ADI Journal on Recent Innovation (AJRI)
Vol. 8, No. 2, 2026, pp. 122−131
E-ISSN: 2686-0384 | P-ISSN: 2685-9106, DOI: 10.34306

The Relationship Between Self Control and Celebrity Worship in Shaping Digital Consumption Behavior within the K-Pop Fandom Ecosystem

Masha Oktaviani[1*], Nurul Khasanah[2], Kamalia[3], Rully Afrita Harlianty[4]
[1,2,3,4]Department of Psychology, Universitas Esa Unggul, Indonesia
[1]mashaoktaviani424@student.esaunggul.ac.id, [2]nurul.khasanah@esaunggul.ac.id, [3]kamalia@esaunggul.ac.id, [4]rully.afrita@esaunggul.ac.id
***Corresponding Author**

Article Info

Article history:

Submission June 23, 2026
Revised August 29, 2026
Accepted September 18, 2026
Published October 09, 2026

Keywords:

Self Control
Celebrity Worship
K-Pop Fandom
Digital Consumption
Fandom Behavior

ABSTRACT

The rapid expansion of digital fandom has transformed K-Pop consumption into an increasingly interactive and consumption-oriented activity, where social media engagement, merchandise purchases, streaming, voting, and fan events shape digital consumption behavior. This study examines the relationship between self control and celebrity worship among early-adult K-Pop fans within the digital fandom ecosystem in Jabodetabek, Indonesia. **A quantitative correlational** design was employed using purposive sampling involving 385 early-adult K-Pop fans aged 18–40 years. Data were collected through Likert-scale questionnaires measuring self control and celebrity worship and analyzed using self control. The self control instrument demonstrated good reliability with Cronbach's α of 0.902 based on 20 valid items, while the celebrity worship instrument achieved a Cronbach's α of 0.865 based on 16 valid items. **The results revealed** a significant positive relationship between self control and celebrity worship (p = 0.002; r = 0.155), indicating a weak positive association. **The findings** also showed that 81.8% of respondents had high celebrity worship and 54.5% demonstrated high self control, with entertainment-social representing the strongest related dimension. These findings indicate that self control does not necessarily reduce fandom engagement but may support more structured participation in digital consumption activities. **The study concludes** that understanding self control within digital fandom is important for promoting responsible consumption and maintaining balanced engagement with K-Pop content, merchandise, and online fan activities.

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DOI: https://doi.org/10.34306/ajri.v8i2.1580
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1. INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of digital technology has significantly transformed the way individuals consume entertainment and interact with public figures. In the K-Pop industry, digital platforms have created a highly interactive fandom ecosystem in which fans can continuously access music, videos, social media content, merchandise information, voting activities, and online fan communities [1]. These technological developments have changed fandom participation from conventional entertainment consumption into more intensive

and sustained digital consumption behavior. Fans are not only exposed to content produced by entertainment companies and idols but also actively participate through music and video streaming, purchasing albums and merchandise, voting for idols, attending concerts or fan meetings, and exchanging information with other fans. Such activities demonstrate how digital platforms facilitate continuous interaction between celebrities and their audiences while simultaneously creating new patterns of consumption within the digital business ecosystem [2]. In this context, celebrity worship may strengthen emotional attachment and encourage repeated engagement with celebrity related content and products, while self control becomes relevant in regulating how individuals manage their behavioral, cognitive, and decisional responses toward these activities. Therefore, examining self control and celebrity worship provides an important perspective for understanding individual participation and consumption patterns within the increasingly digitalized K-Pop fandom ecosystem [3].

