



K-Pop among Female University Students in Lima: A Study on Dance Learning and Cultural Influence through Music Videos

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Abstract. K-pop, known for its idols and iconic groups, has gained prominence worldwide, especially in Asia and Europe. This article focuses on the use of music videos as a tool for dance learning, specifically in Lima, Peru, to understand the perceptions and impact on the learning of culture among young K-Pop fans. To carry out this research, a semi-structured interview was developed, validated, and conducted with 10 young female university students residing in Lima, Peru. The results indicate notable patterns in the consumption and learning of K-Pop through music videos, highlighting the relevance of platforms such as YouTube and other social networks in learning. Likewise, the interviewees provide a detailed description of the challenges and strategies associated with learning K-Pop dance. It is concluded that globally, the dissemination of K-Pop culture mainly occurs online, especially through social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram, as well as in the digital realm through apps like TikTok. The influence of friends also plays a crucial role in the spread of the K-Pop phenomenon. The incorporation of K-Pop music videos is an essential part of developing dance skills and constructing the identity of young women, despite facing linguistic and technical obstacles.

Keywords: K-Pop, learning, Hallyu, students, dance, Korean culture.

1 Introduction

1.1 The Korean Wave: Global Impact of K-pop

The expansion and growing popularity of South Korean popular culture, widely known as 'hallyu' or the 'Korean wave', which encompasses genres such as cinema (sometimes referred to as K-film), comics (manhwa), television dramas (K-drama), and pop music (K-pop), beyond the borders of the Korean peninsula, has been a remarkable and surprising phenomenon, considering the relatively small size of the country and its peripheral position in the global context overall [1], [2], [3], [4], [5]. Since its emergence, K-pop has played a pivotal role in the Hallyu phenomenon, leading to the flourishing of Korean pop culture, encompassing diverse genres ranging from traditional music to hip hop and electronic dance music [6]. Within its wide array of artists, K-pop stands out for its 'idol' culture, which includes boy and girl groups known

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for their iconic group choreographies and the combination of lyrics in Korean and English [6].

K-pop has managed to establish its own presence and demand on a global scale, being particularly strong in the Asian continent, where its cultural impact has been most pronounced [7], [8], [9], [10], [11], [12], [13], [14]. Similarly, in Europe, specifically in Austria, K-pop culture has created a unique space where followers residing in the region can establish bonds with each other, interact, and connect both with other South Korean enthusiasts and with local Austrian communities and institutions [15]. One of the standout moments is the viral success of PSY with his song "Gangnam Style" in 2012, which for several years held the record as the most-viewed video in the history of YouTube. Additionally, the band BTS reached the number one spot on the Billboard Hot 100 with their song "Dynamite" [6]. K-pop enthusiasts are not solely affected by the music; its influence extends beyond the sonic aspects, encompassing the connection that those who enjoy this genre experience with Korean culture [16].

So far, much of the research on K-pop has relied on explanations such as the blending of cultural influences and the proximity between them, which are analyzed in greater depth in the review of literary sources [17]. They have also focused on aspects that have little relevance in other cultures, such as cultural uniqueness or superiority [17]. However, to date, no specific study has been conducted on the use of K-pop music videos as a learning tool. Therefore, this research assumes significant importance as it raises questions in an area of the community that has not previously been subjected to exhaustive exploration in previous research. Additionally, it is expected that this research will yield new discoveries that reflect the trends observed in the K-Pop community in recent years, particularly in the city of Lima, Peru.

The main objective of this study is to determine perceptions regarding the influence of K-pop music videos on the learning of South Korean popular music dance specifically among a small university community of young people in Lima. These young women are involved in dance practices and use K-pop music videos as an important guide in their dance learning process. The research will be based on interviews with these students to understand how they consume and use K-pop music videos in their dance practices. Additionally, we will examine the role these music videos play in the teaching and learning process of dance.

2 Methodology

The selected methodological approach for this study is qualitative. The purpose of this type of research is to explore and delve into the assessment that individuals or groups make about a specific social or human issue [18]. This methodological approach will be used due to its fundamental importance in identifying and understanding the participants' opinions regarding the impact of music videos on their learning process. Through this method, it will be possible to make interpretations that lead to a deeper understanding of the meaning of the collected data.

