K-POP FANDOM IN LIMA, PERÚ:

VIRTUAL AND LIVE CIRCULATION PATTERNS

By

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# Table of Contents

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS** ......................................................................................................................... II

**INTRODUCTION** ................................................................................................................................. 1

  DEFINING KEY TERMS AND CONCEPTS .......................................................................................... 4
  "K-pop" .................................................................................................................................................. 4
  "Fandom" .............................................................................................................................................. 16

**THE 'GAP' IN THE EXISTING RESEARCH ON K-POP** ........................................................................ 18

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES** ........................................................................................................ 24

  Digital Research .................................................................................................................................. 24
  Physical fieldwork ............................................................................................................................... 29

**SUMMARY OF CHAPTERS** .................................................................................................................... 31

**CHAPTER 2: THE VIRTUAL K-POP COMMUNITY** .................................................................................. 33

  **FACEBOOK PAGES: Li_AT ENTERTAINMENT, HALLYU MANYAS** .................................................. 34
    Li_At Entertainment ............................................................................................................................. 34
    Hallyu Manyas .................................................................................................................................. 37

  **ANALYSIS OF TYPEFORM SURVEY RESPONSES** ....................................................................... 44

**CHAPTER 3: THE PHYSICAL K-POP COMMUNITY** ................................................................................. 50

  **K-POP FEST 2013** ............................................................................................................................. 50
  **KOREAN DANCE 3RD STAGE** ........................................................................................................ 54
    Screenings and public rehearsals ........................................................................................................ 62
    Physical Markers of “fandom” ............................................................................................................. 63
  **ASSI Market, Av. Aviación, San Borja** ......................................................................................... 64
  **CENTRO COMERCIAL ARENALES, Av. Arenales 1737, Lince** .................................................. 65
  **K-POP CAFE & RESTAURANTE, Av. Aviacion 2852** .................................................................. 66

**CHAPTER 4: THE CONVERGENCES OF THE TWO SIDES OF THE FANDOM** ..................................... 68

    Channels of communication ............................................................................................................. 70
    Passive and active ways of “consuming” K-pop ............................................................................... 72
    The Internet as the physical fandom's structural foundation .............................................................. 74

**CONCLUSION** .......................................................................................................................................... 77
Introduction

Earlier this year in Peru, I was wandering around an artisanal market at the base of Machu Picchu when I heard strains of a 2012 K-pop song, “Fantastic Baby,” by supergroup BIGBANG. I started to sing along to the chorus, and was soon joined by another voice. The source of this voice: a young girl selling local textiles to passing tourists on their way up to visit the ruins of Machu Picchu.

Since 2013, each of my trips back to my childhood home of Peru has given me more glimpses of how K-pop has successfully become part of the local soundscape. It catches me by surprise every time. Sometimes I hear it in the car as I scan the radio stations. Sometimes a K-pop song plays in the background of a local access entertainment show; completely unrelated to the scene on-screen. It was not long before I encountered K-pop played around Peru with purpose and not as a moment of randomness and surprise.

What is surprising about encountering K-pop in Peru? It is not uncommon to hear in the predominantly Spanish-speaking country English pop songs from the 70s, 80s, to the present: so we can discard any question regarding the connection between enjoying a kind of music and being able to understand it linguistically. But perhaps unlike fans of other kinds of pop music, Peruvian K-pop fans have taken the word “fan” itself to a whole new level – beyond following K-pop news and media through
the Internet, Peruvian fans often attempt to adopt the general physical “look” of a K-
pop celebrity, changing their hair color and even obtaining contact lenses as props
that enhance any resemblance to being a K-pop star. In more than one occasion,
loving K-pop has translated to loving Korean cuisine, Korean TV, and even the
Korean language itself.

I first heard of K-pop as a freshman at Sarah Lawrence College. One of my
newly made acquaintances, Francesca, sat me down in her college dorm room and
persuaded me to watch a music video on YouTube, Girls’ Generation’s “Oh!” We
watched this same video 2 or 3 times before she stood up and showed me the dance
herself. During the repeated viewings, she verbally analyzed each element of the video
as parts that contributed to the magic of K-pop. She followed this analysis by pulling
up some facts for me either from memory or the Internet, statistics I outlined in the
section defining “K-pop,” all of which supported her belief that the K-pop industry is
smartly designed and efficiently run. I had never heard of anything like this in
relation to music. I was intrigued by the level of perfection found in these YouTube
videos but more intrigued by this supposed system that was running this kind of pop
music. Since this initiation into K-pop, I’ve tried to stay in the loop regarding
industry updates and keep up with newly released music, but I am far from becoming
the fans I observed in Lima though I personally consider myself to be a fan of K-pop.