Celebrity worship refers to a psychological attachment toward celebrities that can develop through different levels of involvement, ranging from entertainment social activities to more intense personal attachment and borderline pathological tendencies [4]. Within K-Pop fandom, these forms of attachment can be reflected in the frequency with which fans search for information about idols, consume digital content, purchase merchandise, participate in streaming and voting activities, and communicate with fellow fans [5]. Although these activities can represent ordinary forms of entertainment and social interaction, excessive involvement may create challenges in managing time, finances, social relationships, and daily responsibilities. self control therefore becomes an important factor because it enables individuals to regulate behavior, evaluate decisions, and manage responses to attractive consumption opportunities in digital environments [6]. Previous studies have reported varying findings concerning the relationship between self control and celebrity worship, indicating that the relationship cannot be understood solely from the intensity of fandom involvement. Furthermore, existing research has more frequently examined adolescents, while evidence concerning early adult K-Pop fans remains relatively limited. This study addresses this gap by examining the relationship between self control and celebrity worship among K-Pop fans aged 18–40 years in Jabodetabek, where digital access and social media interaction provide substantial opportunities for continuous fandom participation [7].

The issue is also relevant from the perspective of sustainable digital consumption, particularly as digital platforms increasingly influence how individuals make consumption decisions and participate in online communities. Responsible engagement with digital content and celebrity related products requires individuals to recognize personal limitations and maintain appropriate control over their consumption activities [8]. In this regard, the study contributes to SDG 12 (responsible consumption and production) by highlighting the importance of conscious and responsible consumption decisions within digitally mediated fandom environments. The study is also associated with SDG 9 (industry, innovation and infrastructure) because the K-Pop fandom ecosystem demonstrates how digital platforms and technological infrastructure support new forms of entertainment, interaction, and consumption in the digital economy [9]. Understanding the psychological factors underlying these activities can provide broader insight into how digital consumers engage with technology enabled entertainment ecosystems in a more balanced and responsible manner [10]. Accordingly, this study aims to examine the relationship between self control and celebrity worship among early adult K-Pop fans in Jabodetabek and to provide empirical insight into how self regulation and celebrity attachment are associated with participation in digital consumption activities within the K-Pop fandom ecosystem [11].

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Celebrity worship describes a psychological attachment between individuals and celebrities that can develop through different levels of involvement. In the K-Pop fandom context, celebrity worship is reflected through entertainment social activities, intense personal attachment, and borderline pathological tendencies. These forms of involvement can be observed through activities such as following idol information, streaming music and videos, purchasing merchandise, voting, and interacting with other fans [12]. The development of digital platforms has further facilitated these activities by providing continuous access to celebrity related content and enabling stronger interaction between fans and idols [13].

Self control refers to an individual's ability to regulate behavior, thoughts, and decisions when responding to internal and external stimuli [14]. In the context of digital fandom, self control is relevant because fans are continuously exposed to content and consumption opportunities associated with their favorite celebrities. Effective self control can help individuals manage their participation in streaming, merchandise purchases, online interactions, and other fandom activities while maintaining their daily responsibilities [15]. The study

conceptualizes self control through behavioral, cognitive, and decisional control, which provide a basis for understanding how individuals regulate their involvement in K-Pop fandom [16].

Previous research has shown varying findings regarding the relationship between self control and celebrity worship, indicating that the relationship requires further examination in different populations and contexts [17]. The present study focuses on early adult K-Pop fans in Jabodetabek, addressing the limited evidence concerning this age group compared with adolescent populations. Based on the existing literature, self control and celebrity worship are relevant concepts for understanding digital consumption and engagement within K-Pop fandom [18]. Therefore, examining their relationship can provide insight into how psychological regulation is associated with participation in digital fandom activities and support more responsible consumption practices within the digital environment [19].

3. RESEARCH METHOD

3.1. Research Design

This study employed a quantitative non-experimental approach with a correlational research design [20]. The design was selected to examine the relationship between self-control and celebrity worship among early-adult K-Pop fans without manipulating either variable [21]. The study focused on K-Pop fans residing in the Jabodetabek area, Indonesia, with self-control representing the ability to regulate behavioral, cognitive, and decisional responses, while celebrity worship representing psychological attachment toward celebrities. The correlational approach was used to identify the direction and strength of the association between the two variables based on empirical data obtained from respondents [22].

