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Purchasing Behavior of K-pop Idol Goods Consumers in Korea

Yu Jin Kim* · Jieun Lee** · MiYoung Lee[†]

*CHIPS inc., Production Development, Korea

**UBASE International, Overseas Sales, Korea

Dept. of Fashion Design & Textiles, Inha University, Korea

Corresponding author

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MiYoung Lee
Tel : +82-32-360-8137
Fax: +82-32-865-8130
E-mail : mylee@inha.ac.kr

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Abstract

Idol goods refer to products such as cups and towels, or mementos or souvenirs that are manufactured to gratify the desires of fandom and may include the facial images of a star. The objective of this research was to explore the purchase behaviors of K-pop idol goods. Two hundred and sixty female idol goods purchasers in their twenties participated in an online survey. Cheering tools were the most often purchased idol goods, followed by idol slogans and dolls. To investigate the difference in idol goods' attributes they considered when shopping, respondents were divided into three purchase groups based on their annual total expense for purchasing idol goods. There were significant differences among light, medium and heavy purchasers in terms of goods' price, practical features, and scarcity. The light shopper group was majorly guided by price and practical features as compared to the other two groups, and heavy shopper group was majorly guided by scarcity attribute than in the other two shopper groups. The more they identified their favorite idols, the more they worked hard, the higher their income, the higher the expenses of investing in idol products, the more likely they were to repurchase idol goods. In term of post-purchase behavior of idol goods, most idol goods purchase by fans were stored rather than used, and few indicated that they purchase two identical idol goods for use and storage.

I. Introduction

An idol is someone whose talents, achievements, status, or physical appearance are especially recognized and appreciated by his or her fans. Since objects of idolization come from various domains of life, sport champions, movie actors and actresses, television personalities, pop stars, and political or religious leaders can all be idolized figures (Raviv, Bar-tal, Raviv, & Ben-Horn, 1996). The fandom culture of Korean pop idols which started in the 1990s is a collective culture formed by affection and enthusiasm for stars (Bae, 2012). Over the years, fandom culture has brought great changes to not only consumption patterns but also the way profits are generated. This culture is a complex media product targeting the masses and has a system optimized for the environmental changes in the media industry (Kim & Yoon, 2012). With the development of digital music and streaming services, it is difficult to reach increasingly high break-even point in the entertainment market with album sales alone. Accordingly, management agencies in the entertainment market are seeking as many ways as possible to generate maximum profit in a short period of time. One of the ways that is drawing great attention these days is goods (Jung & Lee, 2009).

With idols recently becoming mainstream in the music industry, the K-pop music market itself is experiencing saturation. In the entertainment market, management agencies are zooming in on goods to generate maximum profit in a short period of time, expanding related businesses, such as opening and operating on/off shopping malls. For example, SM Entertainment is operating SMTOWN COEX Atrium in Samseong-dong, the company's official store, which offers star-related content products, and FNC Entertainment is operating a goods shop, FNC WOW, in Myeong-dong. In addition to operating its official (online) shopping mall, YG Entertainment is also expanding its business into the restaurant industry with its brand YG Republique operating restaurants in Seoul, Jeju Island, and Malaysia (Kim, 2018). According to the Korea Trade-Investment

Promotion Agency (KOTRA), the market size of idol goods and idol portrait-related products amounted to about 75 billion KRW as of 2014 (Yang, 2016). It is estimated that the scale of the idol goods industry has exceeded 100 billion KRW. The items being sold have diversified to include a variety of merchandise, such as cellphone cases, bags, pouches, key rings, albums, posters, postcards, and cheering sticks. The price range of these idol goods is also wide, with the market showing affordable products, such as a cheering stick priced at 18,000 KRW, as well as high-priced goods, such as earphones priced at over 1.2 million KRW.

The negative aspects of fandom have also been emphasized along with the long-standing treatment of fandom culture as a subculture of teenagers or a culture exclusive to women (An, Kim, Jeun, Jin, & Chung, 2012). Recently, however, fandom has no longer been regarded as an exclusive phenomenon among teenagers as more teenage girls who have participated in fandom activities are maintaining their activities even in their adulthood (Oh, 2007) and the scope of fandom is expanding. In fact, a growing number of studies are reporting the positive aspects of fandom in people in their 20s and the possibility of fandom as a type of leisure activity (Kim, 2011; Sohn, 2012). Considering the consumption aspect of fandom, the market, especially for adult fans in their 20s who have purchasing power, is too important to be neglected. Therefore, this study aims to explore the purchase behaviors of adult K-pop idol goods consumers over the age of 20, an area that has rarely been discussed in previous studies.