Therefore, the selected data collection technique will be the interview. Within the realm of qualitative interviews, the researcher will conduct face-to-face interviews with participants, in addition to considering the possibility of conducting telephone interviews or participating in group discussions with groups of six to eight interviewees in each session [18]. These interviews are characterized by using questions that are generally open-ended and not rigidly structured, and their number is usually limited. The main purpose is to obtain the perspectives and opinions of the participants [18]. Consequently, by applying this method, it is possible to acquire a comprehensive understanding of the experiences and perspectives of the participants, which will significantly enrich the qualitative research process. Additionally, it will facilitate the identification of consumption patterns and the use of K-pop music videos, allowing to determine if these have an impact on teaching, learning, and performance.

Therefore, the type of sample to be used for this research will be a sample of 10 voluntary participants [19], young women from Lima aged between 18 and 28 years old who learn to dance the K-Pop genre using videos on YouTube. By employing a case-centered approach, the aim is to acquire a comprehensive and thorough understanding of the influence that the use of K-pop music videos has on the dance learning process. The inclusion criteria for this sample imply that the young women must be engaged in continuous dance practice, particularly in the K-pop genre, using music videos as a learning tool. Additionally, they must be willing to consent to participate in the interviews. Lastly, they must fall within the age group of 18 to 28 years old. Those who do not meet these three criteria will be excluded from the research.

3 Results

3.1 Consumption of K-Pop music videos for learning to dance

K-Pop has influenced various areas of popular culture and how people use music videos as tools for learning, expressing themselves, and engaging in the global K-Pop fan community. All interviewees mentioned YouTube as the main platform for consuming K-Pop music videos, which is not surprising as it is a highly popular video channel and hosts a vast amount of K-Pop-related content, with 40% among Spotify, Instagram, and TikTok as the second platform, reflecting the diversity of media used to interact with K-Pop.

"For example, I like watching them on YouTube because I think it's a bit more economical compared to maybe other apps, but also Spotify to be able to play them" (Interviewee 1, female, 21 years old)

"YouTube obviously YouTube and to listen to other music Spotify or if not, I download them myself" (Interviewee 2, female, 19 years old)

"I think YouTube is the main one because I feel there are more videos and it's accessible" (Interviewee 3, female, 18 years old)

And to learn to dance to the rhythm of K-Pop, the interviewees often turn to these music videos as valuable resources. Some of the ways they use these videos include:

"I usually watch videos, covers of dancers, and also dance teachers who teach choreographies step by step" (Interviewee 10, female, 24 years old)

"(...) I search for the song I want to learn, I play it, and let it run, and then I repeat it several times" (Interviewee 9, female, 25 years old)

"So, I watched and watched and watched, and visually, I already got it or had an idea, and when I was already going frame by frame to analyze and figure out the step, it was easier because I had already memorized what comes next" (Interviewee 4, female, 23 years old)

Likewise, in order to learn new K-Pop choreographies, 80% get informed through notifications on YouTube and 20% through social media such as Twitter, Facebook, TikTok, and Instagram.

"Mainly, I get informed through YouTube, I receive recommendations and start watching them. Similarly, with TikTok all the time, but very little of it is for listening, for example, K-Pop in general, I could say because I find some groups here and there, so like they would be my top ones that are recommended to me the most" (Interviewee 6, female, 27 years old)

"Nowadays, Instagram is more useful to me, YouTube as well. And on Facebook itself, I follow several groups on Facebook, and on YouTube, I'm also following groups that notify me when the group performs there, and that's when I watch it, that's how I determine if I like the group or not, if I like the song or not, so that's how I start kind of discarding, it doesn't mean that all of them are not good, but according to my tastes, maybe some are prettier than others, okay, perfect, that would be it then" (Interviewee 1, female, 21 years old)

Therefore, the consumption of K-Pop music videos for learning to dance is a common practice among fans, and digital platforms play a crucial role in facilitating this process.

3.2 Challenges encountered when learning to dance K-Pop through music videos

K-Pop music videos often pose linguistic challenges for those who do not speak Korean. In this regard, on one hand, 60% of the interviewees use subtitles and online translations to understand the message of the songs. On the other hand, the remaining 40% focus on the choreography, paying attention to the facial and body expressions of the artists, as well as the emotions conveyed in the videos to capture the message.