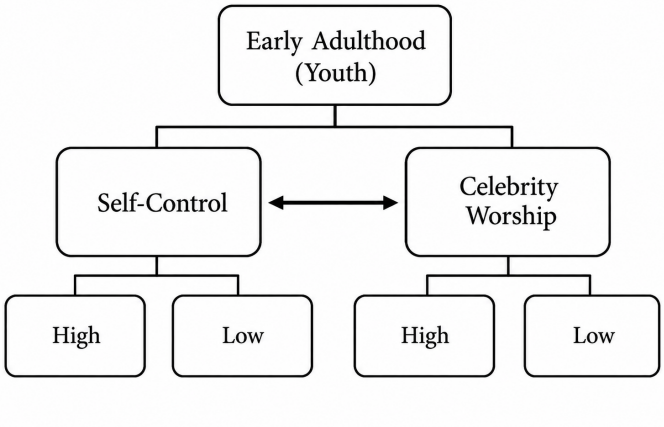


Figure 1. Research Framework

Figure 1 illustrates the research framework of the study by presenting the relationship between self-control and celebrity worship among early-adult K-Pop fans. Early adulthood represents the target population of the study, while self-control and celebrity worship are the two main variables examined [23]. Each variable is represented by high and low categories based on the categorization used in the analysis. The double-headed arrow between self-control and celebrity worship indicates an associative relationship rather than a causal relationship, consistent with the correlational research design [24].

3.2. Population and Sampling

The population consisted of early adult K-Pop fans in Jabodetabek. Early adulthood was defined as individuals aged 18–40 years. The sampling technique used was non probability sampling with purposive sampling, allowing respondents to be selected based on predetermined characteristics relevant to the research objectives [25]. A total of 385 respondents participated in the study.

The inclusion criteria required respondents to identify themselves as K-Pop fans, actively participate in official or non official fandom activities, be aged 18–40 years, and reside in Jabodetabek [26]. Relevant fandom activities included music streaming, purchasing merchandise, video streaming, voting, attending concerts, and

participating in fan meetings. Individuals who only listened to K-Pop casually, did not have a specific idol, and had never participated in fandom activities were excluded from the study [27].

3.3. Research Instruments

Data were collected using two measurement instruments to assess self-control and celebrity worship among early-adult K-Pop fans. Celebrity worship was measured using a modified Celebrity Attitude Scale (CAS) consisting of 31 initial items covering three dimensions including entertainment-social, intense personal and borderline pathological. Self-control was measured using a scale based on the averill self control scale, consisting of 22 initial items covering three aspects behavioral control, cognitive control, and decisional control. Both instruments were designed to represent the respective dimensions and aspects of the variables examined in this study.

The instruments were administered using a five-point Likert scale containing favorable and unfavorable statements [28]. The questionnaire was distributed through digital and social media platforms, including X, TikTok, WhatsApp, and Facebook, to reach respondents who met the established criteria. Following the item evaluation, 20 self-control items and 16 celebrity worship items were retained for further analysis [29]. The self-control instrument obtained a Cronbach's α coefficient of 0.902, while the celebrity worship instrument obtained a coefficient of 0.865, providing the reliability results used for the subsequent analysis.

3.4. Data Collection Procedure

Data collection was conducted through an online questionnaire distributed to respondents who met the predetermined inclusion criteria [30]. The questionnaire was disseminated through X, TikTok, WhatsApp, and Facebook because these platforms were relevant to reaching active K-Pop fans in the target population [31]. Respondents completed the questionnaire using a five-point Likert scale, with both favorable and unfavorable statements included to measure their responses toward self control and celebrity worship.

The data collection process focused on respondents' experiences and characteristics as active K-Pop fans rather than manipulating their fandom behavior [32]. The collected responses were subsequently organized for statistical analysis. In addition to the main variables, demographic information concerning gender and marital status was also presented to describe the characteristics of the respondents [33].

3.5. Data Analysis

The descriptive analysis showed that self-control scores ranged from 21 to 62. Based on the established categorization, 210 respondents (54.5%) were classified as having high self-control, while 175 respondents (45.5%) were categorized as having low self-control [34]. The distribution indicates that respondents with high self-control represented a slightly larger proportion of the sample [35], suggesting that more than half of the respondents demonstrated relatively strong self-control in their daily behavior [36].