II. Literature Review

1. K-pop Music and Idols

K-pop, an abbreviation of Korean pop, refers to a popular music genre originating in South Korea and encompassing a variety of styles (Wikipedia). K-pop does not represent a song; rather, it is a genre that "fulfills both the eyes and ears, like a musical production" (Fhur, 2015, p.82). K-pop hit songs tend to have "upbeat

tunes, family-friendly lyrics and fiendishly catchy hooks” (“What is K-pop...,” 2016). K-pop songs are usually paired with big-budget music videos in which perfectly groomed girl or boy bands perform flawless choreographed dances .

In most cases, the source of K-pop’s popularity lies with idol groups. The “idol” culture is prominent in the Korean entertainment industry, and major entertainment companies, such as SM, JYP, and YG, audition, select, and train teenagers to debut in groups, such as girl or boy bands, rather than as individual artists. Teenage trainers usually spend five to ten years acting, developing personally, singing, and dancing to debut. “Idols” are often subject to strict rules regarding their personal lives to conform to a perfectly managed public persona (“What is K-pop...,” 2016). From casting to debut, the entertainment companies in Korea perfect their young acts, encourage them to get along, and censure scandals (Ono & Kwon, 2013).

An idol refers to a person whose talents, achievements, status, or physical appearances are recognized and appreciated by his or her fans (Cheung & Yue, 2000). The objects of idolization come from various domains of life, such as sport, entertainment, music, politics, and religion. Thus, pop stars, along with sport champions, movie actors and actresses, and politicians or religious leaders can all become idolized figures (Raviv et al., 1996). It is proposed that the idolization of pop singers, beyond the consumption of music and collection of basic information about it, which also reflect a normal appreciation of music, is based mostly on two important components: worship and modeling (Cheung & Yue, 2000). Worship refers to an unusually intense admiration of an idol. This can be expressed in behaviors such as actively collecting information or items related to idol groups or trying to meet the idolized figure in person. Modeling is the desire to be like an idol. This phenomenon can be seen in imitating idolized characters by copying an idolized person’s outfit, hairstyle, manner of speech, and behavior (Cheung & Yue, 2000; Raviv et al.,

1996). The adoration of celebrities such as idols is a normal part of identity development in childhood and adolescence (Giles & Maltby, 2004). Studies show that the idolization of celebrities decreases with age and it is more prevalent among girls than boys. Girls were also found to place more emphasis on singers’ features than boys (Raviv et al., 1996).

2. K-pop Idol Fandom

Fandom is a compound word composed of “fan,” meaning “fanatic,” and “-dom,” a suffix that refers to a domain, kingdom, or collection of persons. The origin of “fanatic” can be traced to the Latin adjective *fanaticus* and is used to refer to a person who enthusiastically loves someone or is absorbed in a certain field (Reysen & Branscombe, 2010, p.177). Fandom in Korea is a diachronic cultural phenomenon that has existed since the establishment of the entertainment industry, including the modern movie and music industries. Since the mid-1990s, when young idol stars managed by big entertainment companies started to appear, fandom has been enthusiastically enjoyed by teenage girls and women in their twenties. Fandom is often understood as a group of individual fans among the public, but in the field of cultural studies, fandom is considered a kind of social phenomenon and cultural practice (Jung & Lee, 2009).

In the past, female fandom was regarded as a subculture exclusively organized by adolescents and many negative aspects of idol fandom were expressed (Kim & Yang, 2013). However, recent idol fandom has shifted away from being the exclusive property of teenagers to a leisure activity of people in their twenties. Such fan base expansion can be attributed to two factors: first, fans who were in their late teens when their idol stars first emerged in the 1990s and continued with their fandom activities into their adulthood, and secondly, the idol’s career expansion from one area (e.g., music) to other areas in the entertainment industry (e.g., TV dramas, films, or variety shows) (Lee, 2015). Even those who do not know idol music have more opportunities to discover idols from dramas, movies, or

variety shows, which has helped expand the range of fans to other age groups.