"I usually watch videos on YouTube that have lyrics in Spanish, so I try to understand it this way. Similarly, the feeling of the song is involved quite a bit because these K-Pop artists often express a lot with their facial expressions and body language" (Interviewee 6, female, 27 years old)

"Well, there is something, there is an advantage that now on the internet there are channels for translations, especially song translations. It's like sometimes they're a bit cheesy, sometimes they don't make much sense, but it's a bit comforting to know that at least you understand what you're singing thanks to those kinds of translations" (Interviewee 7, female, 22 years old)

Moreover, it involves everything from the complexity of the choreographies to the need for proper dance technique and the dedication required to master the routines. Regarding this, the interviewees commented on facing these obstacles:

"A lot of strategy and a lot of patience, this is a secret for many, this is known by everyone" (Interviewee 4, female, 23 years old)

"What I do at least is watch dance tutorials exactly as they are, but in a version, how should I say it, in a slow version, like slow in medium speed, and then at normal speed, to learn step by step" (Interviewee 5, female, 22 years old)

Additionally, K-Pop showcases a connection between music, choreography, and emotional expression in its music videos. In this regard, 40% of the interviewees emphasize the importance of feeling and conveying emotions in their performances, while 30% mention the connection between music, choreography, and emotional expression. Similarly, 30% experience continuous improvement in their performance and a desire to be better performers, often influenced by musical theater and the personal transformation they feel while dancing.

"I've felt that music transforms my being, I delve deep into the lyrics, I feel like I live the music" (Interviewee 10, female, 24 years old)

"Well, it's something difficult because regarding interpretation, I look at myself in the mirror, try to mimic the gestures of the artists, and practice that way, but for that, I have to watch fancams of the idol I'm going to portray, of the character" (Interviewee 9, female, 25 years old)

This experience not only drives continuous improvement in the dancers' performance but can also lead to significant personal transformation, as expressed by

those who find in K-Pop dance a way to explore and express their inner selves more deeply. In summary, learning K-Pop dance through music videos not only involves facing technical difficulties but also immersing oneself in an emotionally enriching experience that fosters personal and artistic growth for the dancers.

3.3 Perception of K-Pop

The perception of K-Pop and its representation of Korean cultural identity in music videos encompasses a wide range of elements, with 30% focusing on fashion and contemporary style, elaborate choreography, and art direction in the videos. Another 30% highlights the importance of traditional elements, such as traditional costumes, musical instruments, and cultural references in the music and choreography. The remaining 40% emphasizes the fusion of traditional and modern elements, including language, narrative, multicultural diversity, and modernization of hanboks (traditional clothing), reflecting a rich and diverse cultural identity in K-Pop music videos.

"I don't know how to say it suddenly, the visual aspect of each member, some also take great care of their physical appearance and makeup, so I think in terms of the visual aesthetics of each member, it always looks good, with skin taken care of almost perfectly, you could say. I feel that this visual aspect, at least with all this physical aspect, is very important in K-Pop videos" (Interviewee 5, female, 22 years old)

"I think because they reflect a lot the cities, they reflect their streets as they are and they also integrate it into their lyrics, for example Gangnam Style, because it's a city, or I don't know, also in some music videos, they show the Han River, in others they show the Seoul Tower, or it always appears there" (Interviewee 4, female, 23 years old)

Similarly, it is reflected how learning K-Pop dance has impacted the understanding of Korean culture, with 10% mentioning that it has improved their knowledge of the language, fashion, gestures, and posture. Another 30% have highlighted the connection between dance and singing, as well as differences in language and expression. A further 20% have focused on aspects such as the speed and intensity of movements, influence on discipline, respect, teamwork, and research on formalities, food, and other aspects of culture. Additionally, 10% have pointed out the complexity of choreographies and empathy with the work and pressure of artists, while another 20% have noticed the influence on the entertainment industry, fashion, and some Korean words. Finally, 10% have discovered that choreographies are a fusion of different genres, such as Hip Hop and R&B. These testimonies reflect how K-Pop dance can be a pathway to understanding and appreciating various aspects of Korean culture.

"The dance was a boost, it wasn't the main one, so to speak, but then we kept researching about Korea, you can investigate, you can know that for example there the dealings with formalities, with people, it's different, they use honorifics" (Interviewee 3, female, 18 years old)

"Seeing the costumes and they were something like very, extravagant also in the way, in how they speak, how they express themselves, the different, like when they speak it's very different from how we speak or anyone from another country, I mean, that kind of captivates me a lot about them" (Interviewee 2, female, 19 years old)

Additionally, the perception of K-Pop has had a global impact on fashion and trends, triggering a significant influence in the fashion industry and lifestyle. Responses reveal that 50% of the interviewees have felt influenced in their dressing style when dancing due to Korean fashion, contributing to their comfort and dance style. Furthermore, an additional 20% have adopted elements of Korean fashion in their attire while dancing, contributing to feeling part of Korean culture and enhancing their dance experience. The remaining 30% have observed influences of Korean fashion in their dressing style when dancing, which provides them with confidence and makes them feel that their style fits the song they are dancing to.