The distribution of celebrity worship showed a more pronounced pattern [37]. A total of 315 respondents (81.8%) were classified as having high celebrity worship, whereas 70 respondents (18.2%) were categorized as having low celebrity worship [36]. This result indicates that high celebrity worship was prevalent among the respondents, with a substantially larger proportion compared with the distribution of self-control [38]. These descriptive results provide an initial overview of the characteristics of both variables before their relationship was examined using Pearson product-moment correlation analysis [39].

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Instrument Evaluation and Data Distribution

The self control instrument initially consisted of 22 items. Based on the validity criterion of $r \geq 0.30$, two items were eliminated, resulting in 20 valid items. The Cronbach's α coefficient increased from 0.901 before item elimination to 0.902 after the elimination of invalid items. The celebrity worship instrument initially consisted of 31 items, of which 16 items were retained as valid based on the same criterion. Its Cronbach's α coefficient increased from 0.647 to 0.865 after item elimination. These retained items were subsequently used in the analysis.

The kolmogorov smirnov test produced significance values of 0.048 for celebrity worship and 0.000 for self control. Based on these values, the data did not meet the normality criterion. The original study subsequently examined the distribution through histograms and Q-Q plots and reported that most of the data were close to the mean and the normal line. The self control was then used to examine the relationship between the two variables, following the analysis reported in the original study.

4.2. Descriptive Results and Categorization

The categorization analysis showed that self control was relatively balanced between the two categories, although respondents with high self control represented the larger proportion. A total of 210 respondents (54.5%) were categorized as having high self control, while 175 respondents (45.5%) were categorized as having low self control.

Table 1. Categorization of Self Control

Score Range	Category	Frequency	Percentage
$X \geq 45.41$	High	210	54.5%
$X < 45.41$	Low	175	45.5%
Total		**385**	**100%**

The distribution of self-control levels indicates that the respondents were relatively balanced across the two categories, although the high self-control category represented a slightly larger proportion of the sample. As presented in Table 1, 210 respondents (54.5%) were classified as having high self-control, while 175 respondents (45.5%) were categorized as having low self-control. This distribution suggests that more than half of the respondents demonstrated a relatively strong ability to regulate their behavior, thoughts, and decisions while participating in K-Pop fandom activities. However, the relatively small difference between the two categories also indicates that both levels of self-control were substantially represented within the sample.

In contrast, the distribution of celebrity worship showed a considerably stronger concentration in the high category. A total of 315 respondents (81.8%) were classified as having high celebrity worship, whereas only 70 respondents (18.2%) were categorized as having low celebrity worship. This finding indicates that most respondents demonstrated a relatively strong psychological involvement with their preferred K-Pop idols, which may be reflected through entertainment-related activities, information seeking, social interaction, and other forms of fandom participation. The considerably larger proportion of respondents in the high celebrity worship category also highlights the strong level of engagement characteristic of the K-Pop fandom represented in this study.

Table 2. Categorization of Celebrity Worship

Score Range	Category	Frequency	Percentage
$X \geq 39.51$	High	315	81.8%
$X < 39.51$	Low	70	18.2%
Total		**385**	**100%**

As presented in Table 2, the high celebrity worship category comprised 81.8% of the respondents, making it substantially more prevalent than the low category. This distribution reflects the strong involvement of respondents with K-Pop idols and related fandom activities, including obtaining information about idols, interacting with fellow fans, purchasing merchandise, and participating in other fandom activities.

The descriptive results showed that self-control scores ranged from 21 to 62, while celebrity worship scores ranged from 29 to 65. Based on the categorization presented in Table 1, the cut-off score for self-control was 45.41, with 210 respondents (54.5%) classified as having high self-control and 175 respondents (45.5%) classified as having low self-control. For celebrity worship, the cut-off score was 39.51, with 315 respondents (81.8%) classified as having high celebrity worship and 70 respondents (18.2%) classified as having low celebrity worship.

