

Harmonizing Minds: The Therapeutic Impact of K-POP on Anxiety and Behavior in Chinese Youth

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Abstract

K-POP is not only synonymous with Korean pop music, but also a comprehensive cultural phenomenon integrating music, dance, fashion and film and television, which has taken a place in popular culture and youth culture worldwide. Within the K-POP field, recent studies have shown the global popularity and K-POP positive and negative impact on teenagers. Additionally, K-POP dance and music enables teenagers to gain positive feedback and help them to relax. This research aims to explore the therapeutic impact of K-POP dance and music, examining to what extent engagement with K-POP dance and music serves as a coping mechanism for anxiety among Chinese teenagers and how this is reflected in their behaviors. Using quantitative method and comparing results. As a result, research shows the significance of K-POP dance and music. The majority experienced many changes both physically and mentally. It is potential for Chinese teenagers to work in progress in trying to grow into better selves. Contributions involve utilizing primary data and anxiety scale in understanding the relation between K-POP and anxiety issues. Anxiety scale shows data completely and provides people with more objective means of understanding.

Keywords

K-POP, Dancing, Chinese Teenagers, Behaviors, Anxiety Scale

1. Introduction

K-POP popularity has been raised around the globe, especially for the youth in China. This type of music and dance therapy enables teenagers to deal with their mental issues in an unconventional way. Existing research emphasizes the important impact of K-POP music and dance in mental state [1]. However, there is still a gap in understanding the influence on Chinese teenagers by investigating the therapeutic effects of K-POP toward mental issues. This research aims to fill this gap by exploring to what extent does engagement with K-POP dance and music serve as a coping mechanism for anxiety among Chinese teenagers, and how is this reflected in their daily behaviors and attitudes? It also aims to propel Chinese teenagers' mental health to a healthier way by developing potential methods.

2. Organization of the Text

2.1. Literature Review

2.1.1. Existing Research

Existing research has provided the benefits of K-POP and the current teenager's mental state, especially explaining cultural difference aspects. For the global impact of K-POP, the research basically discusses the main reason why K-POP success in the globe is because of its memorable melodies, which makes people appreciate and brainstormed [2]. The extraordinary dance and choreography and incorporating of diverse cultural elements in their music gained a large

amount of popularity in Asia. However, it is not specific and needs more details and evidence to support the memorable melodies and dance and only focus on narrow aspects and lack of studies in Asian culture.

According to Wang and Du [3], the current issues and status of Chinese teenager's mental health are becoming increasingly severe. Mental health experts cite depression, anxiety, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) as well their complications like eating disorders as major reasons for psychological counseling and hospitalization. The anxiety and depression are mostly derived from the study pressure from the family and social relationships [3]. However, there is still a limited solution for these mental problems but only unfolding the current issues about Chinese teenagers. According to some research, dancing has been shown to be effective on improving individuals' mental health [4] There is also evidence from research that dancing can have an impact on outcomes of depression symptoms, anxiety, and stress [5]. Under the situation of Chinese teenager's prevalence of mental issues, it is worth exploring whether K-pop could possibly serve as a coping strategy.[6] examined the positive impact of K-POP on teens' mental health. First, K-POP music is therapeutic. It resonates with teenagers and has infectious beats and soul-stirring lyrics. Second, K-POP dance is a stress buster, which means K-POP dance is a full-body exercise that releases feel-good endorphin, enables teenagers to celebrate the mood and positive impact of K-POP, which effectively solves study and family pressure. However, this article only focuses on global teenagers rather than Chinese teenagers only. We need more specific evidence on Chinese teenagers. Another study discusses K-POP music, Bit Hit Entertainment (BTS), the globally popular K-POP group, support their fan-base during the pandemic period, which healed Canadians from the depressed period of pandemic [7]. This provides important insights and serves potential solutions that could be used to intervene in the population of Chinese teenagers.

