in perceiving consumption values and their consequences. Since this demonstrates that
577 fandoms are transnational and universalized, music is a very powerful tool in enhancing national
578 brands and commercial products.

579 Fifth, and related to the foregoing discussion, is the role of music in our social well-
580 being. This study showed that one's sex, age, and ethnicity, have no bearing on the perceived
581 music consumption values and their consequences, indicating that music can play a critical role
582 in creating meaningful relationships and social bonds among music fans regardless of socio-
583 cultural, religious, and political differences. Such social bonds and mutual support and/or care in
584 a broader context of popular culture tourism often leads to co-creating a sense of community
585 through fan-based social interactions such as fan meetings and traveling (Reichenberger &
586 Smith, 2020) or intermingling in diaspora festivals (Gedecho et al., 2023).

587 While the current study focused on the underlying mechanism and structures through
588 which the consumption values of K-pop music, audience involvement, familiarity, and behavior
589 intention interact at the individual level, it also offers theoretical implications for future studies

590 on the efficacy of popular music like K-pop, on social wellbeing at the communal level, in the
591 context of destination management and marketing of popular culture tourism and fan tourism.

592

593 *5.3. Practical implications*

594 By identifying the psychological mechanism of the consumption value of K-pop music,
595 this study offers several practical implications. First, although the character and visual
596 performance value is the most appealing aspect of K-pop music, it is not significant in
597 influencing audiences' emotional involvement and referential reflection. Therefore, destination
598 marketing organizations in Korea should consider how to effectively capitalize on K-pop music
599 in tourism development and marketing. For example, video clips including potential tourism
600 destinations will help promote unknown destinations. Similarly, using a storytelling approach
601 with iconic K-pop music video locations (e.g., Jumunjin Beach - filmed in "*You Never Walk*
602 *Alone*" by BTS; Kyung Hee University - filmed in "*As If It's Your Last*" by Blackpink; Seoul
603 Metropolitan Library - filmed in "*Gentlemen*" by PSY; and Seoul Wave Art Centre - filmed in
604 "*Dream of You*" by Chungha and R3HAB) in tourism marketing may enhance and maximize the
605 effects of an intimate and attachment value and message and vocal value in K-pop music, which
606 indicates the significant and positive influences on emotional involvement and referential
607 reflection in this study.

608 Second, the results of this study indicated that the consumption value of K-pop music can
609 indirectly influence familiarity, shopping and travel intention, and food consumption intention
610 through emotional involvement, referential reflection, and behavioral involvement. This implied
611 that K-pop music would not be limited to raising tourists' shopping and travel intentions related
612 to K-pop music, but could also affect their overall perceived familiarity with Korea and their

613 willingness to consume Korean food. Therefore, tourism and F&B practitioners should capture
614 this opportunity by developing tailored-made marketing strategies and food menus that integrate
615 K-pop music culture and Korean traditions into their products.

616 Third, as a destination life cycle model shows (Butler, 1985; Kozak & Martin, 2012; Xie,
617 2015), a destination can easily decline and perish, like a commodity, due to the competitiveness
618 of destinations, if it lacks revolutionary branding strategies. Therefore, destination marketers put
619 great effort into developing postmodern cultural icons, and capitalize on them when promoting
620 national or city brand images (Gibson & Connell, 2007; Henke, 2005; Im et al., 2012; Long,
621 2014; Krims, 2007; Oh & Lee, 2014; Kim et al., 2018; Saldanha, 2002). Although the current
622 study shows that there are no moderating effects of sex, age, and ethnicity, there is a need to
623 segment fandoms according to the benefits sought, loyalty, and psychological/behavioral
624 variables in order to develop different music tourism programs or products that can cater to the
625 needs of distinctive target markets.

626

627 **6. Limitations and suggestions for future studies**

628 This study has a few limitations. First, it was conducted from December 2020 to January
629 2021, using several screening questions relating to participants' awareness of and level of
630 interest in K-pop music, and their ability to name K-pop singers/bands. As the perceived
631 consumption values of K-pop music may differ between singers and/or bands, further
632 generalizability of the findings should be carefully undertaken to confirm whether the results are
633 consistent across singers/bands. Second, the study illuminated the role of perceived consumption
634 values of K-pop music and their consequences. However, this study did not consider factors that
635 influence K-pop music tourism, such as motivation (push or pull factors), perceived constraints

636 to travel, audiences' sociodemographic features, level of involvement, and level of loyalty to
637 singers or bands. Future studies need to conduct segmentation analysis using these factors to
638 select the most suitable target markets and develop tailored programs for specific groups.

639 Third, to understand music tourism more precisely, interdisciplinary studies relevant to
640 popular culture, media, popular music, ethnomusicology, cultural geography, culture
641 management, performance and the arts, and fan studies, are required. In addition, a longitudinal
642 study is needed because fandom phenomena and the popularity of singers or bands can easily
643 vary (Bang et al., 2021; Kim & Park, 2020), so there is a need to keep tracing the flow of
644 popularity. Fourth, preferences for K-pop music or singers can differ according to cross-cultural
645 similarities and differences (Istad et al., 2022; Kim, 2012b; Monocello & Dressler, 2020; Yang,
646 2012). Therefore, future studies need to compare results more thoroughly, cross-culturally or
647 cross-nationally. Such studies will facilitate a better understanding of the role of music in
648 improving a tourism destination brand, elevating the competitiveness of tourism programs, and
649 promoting the value of local products at the destination.

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