4.3. Relationship between Self Control and Celebrity Worship

The Pearson Product Moment analysis showed a significance value of (p=0.002) ((p <0.05)) and a correlation coefficient of (r=0.155). These results indicate a significant positive relationship with a weak correlation between self control and celebrity worship among early adult K-Pop fans in Jabodetabek. Therefore, the hypothesis proposed in the original study was accepted. The positive direction indicates that higher celebrity worship was associated with higher self control, and vice versa.

The positive direction is important because it shows that self control does not necessarily reduce engagement with K-Pop fandom. Instead, individuals with higher self control may remain involved in fandom activities while managing their time, emotions, and resources. The original study describes examples such as

saving to purchase albums, scheduling music and video streaming, and participating in coordinated fan projects. These activities illustrate how self control may function as a mechanism for organizing fandom participation rather than eliminating it.

4.4. Correlation by Celebrity Worship Dimensions

Additional analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between self-control and each celebrity worship dimension. The Entertainment-Social dimension demonstrated a significant positive relationship with self-control ($p = 0.000$, $r = 0.187$) and had the strongest correlation among the three dimensions. This dimension reflects fandom involvement primarily related to entertainment and social interaction, including sharing information with other fans, searching for information about idols, purchasing merchandise, and using idols as a source of entertainment. The significant but weak relationship suggests that self-control may coexist with active and socially oriented fandom participation.

The Intense-Personal dimension also showed a significant positive relationship with self-control ($p = 0.005$, $r = 0.135$), although the correlation coefficient was lower than that of the Entertainment-Social dimension. This dimension reflects stronger emotional involvement with an idol, including emotional attachment and regular participation in fan activities. In contrast, the Borderline-Pathological dimension did not show a significant relationship with self-control ($p = 0.269$, $r = 0.056$). These findings indicate that the relationship between self-control and celebrity worship may vary across different dimensions of celebrity involvement.

4.5. Implications for Digital Fandom and Consumption

The findings have practical implications for understanding how self-control may contribute to consumption behavior within digital fandom environments. The positive relationship between self-control and celebrity worship suggests that engagement with K-Pop celebrities does not necessarily occur independently of individual behavioral regulation. Within digital fandom, fans are exposed to various forms of digital consumption activities, including content engagement, interactions with fan-related media, and other consumption opportunities. Therefore, maintaining appropriate self-control may help fans regulate their engagement and make more conscious consumption decisions while remaining involved in fandom activities.

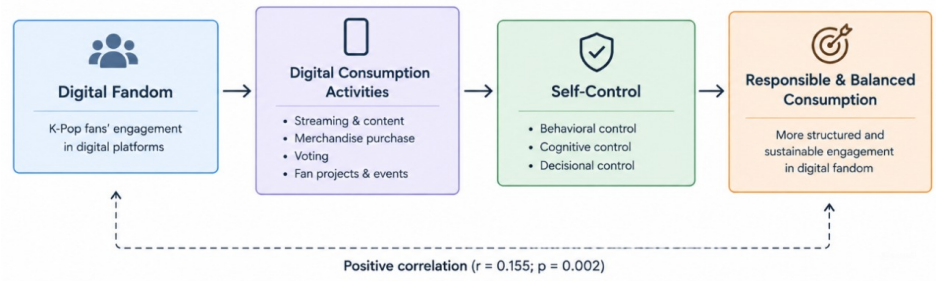


Figure 2. Digital Fandom Engagement and Responsible Consumption

The Figure 2 shows the relationship between digital fandom, digital consumption activities, self-control, and responsible and balanced consumption. Digital fandom represents fans' engagement with K-Pop-related content and activities, while digital consumption reflects activities such as content consumption, purchasing, and participation in digital fandom spaces. Self-control is presented as a behavioral factor involving behavioral, cognitive, and decision control that can help regulate consumption-related responses. The figure further illustrates that these factors are connected to the development of more responsible and balanced consumption within the digital fandom environment.

5. MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

For managers in the K-Pop entertainment industry, the high level of celebrity worship among respondents (81.8%) indicates strong fan involvement with idols and fandom related activities. This provides an opportunity for entertainment companies to strengthen fan engagement through interactive digital content, streaming activities, voting, merchandise, and fan events. At the same time, these activities should be designed to encourage meaningful participation and avoid promoting excessive consumption, allowing companies to maintain long term and sustainable relationships with their fan communities.

Self control also offers an important consideration in designing digital fandom strategies. Although the relationship between self control and celebrity worship was weak, its significant positive direction suggests that fans can remain actively involved while managing their time, financial resources, and consumption decisions. Entertainment companies can support this balance by providing well organized digital activities, transparent merchandise information, and structured fan projects that allow fans to participate according to their personal resources and priorities.

From a strategic perspective, greater attention can be given to the social and entertainment aspects of fandom. The entertainment social dimension demonstrated the strongest significant relationship with self control (r = 0.187; p = 0.000), followed by the intense personal dimension (r = 0.135; p = 0.005), while the borderline pathological dimension showed no significant relationship (r = 0.056; p = 0.269). Managers can therefore prioritize socially oriented and entertainment based fan experiences while incorporating responsible consumption practices. This approach can help entertainment companies strengthen fan engagement while supporting a more balanced and sustainable digital fandom ecosystem.

6. CONCLUSION

This study examined the relationship between self control and celebrity worship among early adult K-Pop fans in Jabodetabek. The results revealed a significant but weak positive relationship between self control and celebrity worship (r = 0.155; p = 0.002). In addition, 81.8% of respondents demonstrated high levels of celebrity worship, while 54.5% showed high self control. These results indicate that strong involvement in K-Pop fandom does not necessarily reflect a lack of self regulation. Instead, fans may remain highly engaged with their favorite celebrities while still maintaining the ability to regulate their behavior, thoughts, and consumption decisions.

The dimension level results provide further insight into the nature of digital fandom participation. The entertainment social dimension showed the strongest significant relationship with self control (r = 0.187; p = 0.000), followed by the intense personal dimension (r = 0.135; p = 0.005), whereas the borderline pathological dimension was not significantly related to self control (r = 0.056; p = 0.269). These results suggest that self control can coexist with active and socially oriented fandom participation rather than necessarily limiting fan engagement. In the context of digital consumption, self control may therefore function as a mechanism that helps fans organize their participation, including streaming, merchandise purchases, voting, and fan activities, in a more balanced and responsible manner.

Future research could extend this study by examining K-Pop fandom across different age groups, regions, or cultural contexts to determine whether similar patterns of self control and celebrity worship emerge. Further studies could also incorporate additional factors related to digital consumption, such as financial behavior, social media engagement, emotional attachment, or parasocial interaction, to provide a broader understanding of fandom behavior. A longitudinal or qualitative approach may also offer deeper insights into how celebrity worship and self control develop over time and how these factors influence fans' consumption decisions within an increasingly digital fandom ecosystem.

7. DECLARATIONS

7.1. About Authors

Masha Oktaviani (MO) https://orcid.org/0009-0009-9920-8154

Nurul Khasanah (NK) https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9736-3278

Kamalia (KK) https://orcid.org/0009-0004-5061-2379

Rully Afrita Harlianty (RA) https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0268-9329

7.2. Author Contributions

Conceptualization: MO; Methodology: KK; Software: NK; Validation: RA and MO; Formal Analysis: NK; Investigation: RA; Resources: KK; Data Curation: MO; Writing Original Draft Preparation: KK and NK; Writing Review and Editing: MO and RA; Visualization: KK; All authors, MO, NK, KK and RA have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

7.3. Data Availability Statement

In line with our commitment to research transparency, the dataset underlying this study has been archived in the Zenodo Repository https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.23183590.

7.4. Funding

The authors received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

7.5. Declaration of Conflicting Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest, known competing financial interests, or personal relationships that could have influenced the work reported in this paper.

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