There is a study about how the K-POP dance reflects Chinese teenager's daily behaviors and attitude, from a dance class. It is evident that K-POP dance enables individuals to relieve stress and give the public a sense of accomplishment. Dance allows students to switch moods and fulfill their campus life a lot, as well as get along well with students who dance [8]. Therefore, K-POP dance is capable of releasing Chinese students' stress and improving their self-esteem effectively from daily behaviors and helping them to be more confident and make their life more fulfilled. This study provides some insights that K-POP dance could benefit Chinese students physiologically. Nonetheless, the physiological factors mentioned in this study were not related to anxiety issues.

2.1.2. Gaps and Limitation

In a nutshell, there are still some gaps that need to be fulfilled. First, although studies show K-POP positive effects on Chinese teenagers, however, there is no specific research on exploring the relationship between K-POP and anxiety among Chinese teenagers. Second, not so many studies talk about solutions although they have tried to understand factors related to anxiety. Third, there is no study that has examined K-POP specifically as a solution to deal with anxiety issues of teenagers in China. This highlights the necessity of the current research about K-POP coping with anxiety issues among Chinese teenagers.

3. Research Methods

3.1. Data

To collect data, we have conducted interviews via social media survey tool called Sojump that is randomly distributed to my WeChat peers who are typically Chinese teenagers. Some of them might be obsessed with K-POP culture and music and some of them might have never been exposed to K-POP at all. The unit of analysis is student, which ends up as a sample of 51 students. The response rate for these 51 students is 100%.

3.2. Research Design

This research uses quantitative methods that aims to compare two groups of individuals who dance K-POP versus who did not dance K-POP. The outcome for comparison is their anxiety levels. We also compared groups who have not listened to K-POP music before and make contrast about anxiety level with the group who had listened to K-POP music constantly in their daily lives.

By using survey distribution channels, we asked for participants’ demographics information’s of their age, gender and their school grades; Our survey also includes questions about their dancing behaviors, duration, frequency, and how they rate themselves in terms of their dancing level. Additionally, we also use some survey questions to understand interviewees’ personal conceptions or perceptions of the influence of their K-POP exposure on their own anxiety level. The anxiety level is the outcome of interest which we used the severity measure for generalized anxiety disorder (child aged 11-17) [9]. The total score can range from 0 to 40, with higher scores indicating greater severity of generalized anxiety disorder. The raw scores on the 10 items should be summed to obtain a total raw score. The average total score is calculated by dividing the raw total score by number of items which reduces the overall score to a 5-point scale. This allows us to think of the child’s generalized anxiety disorder in terms of none (0), mild (1), moderate (2), severe (3), or extreme (4).

4. Research Analysis

4.1. Descriptive Result

Our survey results show that the age of these teenagers ranges from 14-17. There are 7.8% of the teenagers are 14 years-old, followed by 23.5% of 15 years old. Those who are 16 counts for the most, which is 56.9% and the 17-age group is 11.8%. The majority of our participants are female (94.1%), with some males accounting for 5.9%. They are primarily coming from grade 10 (74.5%), with some from grade 11 (15.7%) followed by a 5.9% of grade 12 (5.9%) and a 3.9% of grade 9. (See in Figure 1-3)