This thesis focuses on the Peruvian K-pop fan community and the modes of
agency demonstrated by the fans. At present, the current K-pop fan community
operates on different levels, starting from individual fans moving into regional cover groups and fan clubs, and above that, bigger networks of fans that collectively form the local network mostly based in the capital city of Lima. The goal of this thesis was to document the current K-pop scene in Lima as it is upheld by the local fandom. I wanted to explore the two different ways this fandom exists in order to see how fans are attempting to sustain their enjoyment and worship of K-pop in a place where it was not meant to be marketed (though this has started to change since the K-pop entertainment companies have been made aware of the large fan base in Peru and other Latin American countries). My research questions include: how are Peruvian K-pop fans engaging with the music and in what ways? Can their love for this musical genre be explained? Is this fandom ultimately sustainable? And finally, how do social networking sites work in shaping such a community?

For theoretical and empirical purposes I have studied the fandom as divided into two categories: the virtual fandom and the physical fandom, where virtual refers to fandom that exists on the Internet and the physical refers to human-to-human interactions and gatherings. My ideas regarding this fandom are based on literary research, physical fieldwork conducted during the summer of 2014 and early 2013, use of the Internet and online material, as well as some personal insights I gained from having lived in Peru for an extended amount of time and having been a K-pop fan myself since my first encounter with the music in 2009.

My thesis documents the Limeñan fandom as it exists up until 2015, with the
understanding that the fandom is continuously changing and, like other fads and trends, could run the risk of being defunct soon either through loss of interest, loss of momentum in the movement, or lack of participation. I show the extent to which a form of music can draw engagement and enthusiasm from its fans, by looking at the different ways through which fandom is manifested in virtual and live contexts.

In this introductory chapter, I offer definitions of some key terms and concepts; a brief literature review on the burgeoning field of “Korean popular music studies;” some theoretical frameworks to contextualize my study; a short discussion and review of my research methods; and finally an outline to the chapters that make up this thesis.

**Defining key terms and concepts**

*K-pop*

In this thesis, “Korean popular music” will be henceforth abbreviated to its more common name of “K-pop.” Korean popular music has had different meanings over time; in this document I refer to Korean popular music produced in the past ten years (since 2006). This kind of K-pop is characterized by a number of features. I define K-pop according to different sets of categories adapted from Simon Frith:

- Formal and technical rules
- Semiotic rules
- Behavioral rules
- Social and ideological rules
- Commercial and juridical rules (Frith 1998).

Formal musical rules for K-pop are translatable to Western norms for pop
music: short (3-4min) songs, usually a danceable beat, a reliance on recording processes and technology, and lyrics performed often simultaneously within one song in both English and Korean.

Semiotic rules - or “the rules in which meaning is conveyed” - are not as straightforward (ibid. 91). Frith elaborates that semiotic rules govern rhetoric. In the case of contemporary Korean popular music, semiotic rules primarily concern the medium of the music video. Non-Western listeners of K-pop are particularly attuned to the symbiotic relationship between lyrics and video, since not knowing Korean could be countered by an understanding of what is going on achieved through interpretation of visual media. The last five years have seen a rise in the number of MV releases by K-pop groups and individual artists alike. This statistic includes, of course, the “Gangnam Style” phenomenon, a music video by the artist PSY that features over two billion views on YouTube.

The next category, behavioral rules, encompasses “offstage performances, behavior in interviews, packaged performance” and “performance rituals in a wide sense” (ibid. 92). For example, one of the main production companies, SM Entertainment, run by CEO Lee Soo-man, has engineered a manual-like text denominated “Cultural Technology,” which advises managers on a range of issues - including but not limited to shades of eyeshadow, choice in wardrobe, etc. Members of bigger groups like Girls Generation (SNSD) often “perform” publicly according to their individual images and single-name identities that, combined, form the bigger
public image of the group as a whole.

Group members’ appearances on variety shows in South Korea are also specially planned, sometimes to demonstrate the band's bonds with one another or with their production company. This technique also ascribes to the fourth rule on social and ideological expressions, i.e “the nature of the musical community and its relationship to the wider world” (ibid. 93). Given that the listening community outside of Seoul has no access to such variety shows, the accessibility provided by YouTube thus enables these particular fans to keep track and remain “in touch” with idolized celebrities.

Social and ideological rules can also be interpreted through the ways in which K-pop songs communicate and negotiate gender, economic, and internal cultural issues. The latter is exemplified through PSY’s “Gangnam Style,” which lyrically forms a social commentary on the rich lifestyle in the ritzy neighborhood of Gangnam in Seoul. XOJane.com’s Erica Han Jin interprets “Gangnam Style” as a mockery of people associated with this neighborhood and rich lifestyle, as well as “the obsession of pretending to have it all, and the subtext that having ‘it’ means being more Western” (Jin 2012).