This expansion of idols' fan bases has also influenced the area of fandom activities. With the increased number of fans in their 20s with purchasing power participating in fandom activities, it has become quite natural for fans to make donations to charity under the fan community name or the name of the celebrity they are supporting, engage in social activities with the celebrity, and make a "tribute" to the star on special occasions, such as their birthday or debut anniversary. Fans are increasingly engaging in positive activities, such as collecting small amounts of money with fellow fans and donating it to underprivileged people in the name of the star as part of their birthday celebration event (Park, 2014). Unlike the fandom culture in the past, which was led mainly by teenagers fanatically idolizing young singers, the recent idol fandom culture is led by fans in their 20s expressing their enthusiasm by "supporting" the idols. Fans have grown out of being passive consumers and became active producers who personally manage and promote stars (Jung & Lee, 2009).

Many papers have examined the impact of fandom activity on the development and school adaptation of adolescents. Previous studies found that fandom activity has both positive and negative effects on the development of adolescents. Teenagers with a moderate level of the idolization of pop stars had good-quality interpersonal relationships, a lower distress level, higher life satisfaction, and a more valuable social self than the group who had a lower or higher level of idolization of pop stars (Lim, 2002). Fandom activity also has some positive effects on adolescents' emotional resilience, which is the ability to adapt to stressful situations and cope with life's ups and downs (An, Kim, Jeun, & Chung, 2013). Previous research reporting negative effects regarding participation in fandom activities revealed that strong fandom activities and idolization tended to have a negative impact on adolescents' school life adjustment (An et al., 2012).

3. Idol Goods

Idol goods refer to products or mementos that are manufactured to gratify the desires of fandoms and include the facial images of stars, such as on cups, towels, or souvenirs. With the Korean music record market shrinking and more idol groups with distinct concepts emerging, the entertainment industry has undergone a change in its business structure through having to deal with the shortened life cycle of idol groups in Korea. It has become impossible to counteract crises adequately in terms of profitability through the record industry alone (Jung & Lee, 2009). The higher break-even point and shortened life cycle of idol groups resulting from the shrinking of the record market have created an environment in which the entertainment industry is forced to make maximum profit in a short period of time. Under these circumstances, the entertainment industry set the goal of establishing a revenue model to generate maximum revenue in a short period of time and secure a market (fandom) that will consume the products and services offered by the model. Borrowing the "one-source-multi-use" method from the Japanese entertainment industry, where the idol industry developed early, the Korean entertainment industry adopted the revenue model of spin-off products by offering numerous products related to idol stars or highlighting the closeness between idol stars and their fandoms (Jung & Lee, 2009).

Idol goods were available even in the 1990s when the first generation of idol stars was active. Stationery shops in front of schools sold notebooks and pencil boards featuring portraits of idols, and entertainment companies (e.g., SM entertainment) have even sold H.O.T. fan cards and necklaces containing the DNA of each member of the group (N. R. Lee, 2016). Nowadays, a variety of idol goods are being released, including mobile phone cases, cushion covers, key rings, clothes, candles, expensive earphones, and official cheering tools, such as balloons and glow sticks. SM Entertainment, one of the largest entertainment companies in Korea, operates a department in charge of planning and developing idol

goods. The company has opened offline stores in COEX, Myeong-dong, and Dongdaemun in Seoul, Korea, and displays and sells various goods of the idols or artists the company is managing. A wide range of idol goods and related services are offered at the SMTOWN COEX Atrium, an entertainment center complex of SM Entertainment. In this store, witty products, candy with a singer's character on the lid, and jelly featuring the singer's logo can be found. Other major entertainment companies, such as FNC Entertainment, YG Entertainment, and Cube Entertainment, also operate official online and offline shopping malls (Kim, 2018; S. B. Lee, 2016; Seo, 2015).

In addition to the official idol goods sold by entertainment companies that manage idol stars, the market for "unofficial" idol goods made by fans is also growing. The variety of these unofficial goods is as wide as that for official goods, ranging from basic items, such as photo books, to miscellaneous products, such as calendars, key rings, USB flash drives, memo pads, stickers, and dolls. Allegedly, the proceeds from selling these unofficial idol goods go toward indirectly promoting the artists through donations and support activities, but this kind of commercial activity of selling goods made from idol photographs is basically illegal, infringing the idol's portrait rights and copyright (Yang, 2016).