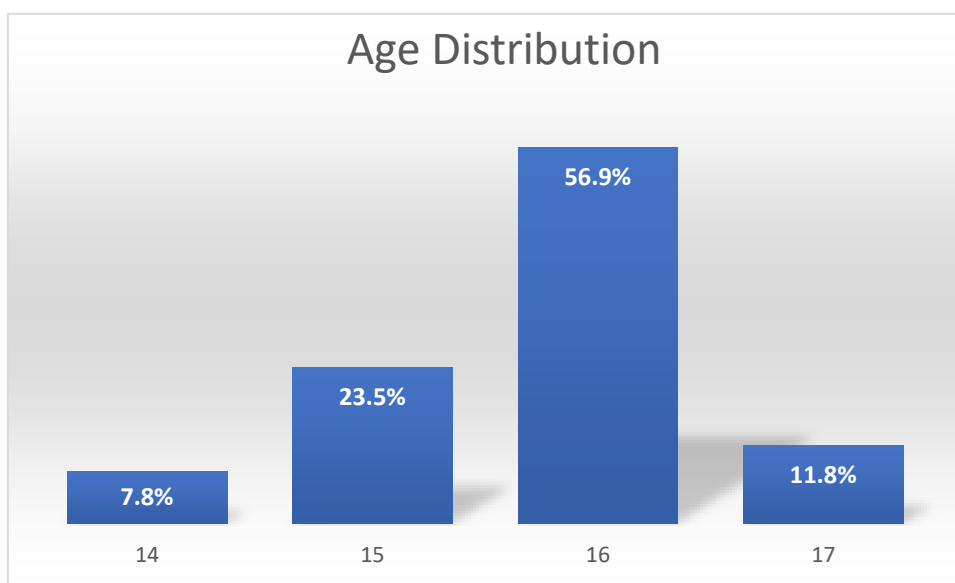


Figure 1: Age Distribution

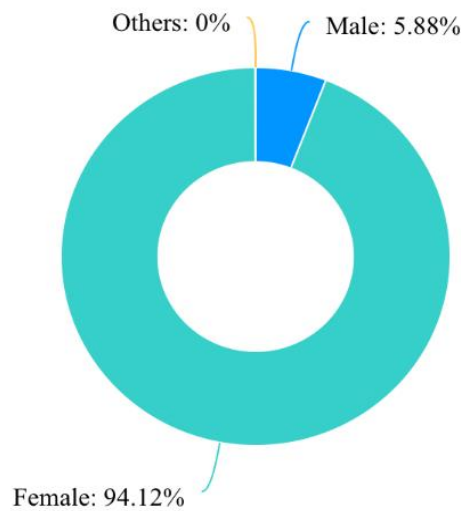


Figure 2: Gender

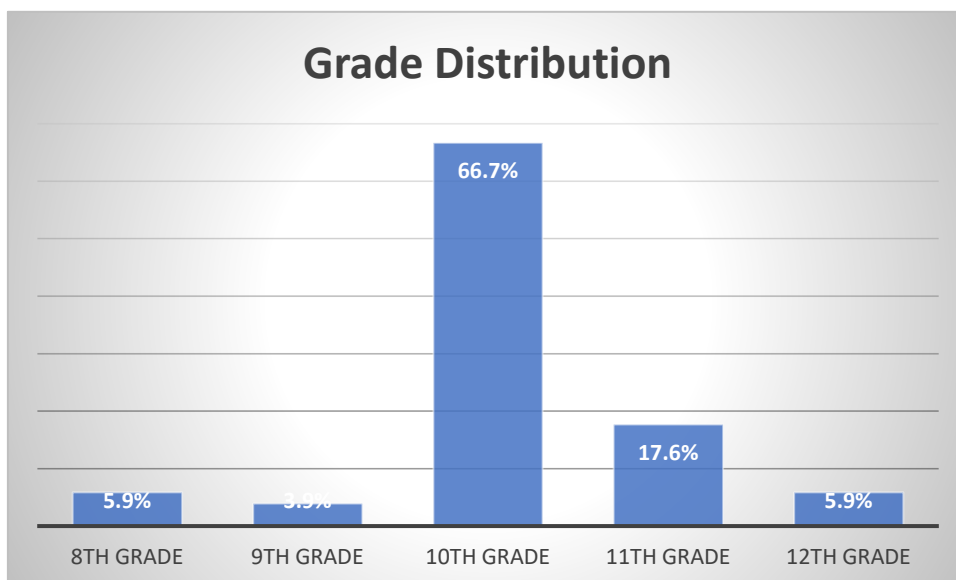


Figure 3: Grade Distribution

4.2. Dancing/Listening Behaviors

There are 54.9% of teenagers who danced K-POP before and 45.1% did not. For those who danced, 32.1% had one-year K-POP dancing experience and some even had danced for more than two years (28.6%), with only 10% danced less than a month. (See in figure 4)