The final category, “commercial and juridical rules,” is also related to the dominant entity of the production company, as it controls concert tours around the world, recording and promotion processes, among other logistical tasks. Production companies can also participate in the recruitment stages, using local amateur talent
shows to constantly search for new talent.

A structural approach that makes use of these five kinds of rules, looking beyond musical characteristics, is especially useful in a study of Korean popular music. Looking at these parts of the musical genre creates an analytical prism through which one may try to determine factors that make this genre so popular.

Another approach to understanding modern manifestations of Korean pop is to consider the history of popular music in South Korea, a history that highlights how music as a form of expression has transformed over the years in accordance to fluctuating cultural influences, to the extent that today’s definition for K-pop is significantly different from its previous incarnations. Korean popular music has the further distinction of undergoing redefining moments approximately every 10–20 years. Two older genres are especially significant to the creation of the K-pop of the 2000s: *taejung kayo* and *shin minyo*. Additionally, the 1990s is a critical period as it reveals how K-pop has been continuously reworked and redefinitions of this music continue to show how it serves as a signifier for contemporary cultural trends.

Part of the development of Korean popular music began in 1910 with the Japanese occupation of Korea: between 1925 and 1945, pop music began establishing its importance first through appearances on commercial recordings, followed by the creation of *taejung kayo*, popular forms of composed songs dating to the first decade of the twentieth century, initially imported from Japan and Europe, but they gained Korean lyrics for the first time in 1905 (2006:3). As Young Mee Lee states in the
introduction to the volume *Korean Pop Music: Riding the Wave*, edited by Keith Howard, Korean popular music began and was nurtured under the “political and social constraints of colonial rule,” i.e. the cultural policy of the 1920s (ibid. 1). During this time, Japanese colonizers allowed the colonized Korean people to publish Korean language newspapers and hold social activities that would later form “the foundations of local artistic culture,” which include music (ibid. 1). Changes in occupying foreign powers inevitably led for constant responding adoption of external influences. The first significant type of popular music, *taejung kayo*, was thus rooted in the foreign cultures absorbed via Japan, and encompassed collective reactions against the colonizers and shared experiences of the colonized (ibid. 2). *Taejung kayo* “embodied the experiences and desires of the masses,” especially those experiences that were related to the pain and suffering of the colonized. Lee emphasizes that because of *taejung kayo*’s lyrical connections to such patriotic feelings, “such songs continued to be loved by many Koreans today” (ibid. 3). *Taejung kayo* eventually developed in the 1940s into the more well-known Korean genre of *t'urot'u*, or trot. Trot is musically similar to Japanese *enka* music, conveying themes of nostalgia, but more importantly was “supported by an educated [Korean] urban youth” (ibid. 9). Today, South Koreans view trot as “old people” music, drawing attention to the short spans of life as experienced by temporally representative musical traditions. As phrased by Lee, Korean’s early popular music history is therefore highly relevant as “the hybridity of early popular songs exhibits a clear character that reflects their time,
as native culture weakened and was supplanted by a modern but initially foreign import. They provide a lucid example of how cultural change occurs and how a new culture is established” (ibid. 9).

Following *taejung kayo* is the emergence of *shin minyo*, or “new folksongs” in the 1930s. As opposed to *taejung kayo* and trot, *shin minyo* is described by Hilary Finchum-Sung as a musical genre that “represents the sentiment of the people while appealing to popular tastes” (ibid. 10). The difference is underlined in the added consideration to popular taste. The development of *shin minyo* marks a shift in focus from forms of lyrical expression of historical sentiments of nostalgia and repression to simply forms of aesthetic. Specifically, *shin minyo* is considered Korea’s “first indigenous pop music; the first attempt at melding foreign influence with domestic aesthetics, distributed through the new-fangled technologies of radio broadcasts and sound recordings” (ibid. 11). The combined forces of the foreign, domestic, and usage of contemporary technology in *shin minyo* thus represent the basic factors needed in the modern K-pop equation.