Meanwhile, the retail industry is also trying to develop products through collaboration with famous idol groups. For instance, E-Mart collaborated with SM to introduce private label products under the names of SM stars such as EXO and Super Junior (e.g., Exo Sonjjajang, Super Junior Ramen, SHINee Sparkling Water). The products are private label products that were previously sold by E-Mart and were newly packaged after being named after stars. Although their contents are similar to those of current products, their sales have increased by an average of 190.5% compared with before they started working together (Kwon, 2016). Despite the growth in the K-pop idol goods market, there is a lack of research on consumer buying behavior among idol goods consumers.

4. Idol Identification

Fandom is a social identity that a group of people have in common in relation to their favorite entertainer. According to social identity theory, the self-concept is comprised of a personal identity, encompassing idiosyncratic characteristics, such as abilities and interests, and a social identity, encompassing salient group classifications (Tajfel & Turner, 1985). Individuals tend to classify themselves and others into various social groups, such as organizational membership, gender, and age cohort. According to Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory, a person's identification with a model (e.g., a celebrity) determines how likely that person is to enact the modeled behavior. When people perceive themselves as similar to the model, they are more likely to enact whatever behavior is modeled by that person. Bandura (1986) believes that the identification process is based on the viewer's perception that the model is similar to him- or herself. In the case of a celebrity, identification may also determine behavioral compliance. The more a person identifies with a celebrity, the more likely that person may be to engage in advocated behaviors.

Identification is also used to explain professional sports fans' loyalty toward sports teams. Mahony (1995) defined team identification as "the degree to which a fan defines him/herself by the same attribute that defines the sport team" (p.12). Team identification has been used in previous studies as a determinant of sport consumers' impulse shopping behaviors for licensed team apparel (Kwon & Armstrong, 2002). Sport team identification has been one of the major psychological orientations with which sport scholars and marketers explain and predict sport consumers' behaviors. The higher the level of consumer identification with the respective sports team, the greater the likelihood of the consumer making an impulse purchase of the team's merchandise.

According to previous studies on professional baseball fandom (Kim & Baek, 2010; Kim, Kim, & Hur, 2010), team identification has a direct effect on team attachment, and the purchase satisfaction regarding

pro-baseball licensing clothing goods has a positive effect on the relationship quality between consumers and pro-baseball teams as well as the team brand loyalty of consumers. In this study, we will examine other consumer characteristics (e.g., demographic characteristics, degree of fandom activities) as well as whether idol identification affects the purchase intention of idol fans.

III. Research Method

1. Research Questions

This study aims to explore idol fans' purchase behaviors of K-pop idol goods and factors affecting their repurchase intentions regarding K-pop idol goods. The research questions aim to:

- 1) Explore idol fans' purchase behaviors for K-pop idol goods;
- 2) Examine what product attributes idol fans place importance on when purchasing and how these product attributes differ depending on shopper characteristics;
- 3) Explore the post-purchase behavior of K-pop idol goods consumers ; and
- 4) Identify factors that influence repurchase intention for K-pop idol goods.

2. Measurement

All measurement items were adopted from previous studies and reworded for this current study context if necessary. All items were measured on a five-point rating scale, with endpoints defined by 1 = "very unlikely" to 5 = "very likely." The definitions of each variable and measurement items used in this study are as follows:

Attributes of idol goods: This refers to what is emphasized when consumers make purchase decisions (price, quality, practicality, scarcity, and design) and was measured with six items.

Severity of fandom activities: This refers to the degree of affection and positive feelings one has for an idol

star. Based on the previous research (Kim, 2011; Raviv et al., 1995), eight items were developed.

Idol identification: This refers to a fan's perceived sense of unity with and belonging to an idol. It reflects the extent of the psychological connection the fan has to the idol in terms of wanting to feel close to the idol and experiencing the success as well as failure of that idol. Idol identification was measured with eight items adopted from Mael and Ashforth (1992) and Kim et al. (2010).

Repurchase intention: This refers to the intent to keep on using a product or service. Purchase intention has typically been used to predict actual purchase behavior and has been a reliable indicator. Repurchase intention was measured with two items (five-point scale), such as "I will continue to purchase idol goods in the future."

Goods purchasing experience: Questions on respondents' purchasing experience of idol goods (e.g., total expenditure on idol goods, types of purchased goods, purchase satisfaction, and post-purchase behavior) were also asked.

Demographics: Questions on demographics (e.g., age, educational background, occupation, income) were also asked.