About 52.9% of teenagers have listened to K-POP music before. For those who listened K-POP music before, about 67.9% have listened for more than two years, while the remaining listened less than 2 years. (See in figure 5)



Figure 4: K-POP Dance Experience

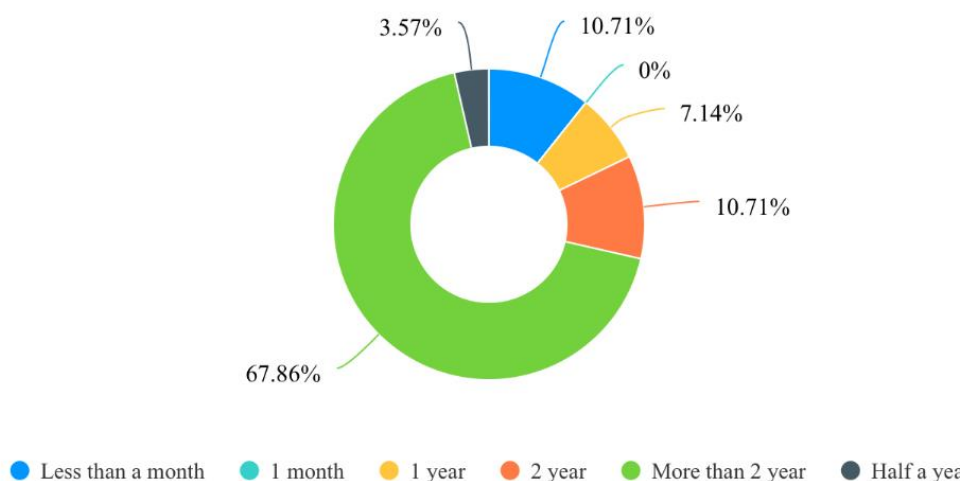


Figure 5: K-POP Music Experience

4.3. Anxiety Level

We used both an anxiety scale and their self-evaluated anxiety to measure their anxiety status. Regarding their self-evaluated anxiety level, nearly 39.3% of those teenagers agreed there’s a decrease in anxiety since they started engaging in K-POP dance activities and only 10.7% indicates there is an increase in anxiety level. In terms of certain aspects, most people thought the music (82.4%) and physical activity (71.3%) had helped to manage their anxiety level. Some thought that social interaction and a form of expression are also positively influenced by K-POP in terms of their anxiety level (See Figure 6 and Figure 7).