*Shin minyo*, in contrast to older forms of folksong, also highlights the beginning of the melding of Western and Korean musical features: namely, how musicians played Korean melodies on Western instruments. Finchum-Sung emphasizes here that South Korea’s history of constantly playing the role of the invaded inevitably led for the nation’s culture to be “simply squashed” (ibid. 13). The eventual result was a growing tendency to look outwards while creating internal and national music.
Finchum-Sung further identifies that the influx of international trade that began at the end of the nineteenth century is what inspired Western music to “permeate into [the Korean] society through the hymns of missionaries and Western classical music,” effectively making the musical product a postcolonial one (ibid. 13). A quote in Finchum-Sung’s essay refers to indigenous Korean music as a “hidden treasure,” one that had “no place […] in modern times. Our music has become outdated, our music, made for people of long ago, has become unsuitable to the ears and sensibilities of modern people” (ibid. 13). Above all things, this sentiment foreshadows the future reversal undertaken by modern K-pop production companies that now look to create music of the future.

Through analysis of shin minyo, Finchum-Sung contends that it becomes apparent that Korea’s national history does play an undeniably significant role in the development of Korean popular music, no matter how much it may appear to the contrary in modern K-pop. Finchum-Sung underlines shin minyo’s importance by suggesting that it not only represents “a Korea emerging from the Third World to international power, from feudalism to democracy,” but also served as a marketing experiment. And as shin minyo lost popularity, Korean popular music through gradual phases (beginning from the end of the 1930s and extending to the 1990s) evolved in character from indigenous to cosmopolitan.

As with taejung kayo and shin minyo, the ballads from the eighties joins the previous genres in shaping contemporary K-pop; select characteristics from each
period’s music are combined for the final performed product, illustrating a drawn-out development that further highlights the calculated reflexivity exhibited by today’s manufacturers of Korean pop. The ballads from the 1980s deserve additional attention as the dominant form of popular music. Addressing the 1980s as “the decade of TV,” scholar Keith Howard points out that it was during this time period that Korean popular music began to give careful consideration to developing media technologies:

“Music culture was a virtual media monopoly; a continuation, if you like, of the limited access to phonographs in earlier times, a culture made more utilitarian with the arrival of radio. Recordings commodified popular music styles, objectifying the concept of songs, determining length and medium” (ibid. 83).

The 1980s were additionally significant due to the prevalence of censorship by the government (via the media) of individual singers. These instances of censorship involved “restricted personal identity, technical evolution, and restricted consideration ethnicity” (ibid. 84). The control of the media was part of General Chun Doo Hwan’s military coup and attempt to establish himself as head of state. As part of this process, the media of the 1980s began to further censor artists who sought to project personal identities. The media’s role in the K-pop industry of today (2015) is entirely different from that of the 1980s, in that the media not only does not censor K-pop, but serves as an indispensable entity through which K-pop is distributed nationally and globally.

The 1980s’ controlled import of Western influences is now entirely subverted. Where lyrics “were required to tell a story in which the singer was central,” today’s K-
pop song lyrics feature a mix of English and Korean and tell stories, but often from an unidentified character portrayed by the performer. For example, in Girls’ Generation’s “Oh!” the girls in the group sing to a desired boy / “older brother” figure: here, and in most K-pop songs, no specific person is identified as the protagonist, or the character whose viewpoint we hear from the most. For example, most of “Oh!” is about a girl trying to get the attention of a guy:

“Hey oppa look at me, just take a look at me
It’s the first time I’ve spoken like this
I fixed my hair and put on make-up too
Why do you only not notice me?” (translation provided by yeinjee.com)

The ambiguous identity of the voice in the song leaves room for listeners and performers alike to re-imagine themselves as the voice itself, singing these lyrics as if they were actually trying to get the attention of a cute boy.

Lyrics found in the ballads of the eighties structure contemporary K-pop songs by making lyrics a key part of the music, fitting the criteria of generic pop music, except the one difference here is that in contemporary K-pop songs lyrics are not only at times irrelevant to the performer’s personal life, but even nonsensical. Referencing an eighties song “Red Dragonfly,” Howard opines that ballads and their texts “seem to invite a pop video” given the song’s narrative and imagery found in the lyrical content (ibid. 86). Though there were media production limitations at that time that prevented this realization, Howard nevertheless makes a good point in demonstrating how “everything [fit] media specifications” (ibid. 86).
With hippie folk pop trending in the 1970s and ballads in the subsequent 1980s, in the 1990s the conglomeration and selective use of these other forms of popular music resulted in the rise of Korean boy bands. The final decade preceding the K-pop of the 2000s oversaw the debut of the band Seo Taiji and the Boys. This event is seen definitively within K-pop history as one of the most important developments that introduced a structural model for current artists. Seo “introduced a new concept of star based on image, controlled by the group irrespective of managers and agents;” Howard indicates additionally, “Seo used conventional sampling techniques and synthesized accompaniments” (ibid. 87). These traits continue to manifest in modern K-pop music. Key years in the 1990s include the ones between 1992 and 1994, during which Korean artists continued to appropriate foreign styles as a result of increased opportunities for travel. As Howard states, “Any style became Korean as acculturation collapsed the foreign into a vernacular expression” (ibid. 91). This characteristic of appropriation is perhaps now the most emphasized as it embodied not just “largely rootless fusion,” but a way of finding uniqueness (ibid. 92). The 1990s also brought about music videos, a development that meant a further shift from music to visuals. In this manner, the role of pop videos and the acts of appropriation grow into being modern fundamentals of K-pop music, assimilating into formulaic production and incorporating the dual task of importing the foreign while retaining local similarity (ibid. 93). A final measure of performativity introduced in the 1990s by the formation of Seo Taiji is the addition of dance. This
last component to Korean pop and its importance is summed up by female artist Kim Tae Young:

“When we were kids, we could only hear American rock, at nightclubs, army bases and so on. We copied Michael Jackson, the old style of M.C. Hammer, Billy Brown. We memorized songs and dance movements as our foundation. We went to discos, put a walkman near the speakers to record the mixes, then used the tape to develop our skill. I guess it is still the dance rhythm of our music that sells it” (ibid. 94).

Dance has since become one of the primary distinguishing features of K-pop, as evidenced by “Gangnam Style” and its distinctive horse-dance. The three elements of Western sound, Asian image, and the production values inherent in the components of music videos and dance provide the foundation for K-pop as current listeners view and hear it.

In addition to Seo Taiji, another influential figure to emerge from the 1990s is former musician Lee Soo-man. Where Seo Taiji’s Yang Hyun-suk goes on to found YG Entertainment - one of today’s “Big Three” production companies - in the background lurked the recently graduated Lee, who conducted a survey in an effort to research what his peers looked for in new musical groups. The end-result was the creation of the two groups H.O.T and S.E.S. Eventually, Lee Soo-man also founded his own production company SM Entertainment, the second of the “Big Three.” These production companies are now multifunctional power hubs, capable of managing and marketing new musical groups.

The 2000s subsequently brings about the peak of the Korean Wave (hallyu). A
phrase created by Chinese journalists, the translation of the Mandarin phrase hanliu to hallyu refers not so much to a wave as to a flowing (liu) motion that symbolizes the circulation and popularity of Korean culture through select media “products” that include not just K-pop but Korean dramas as well. Beginning with distribution in Japan (effectively reversing the historical influence and movement from the latter country to Korean), hallyu spread to China, Taiwan, Malaysia, and other South Asian countries. After years of trying to gain a stable foothold in Western - particularly in American - audiences, Psy's release of “Gangnam Style” gained extraordinary attention worldwide and especially in the US.

In contrast to its historical manifestations, K-pop today is far from resemblances to older types of folksong. Often considered to be a way of portraying the South Korean economy, it is as much a cultural product as it is a contributing factor to said economy. In an article from The New Yorker, John Seabrook quotes an estimated $2 million amount contributed by K-pop consumption. Geographically, South Korea's location also makes it the most ideal country to “sell” its pop music to neighboring countries: notably, China, often reputed as the future biggest market on the global economy. The Korean government promotes K-pop as a form of “soft power,” truly highlighting the drastic change in function behind popular music (Seabrook 2012). According to Seabrook, “hallyu has erased South Korea’s regional reputation as a brutish emerging industrial nation, replacing it with images of prosperous, cosmopolitan life” (ibid.). To create and circulate such appealing images,
music videos and publicity of perfect pop stars contribute to making this a success. “Gangnam Style” itself, in referring to the wealthy Gangnam district of Seoul directly accomplishes this task.

“Fandom”

Another important term used in this thesis is “fandom.” My use of “fandom” refers both to the act of being a fan as well as the fan community itself. A useful introductory volume is the compilation *Fandom: Identities and Communities in a Mediated World* (2007) by Jonathan Gray, Cornel Sandvoss, and C. Lee Harrington, Fan studies here is broken down into six directions:

1. The emphasis on the symbolic and representations that mark contemporary mediated worlds
2. The dissolution of boundaries between different textual and cultural forms, leading to the erosion of binary oppositions between popular and high culture
3. The changing relationship between physical place and virtual space and the social interactions and performances taking place within them in an increasing deterritorialized world
4. The interplay between the global and the local in processes of cultural globalization
5. New identities and practices arising out of the transformation of production and consumption in light of social and technological change