"In fact, yes, when I feel that the choreography is ready, I look among my clothes for something similar to what my character wears in their music video or in their dance practice because, believe it or not, that makes you feel like them, like a real artist. Every little thing, even accessories, adds up and makes it an incredible experience even though I'm dancing to the camera" (Interviewee 9, female, 25 years old)

"The outfit is an essential part when performing a choreography, dressing in that clothing makes me feel part of Korean culture" (Interviewee 10, female, 24 years old)

These testimonies reflect how Korean fashion plays a significant role in how people dress when dancing K-Pop, influencing their comfort, style, and confidence during performance.

4 Conclusion

Learning K-Pop choreographies through music videos is a common practice, and interviewees mention different approaches to achieve this. Some mention watching cover videos by dancers and dance instructors who teach the choreographies step by step. Others mention repeating the song playback and learning the choreography through constant practice. Additionally, the importance of "dance practice" videos and live performances as valuable visual resources for learning choreographies is highlighted. As for how they stay informed about new K-Pop choreographies, it is noted that 80% of the interviewees get informed through notifications on YouTube, while 20% use social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, TikTok, and Instagram. In summary, regarding perceptions of the influence of K-Pop music videos on dance learning, the results reveal that consuming K-Pop music videos is perceived as a common practice among the interviewed young women for learning dance. Additionally, the diversity of elements present in the music videos, such as contemporary fashion, elaborate choreography, and art direction, contributes to the richness of the learning experience.

Next, regarding the consumption of K-Pop music videos for learning dance, it is concluded that YouTube emerges as the primary platform for consuming K-Pop music videos, highlighting its accessibility and the availability of a wide variety of related content. In addition to YouTube, 40% of the interviewees use other platforms such as Spotify, Instagram, and TikTok, reflecting the diversity of media used to engage with K-Pop. Similarly, young people in Indonesia predominantly access and consume K-pop online, especially through social media platforms [8]. Additionally, the influence of friends plays a significant role in the spread of K-pop, as individuals tend to follow the trends and behaviors of their peers [20]. At the same time, in Vancouver, being a K-pop fan involved responding to socially constructed meanings of this genre, confronting stereotypes, and seeking belongingness [21]. Although K-pop appears to be a subcultural form, fans explored subcultural meanings through participation in social networks, distinguishing themselves and asserting their identity as fans [21].

Regarding the difficulties encountered in learning K-Pop dance, linguistic barriers are considered a significant challenge, with the use of subtitles and online translations being a common strategy to overcome this difficulty. Similarly, the complexity of choreographies and the need for appropriate dance skills are additional challenges, addressed through strategies such as watching tutorials at different speeds and practicing step by step. An interesting proposal is the implementation of a system in a virtual environment capable of automatically generating continuous and creative K-Pop choreographies [22]. This is achieved through the application of postures and gestures derived from short-term bidirectional memory (Bi-LSTM) [22]. Pre-recorded videos of K-Pop dances and dance videos are used as input, and users interested in obtaining a new choreography for a 3D dance character in the source film can achieve this through the implementation of Bi-LSTM [22]. This exemplifies how in the era of global K-pop, audiences not only decode messages but also create their own texts and meanings through transcultural and transmedia experiences [23].

Finally, regarding the perception of the influence of K-Pop music videos on the interest in learning to dance, it is seen as a motivating factor for the interest in learning to dance among the young interviewees. In turn, the emotional connection with the music and personal expression through dance are highlighted aspects, showing how K-Pop not only influences dance skills but also the identity and self-expression of the interviewees. Additionally, due to their fascination and affection for K-Pop, certain followers choose to learn the Korean language [24].

These conclusions indicate that the consumption of K-Pop music videos is an integral practice in the dance learning process among young individuals, with YouTube playing a central role. Despite linguistic and technical difficulties, the positive influence of K-Pop is reflected in the development of dance skills and the formation of identity among fans, who seek to acquire cultural and subcultural capital through their active participation in the K-Pop subculture. Additionally, it should be considered that this is a qualitative research study, and therefore, it is not possible to generalize the results.

For future research, various topics can be addressed, such as the development of language skills to explore how learning Korean songs affects interest in the language and whether it contributes to language skill development; comparison of dance styles to investigate preferences and motivations behind the choice of specific dance styles within K-Pop and how these styles vary among fans; influence on self-expression to delve into how K-Pop influence extends beyond dance, affecting self-expression and personal identity of young individuals; and impact on the fashion industry to examine how the influence of Korean fashion, derived from K-Pop, affects clothing choices during performance and how this translates into everyday fashion. These research areas can provide a more comprehensive and detailed understanding of the influence of K-Pop on dance learning and the lives of young fans.

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