3. Sampling

According to previous studies, the size of the adult fandom (those over the age of 20) for idols is increasing in Korea (Kim, 2011; Sohn, 2012). It has been reported that adult fans with economic power who are over the age of 20 are actively consuming idol goods (Hong, 2014). Therefore, the subjects recruited for this study were women in their 20s who are currently involved in or have experiences with K-pop idol fan activities and purchasing K-pop idol goods. The participants for the survey were recruited by posting an announcement about the survey on online K-pop idol group communities and fan galleries, such as EXO, SHINee, BIGBANG, and Super Junior fan boards and other online communities for women in their 20s.

4 . Data Collection and Analysis

An online survey was conducted for this study. The participants for the survey were recruited by posting an announcement on online K-pop idol group communities and fan galleries. Women who met the criteria and wished to participate in the survey were instructed to follow the link on the announcement, which led to the “Research Information and Consent” page. They were asked to click the “I agree” button to indicate their consent after reading the information and agree to voluntarily participate in the research. Participants who agreed to participate in the study were directed to an online questionnaire page. Frequency analysis, factor analysis, reliability tests, ANOVA, Duncan’s multiple range test, and multiple regression analysis were used for data analysis.

responses or responses without purchasing experience of idol goods were excluded and 260 samples were used for data analysis. The respondents’ average age of 23.8 years and most are students (66.9%). In terms of annual total expense for purchasing idol goods, 39.2% of the respondents spent less than 100,000 won, 33.1% spent 100,000 won or more but less than 300,000 won, and 13.5% of them spent 300,000 won or more but less than 500,000 won. Detailed information of respondents’ characteristics are presented in Table 1.

Examining the type of idol goods purchased by the respondents, it was found that cheering tools such as cheering sticks and other tools with slogans made up the largest group, followed by dolls, stickers, and photo books (See Figure 1).

IV. Results

1. Sample Characteristics

A total of 283 responses were collected through the online survey. Among these responses, 23 incomplete

2. Reliability Analysis

The reliability analysis results indicated relative high values of *Cronbach’s α* : .762 for the items used to measure idol identification and .760 for items used to measure the severity of the fandom. Items used and results of the reliability test are presented in Table 2.

Table 1. Sample Characteristics

	Characteristics	Frequency (%)
Age	20-24	163 (67.3)
	25-29	97 (32.7)
Income	Less than 300,000 KRW	72 (27.7)
	300,000 - less than 1,000,000 KRW	122 (46.9)
	1,000,000 - less than 1,500,000 KRW	26 (10.0)
	1,500,000 - less than 2,000,000 KRW	26 (10.0)
	More than 2,000,000 KRW	14 (5.4)
Occupation	Student	174 (66.9)
	Office worker	31 (11.9)
	Professional	20 (7.7)
	Service worker	11 (4.2)
	Other	24 (9.2)
Amounts of goods purchased annually	Less than 100,000 KRW	102 (39.2)
	100,000 - less than 300,000 KRW	86 (33.1)
	300,000 - less than 500,000 KRW	35 (13.5)
	500,000 - less than 1,000,000 KRW	18 (6.9)
	More than 1,000,000 KRW	19 (7.3)