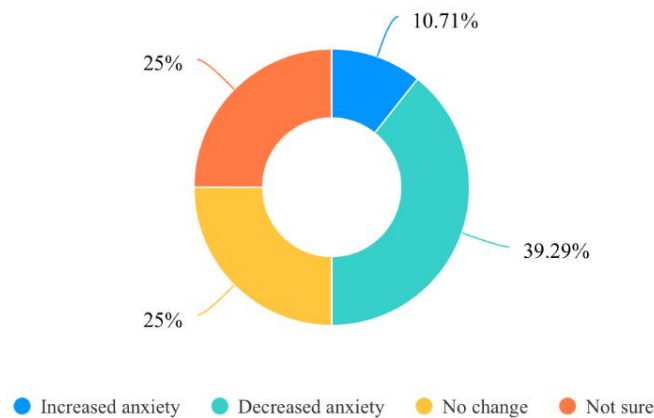


Figure 6: Self-evaluated Anxiety Perception Influence by K-POP

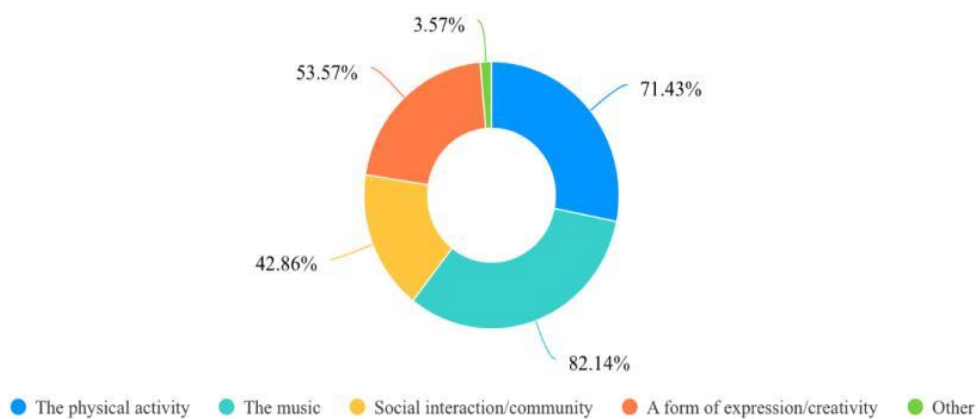


Figure 7: Positive Aspects influenced by K-POP on Anxiety (Self-perception)

We also used the severity measure for generalized anxiety disorder (child aged 11-17) [9] to measure their anxiety level in a more objective way. Results show that the majority of our sample presents a mild anxiety level (41.2%), with 23.5% showing moderate anxiety. There are 13.7% of these participants have shown an extreme level of anxiety. (See Figure 8).

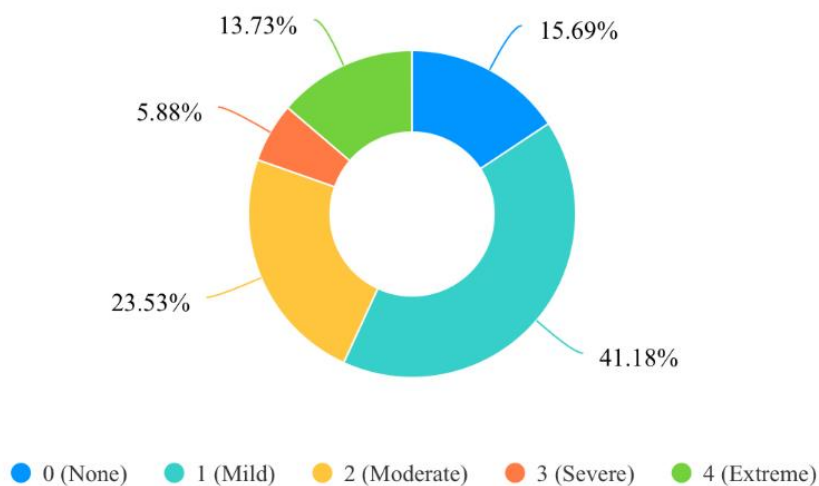


Figure 8: Anxiety level by severity measure for generalized anxiety disorder

4.4. Comparative Analysis

We took a further step to compare the anxiety level for those who danced K-POP before versus those who did not dance before. We found that non-K-POP dancers have an average anxiety score of 2.63, while those K-POP dancers' anxiety score was 2.06 on average.

Meanwhile, we also want to understand whether the difference in dancing experience of those K-POP dancers will have an influence on individuals' anxiety level. We found that for those who danced only less than a month, their anxiety score is 3 on average which falls into the severe category, while for those who danced for more than two years, their anxiety score is 2 on average which belongs to the moderate group.

Regarding participants' own perceptions of the influence of dancing K-pop on their anxiety level, they responded to the survey question that their daily behaviors and attitudes have changed a lot since they started engaging in K-pop dance. For people who dance K-POP, it shows that majority of them agree that they become more confident, and the K-POP boosts their happiness and increases their physical health to a large extent. Additionally, we found that K-pop dance enables Chinese teenagers to build a better self and a higher expectations for the future.

Acknowledgements

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