The editors to this volume describe fandoms studies as important mainly because “it matters to those who are fans” (1). The volume looks at three generations of fan scholarship that spans two decades. The first period of “fan studies” concerns “an underlying duality of power” (3). Early concepts of fan studies made fandom
“more than the mere act of being a fan of something: it was a collective strategy, a communal effort to form interpretive communities that in their subcultural cohesion evaded the preferred and intended meanings of the ‘power bloc’” (2). The second stage focused on “what fandom is not – an a priori space of cultural autonomy and resistance,” but gave little emphasis to individual motivations, enjoyment, and pleasure of fans (6). Finally, the third wave of fandom studies looks to “the investigation of fandom as part of the fabric of our everyday lives [...] [capturing] fundamental insights into modern life” (9). The editors conclude:

“... it is precisely because fan consumption has grown into a taken-for-granted aspect of modern communication and consumption that it warrants critical analysis and investigation more than ever.” (9)

What is further significant about fan studies, and especially in relation to my project, is what it contributes to scholarly research. The editors argue that fans become prisms through which we “explore some of the key mechanisms through which we interact with the mediated world at the heart of our social, political, and cultural realities and identities” (10). Furthermore, fan studies contribute the development of our “understanding of how we form emotional bonds with ourselves and others in a modern, mediated world” (10).

From this collective volume, I use directions 3, 4, and 5 as listed above. Most of this thesis focuses on the differences between physical place and virtual space and the significance of the two categories (direction 3). My choice in studying fans of K-pop who are from or live in Peru often makes me consider what I observe in fieldwork
using a dichotomy that distinguishes a globally popular genre of music in a
distinctively local context (direction 4). Finally, I gain brief snapshots into how being
a K-pop fan shapes new identities and practices in a pre- and post-K-pop influenced
Peru (direction 5). My study of the Peruvian K-pop fan community further
contributes to the third wave of scholarship on fandoms around the world by focusing
on the interplay between consumption and the modeling of an everyday lifestyle.

The 'gap' in the existing research on K-pop

When I first started to look at K-pop from an academic perspective, I was
unaware of any concrete volumes on “Korean popular music studies” or even “Korean
culture studies,” though this has since changed, with the publication of compilations
such as The Korean Popular Culture Reader (2014). As a scholar studying the K-pop
phenomenon of the 2000s, at the beginning of my research process I found that there
were a limited number of published print sources on K-pop. However, there were
many articles published by periodicals ranging from Time to The New Yorker to The
Financial Times. While short, these articles were proof that K-pop had indeed
garnered international attention and from a number of fields at that.

Databases like JStor reveal interest from academic disciplines such as sociology,
media studies, cultural studies, as well as ethnomusicology. Reading articles on K-pop
(see references), I began to recognize and adopt certain ways of talking or describing
K-pop in ways that would make it easier for non K-pop listeners to gain a basic
understanding of it. For example, one of my typical definitions for a non K-pop listener would be to describe K-pop as “a South Korean genre of popular music known for their music videos, choreography, use of both English and Korean, and catchy melodies.”

A review of the existing scholarly literature on K-pop invariably draws out certain patterns of inquiry that occupy academics studying any aspect of this musical genre, i.e. how to study K-pop and its surrounding culture. This is when academic disciplines and their contrasting agendas and methods play significant roles. For example, a media and communications scholar uses more quantifiable data as opposed to data obtained through ethnographic fieldwork. Quantifiable data is produced through the analyses of surveys, questionnaires, or by looking at content available online and summarizing it all numerically. While quantifiable data is often interpreted to be a more concrete form of evidence and easy to cite, the arguments made in such articles were not persuasive. One such article on the Romanian K-pop fandom (Marinescu 2013) argued that fans related the music to notions of Korean culture and identity, yet none of the quantifiable data provided made this statement compelling. There were also articles from the field of cultural studies (Jung 2014) that attempted to pinpoint a definite relationship between music and cultural identity, not by looking at performance, but at the music’s impact on communities of listeners. Thus the existing solution to “How do we study K-pop?” is to find ways to tailor a study to the methods as opposed to the subject at hand.
Similar themes emerge in a reading of the current scholarship. These themes link K-pop to five main issues: meaning, identity, culture, globalization, and the informal and existential Big Question concerning K-pop: what makes it so popular? The first issue, music and meaning, investigates whether meaning exists on any level and in relation to K-pop. Does K-pop music hold any meanings for the listener? In the Romanian and Indonesian case studies, listeners cited feelings incited by K-pop or revelations about themselves that were also inspired from listening to the music (Marinescu 2013; Sutton 2011). Here, meaning is not music-based: it is not found in the chords or the lyrics or the instrumentation. Instead, “meaning” refers to fan reactions and fans’ own interpretations of the music. Finding profound meaning in the music of K-pop and surrounding culture seems to be a significant and consuming academic agenda, perhaps because the presence of meaning would justify K-pop’s popularity and global success.