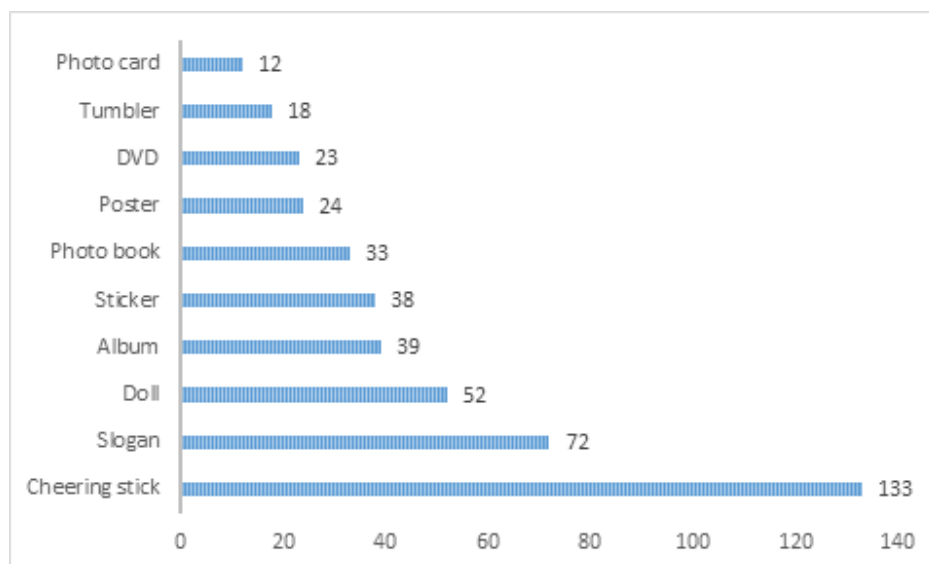


Figure 1. Types of Idol Goods Purchase by the Respondents

Table 2. Results of Reliability Tests

Variables	Items	Cronbach's α
Idol identification	I feel like I'm being criticized when Idol is being criticized. I feel like I'm being praised when Idol is praised. Idol is called "Our OO." I'm interested in what other people think of idol groups. I feel good when others think positively. I think the success of an idol is my success. I always copy the hair-style of my favorite idol or buy clothes or accessories that he or she is wearing. I try to resemble his words, actions, and thoughts.	.762
Severity of fandom activities	I always go to concerts and performances of my favorite idol, no matter what. To go to the fan signing event, I buy three or more albums. I buy the person's record or album, or DVD. For public broadcasting and pre-recordings, we have a nightly sleep and a night. When a new album is released, I stream it to rank the music source site. Join an official fan club. Collect photos and videos.	.760
Purchase intention of idol goods	I'll keep buying next time. When I purchase items, goods will be considered first.	.602

3. Product Attributes Considered when Purchasing Idol Goods

To investigate the difference in product attributes considered when purchasing idol goods, the respondents were divided into three purchase groups based on their annual total expenditure on idol goods. After dividing the respondents into the light shopper group (less than 100,000 won, 39.2%), medium shopper group (100,000 won or more but less than 300,000 won, 33.1%), and heavy shopper group (300,000 won or more, 27.7%), one-way ANOVA was conducted to determine the difference in attributes of goods considered between the groups. The analysis results are shown in Table 3.

The results indicated that all three groups emphasized the design of the idol goods when making purchase decisions and there were no significant differences among the three groups for the design attribute. It was also found that there was a significant difference between the groups regarding the price attribute ($p < .001$). The results showed that the light shopper group emphasized the price of goods more than the other two groups, suggesting that consumers whose annual expenditure on idol goods was higher considered the price of each product less. Regarding the quality of idol goods, all three groups responded that they considered this attribute important, showing an average score of 4.2 and no significant differences between the groups. Meanwhile, a difference was observed between the groups regarding the

practicality attribute ($p < .01$); the light shopper group placed more importance on practicality than the other two groups, suggesting that consumers whose annual expenditure on idol goods was lower considered the practicality of the goods more. A difference between purchase groups was also observed in the importance placed on the scarcity attribute (e.g., limited edition) ($p < .001$), with heavy shoppers responding more strongly than the other two purchase groups, stating that this attribute was an important consideration when purchasing idol goods.

4. Factors Affecting Repurchase Intention Regarding Idol Goods

The severity of fandom activities, idol identification, annual expenditure on idol goods, and income were used as the independent variables, while the consumers' repurchase intention was used as the dependent variable to determine the relationship between the variables. According to the regression analysis, repurchase intention was significantly affected by idol identification, the severity of fandom activities, expenditure on idol goods, and income. Fans with stronger idol identification, many purchases of idol goods, more active engagement in fandom activities, and a higher income tended to have higher repurchase intention regarding idol goods. By examining the beta coefficients, it was found that consumer's annual expenditure on idol goods had the

Table 3. Attributes of Idol Goods Compared by Shopper Group

Attributes of Idol Goods	Light Shopper (<i>n</i> = 102)	Medium Shopper (<i>n</i> = 86)	Heavy Shopper (<i>n</i> = 72)	<i>F</i>
Price	3.60 (1.007) A	3.23(1.037) B	2.82(1.079) C	11.940***
Quality	4.58 (.667)	4.38 (.828)	4.28(1.091)	2.807
Practical feature	3.20 (1.178) A	2.95(1.217) A	2.63(1.227) B	4.746**
Scarcity	3.12 (1.253) C	3.91(1.070) B	4.28(.859) A	25.973***

Note. Duncan test results A<B<C, *** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$

Table 4. Factors Affecting Repurchase Intention Toward Idol Goods

Dependent V.	Independent V.	β	t	R^2	F
Repurchase intention	Severity of fandom activities	.206	3.713***	.419	46.060***
	Idol identification	.268	5.264***		
	Expenses for purchase idol goods	.364	6.748***		
	Income	.129	2.526*		

** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

greatest influence ($\beta = .364$), followed by idol identification ($\beta = .268$) and the severity of fandom activities ($\beta = .206$).

5. Post-purchase Behaviors of Idol Goods Consumers

Concerning the behaviors of the respondents after purchasing idol goods (allowed multiple responses), 65% responded that they “use the purchased goods,” and it was also found that these goods being used were mainly cheering tools or practical products. The majority of respondents (87.3%) indicated that they “store the purchased goods.” These respondents noted that whatever they did not use was stored. Among the reasons given, storing the purchased goods showing the highest percentage can be attributed to the nature of idol goods, which are often composed of products that are impractical. Thirty-nine percent of the respondents responded that they “display the purchased goods”; items such as photographs and life-size cutouts are included in this category. About nine percent of the respondents stated that they would resell the goods because they had bought multiple same products or no longer liked the idol. It should also be noted that few (5%) respondents indicated that they “make duplicate purchases” of one product for both use and display or both for use and storage.

V. Discussion

In this study, we explored idol fans' (those in their 20s) purchase behaviors regarding K-pop idol goods and factors affecting their repurchase intentions. In terms of product attributes, light purchasers placed importance on the price and practicality of the goods and heavy shoppers indicated that scarcity and limited editions were important considerations when purchasing idol goods. In terms of factors affecting repurchase intention regarding idol goods, respondents who identified more with their favorite idols, engaged in more fan activity, worked hard, had a higher income, and had higher expenditure on idol products tended to have high repurchase intention. For fans with more experience of purchasing idol goods, scarcity, such as limited editions, was an important attribute in selecting products. Thus, entertainment companies that want fans to continue purchasing idol goods need to plan a line of merchandise that possesses the scarcity attribute. On the other hand, since new fans or those who do not invest much money in idol goods place more importance on price and practical attributes, merchandise planning should reflect various price points and product attributes depending on the characteristics of consumers, including reasonably priced and practical products for these fans.

When examining the respondents' behavior after

purchasing idol goods, some respondents said they used some of the products (e.g., cheering tools). However, the majority of responses indicated that they would store the idol goods they had purchased, confirming that the goods were not bought for practical use. Additionally, five percent of the respondents said they purchased multiple items of one product for both use and display or both for use and storage. Some of the respondents indicated that they resold the idol goods they purchased. Since many fans have shown that they purchase several of the same products for use and storage or use and display, planning a set of products for these consumers may also be considered. Of course, even without these set products, consumers will buy their favorite idol goods, but planning these sets for the continued sales of the goods would help strengthen the fandom in the long run.

We also examined the relationships among the fan's income, prior purchasing characteristics (e.g., annual expenditure on idol goods), severity of fandom activities, idol identification, and repurchase intention regarding idol goods. Fans with stronger idol identification, many purchases of idol goods, more active engagement in fandom activities, and a higher income tended to have higher repurchase intention regarding idol goods. Among these factors, it was found that consumers' previous goods purchasing behavior (annual expenditure on idol goods) had the greatest influence. Since idol fans with high annual purchases of idol goods are fans who are highly satisfied with the goods they have purchased, it is expected that they will be highly willing to repurchase idol goods. Thus, planning idol goods for fans who have already bought many will want to buy by offering aesthetically pleasing products and constant interest would increase their intention to purchase as well as strengthen their fandom in the long run. The results of this study also confirmed that such as idol identification has a significant effect on repurchase intention for idol goods. This finding supports Kwon and Armstrong's (2002) study, which pointed out that sport team identification is a major psychological factor that can be used to predict sport consumers' behaviors. Additionally,

studies have been conducted in Korea to investigate team identification and its effect on licensed clothing satisfaction and team loyalty (Kim & Baek, 2010; Kim et al., 2010).

Although the idol goods market is growing significantly due to K-pop's growth, little research has been conducted on consumers' behavior regarding idol goods. This study can help increase our understanding of idol goods consumers and provide basic data for planning effective marketing strategies that incorporate knowledge of idol fans' goods consumption behaviors.

The subjects of this study were limited to female idol fans in their 20s due to the increased number of adult idol fans in Korea. Therefore, follow-up studies will need to include a wider range of consumers in terms of age groups and genders. As K-pop grows globally, it would be also meaningful to analyze the characteristics of consumers in different regions and cultures.

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