In fact, K-pop’s profound meanings could be more specifically interpreted through the relationship between K-pop and identity formation. The identity formation here refers again to the fandom and not the actual K-pop performers, who remain inaccessible and protected by secretive management companies. Issues on identity alternatively underlie discussions that mention fans’ connections between K-pop and the mother Korean culture. In both the Indonesian and Romanian case studies, it is evident that fans directly relate the music to the host culture, as if one automatically equated to the other. Fans then adopt behaviors that they believe
subscribe to this overarching Korean culture perpetuated by the mass distributed music.

Korean culture is therefore another recurring issue in the current scholarship on K-pop. This manifests not only through fan ideas of Korean culture as reconstructed from consumption of Korean dramas and music, but through the way K-pop is considered a cultural product exported by South Korea. As mentioned before, K-pop is considered a gateway to Korean culture, often leading to fans making efforts to learn the language, enjoy the food, and visit Seoul. On a grander scale, scholars portray K-pop as a holistic representation of South Korea, despite the existence of multiple musical genres within the country. Korean culture, through K-pop, is then combined and packaged to be consumed worldwide.

These studies on K-pop invariably linked this musical genre to the theme of globalization. Many scholars pointed out how K-pop is built on processes of globalization or resulted from the effects of globalization. In the first situation, K-pop’s international style of cooperation (European songwriters, American choreographers, Korean performers) is shown to be a form of musical globalization. In the second situation, K-pop is interpreted using globalization as a contextualizing framework. K-pop is argued to be the product of global flows, or East meets West and vice versa. Readings of K-pop as innovative or hybridizing often include the theme of globalization and contribute to the reasons for its continuing worldwide popularity.
The final research question persistent in the current literature asks how and why K-pop achieved its success, but it is a question that remains unsolved. The viral nature of “Gangnam Style” remains a strong inspiration for this question and is evidenced by the number of studies that use the song and its trajectory as an analytical focal point and important marker on the timeline of K-pop history (Jung and Shim 2014; Jung 2014; Lie 2013, etc.).

The scholarly scope of the field at its current stage can be understood through a consideration of the ways past scholars have approached the subject matter. On a general level, these approaches fall into four categories: time, interlocutors, K-pop as cultural product, and K-pop’s formal characteristics. In the first category, K-pop is studied according to notions of time: the rise of the Korean wave (Hallyu) is often pinpointed as a significant turning point and even appears to be a subfield of its own (Hallyu studies). Alternatively, I’ve look for scholarly work on K-pop diachronically or since the release of “Gangnam Style.” In the second category, analysis regarding interlocutors, scholars examine fans and producers; essentially, the people behind the music. The third category, K-pop as cultural product, distances K-pop from its musical nature and frames it as a static object manufactured and sponsored by the Korean government. The final category assumes a more textual approach, and lyrics and musical content are studied more closely, as well as characters and stereotypes performed by the K-pop celebrities themselves.

Most of the studies I found while completing my literature review focus on
what happens outside of Korea, for example Marinescu’s study of the Romanian fandom and Sutton’s work with the Indonesia fan community; there is not much on the internal reception regarding this music. And while these studies generally emphasized the importance of the fandom, there is a lack of attention paid to the industry and its performers, which could provide more holistic insights and even potentially solve the big question regarding K-pop’s global popularity. One explanation for this imbalance — more attention paid to fans rather than the performers themselves — could be that there already exists a clear distinction between the roles of the listener and the performer and continues to be maintained by the K-pop industrial entities, but there is no limit to what a fan can do in relation to their appreciation for a musical genre.

Through this study, I hope to add to the current field of literature a case study focusing on a different area of the world. Compared to other targeted audience countries, Peru – unlike neighboring countries of Japan, China, Taiwan, and other South Asian countries – represents a marginal space that took production companies by surprise. Additionally, the popularity of K-pop in Peru did not need the US or another Western country to act as a mediator. Instead, the Internet bridged these worlds and connected South Korea’s pop music directly to Peru. Because of the Internet’s important role, I also found it necessary to dedicate a chapter solely to the virtual manifestations of the Peruvian fandom.
Research Methodologies

My research methodologies can be synthesized into two main activities: digital research and physical fieldwork.

*Digital Research*

While working on this project I spent a lot of time on YouTube and Facebook, following trails that connected user-to-user and fan club to fan club. I first found out about Lima’s K-pop fandom through Facebook in 2012, and Facebook has since remained an important tool for networking, discovering future events, as well as proving an interesting forum through which I could unobtrusively observe the fans’ online behavior.

Prior to 2012, it would never have occurred to me to type a search string like “K-pop Peru.” When I finally thought to use the Facebook search bar, typing those search strings and variations using related keywords (K-pop, Korean pop, pop coreana, etc) gave me a good list of leads, leads which pointed several times to the existence of a new but established fan community.

On Facebook, finding one single event can lead to RSVPing to a number of related events, events which the social media website lists on a sidebar for a given event’s Facebook page, such as a K-drama screening, public rehearsal, or other kind of gathering. Upon finding these event pages I would spend time reading the many comments and posts of individual Facebook users. Additionally, on these event
“Walls,” owners of K-pop merchandise stores as well as individual vendors would advertise their wares, appending the statement “Permiso para publicar” (permission to publish) to their ads.

Facebook’s messaging feature also gave me the ability to directly reach out to fans and page administrators. Through this messaging client I was able to have informative though brief conversations with users, and these individual fans were able to address any brief questions I had about their experience as K-pop fans in Lima (and elsewhere in Peru). I chose to survey individuals as opposed to groups because I could gain a somewhat better sense of individual responses since theoretically only one person was answering the questions. In some trial group messages I found it hard to distinguish individual voices in one given cover group. I also gained quicker responses when I contacted individuals, as some groups did not convene as often and enough to sit down together and answer some of my questions. Finally, because interviewing someone via virtual platforms already made it difficult to distinguish elements such as tone and eliminated cues such as facial expressions, I tried to avoid messaging group members as a whole in order to avoid ambiguity and misinterpretation.

I was once asked during a conversation here at Wesleyan whether the role of these Internet platforms — Facebook, YouTube, etc. — mattered to the development of the K-pop community. I think the Internet and its ability to transcend physical borders and divisions within a city definitively aided the rapid growth of the now
large K-pop fandom in Lima. As a former resident of Lima, my social circles were small and limited geographically to what was immediately near me. Thus from a personal standpoint I know that without Facebook, it would have been almost impossible to locate these events and fan clubs on my own. And for teen fans who are unable to drive or otherwise transport themselves around the city, they would be limited to social events accessible either by pedestrian means or by public transportation. On Facebook, your geographical location not only makes it more easier for the social network to connect you to local events, but also does not have to be a determining factor as to who you can or cannot contact. Internet-based communities can blur or otherwise ignore pre-existing physical markers of division, and it is because of this central importance that I did a lot of work on a site like Facebook, which I typically do not associate with academia though I think it deserves some attention: especially given its effectiveness to a study of how a K-pop community operates on a day-to-day basis in the new digital age. *Shadows in the Field*, edited by Cooley and Barz, features an entire chapter on virtual fieldwork (2008). Facebook was thus important to my “virtual fieldwork” as it “employs technologically communicated realities in the gathering of information for ethnographic research” (ibid. 91). Cooley, Meizel, and Syed (the authors of this chapter) further state:

For us, virtual fieldwork is a means of studying real people; the goal is not the study of the virtual “text,” just as for ethnomusicologists (generally) the subject of study is people making music rather than the music object exclusively.

Thus despite the fact that much of my second chapter relies on data mined from
Facebook, my study is not centered on Facebook itself but how the people behind these Facebook pages use the Internet to maintain the virtual face of the fan community that operates and exists in reality, around Lima, or how “how the virtuality becomes a part of peoples’ very real experience” (ibid. 91). And most importantly:

The Internet ... is a socially embedded phenomenon; the virtuality of the Internet is not separated from reality (Miller et al. 2004:80). Virtuality is only as real as any other cultural production; it has only the meaning with which people imbue it. Focusing on how people experience—and invest power and meaning in—communicative technologies returns the “ethno” to virtual ethnography (ibid. 91).

The Internet’s all-important role in these Peruvian teenagers’ lives (at least to those who have the means to access it) showed me its inherent function within the fandom. For me as a researcher, the Internet and the fandom’s existences are so intertwined that it would be impossible for me to neglect the fandom’s virtual manifestations in a study of the Limeñan K-pop fan community.

The online survey software Typeform was another of my digital research tools. Typeform is self-described as “a cloud based service that allows you to build & design beautiful device-agnostic forms, called ‘typeforms.’” My survey consisted of 11 questions concerning why these fans liked K-pop. (See appendices for survey questions and responses.) Typeform also included analytical tools capable of visually and numerically re-organizing the responses.

For example, for the question “How long have you been listening to K-pop?” The software showed me that 44% of the 25 people who responded to the survey have
been K-pop fans for as long as 3-5 years:

While both Facebook and Typeform were instrumental to my research process, there were still some limitations to using these as research tools. That both tools were Internet-based meant that I could receive information sometimes immediately and directly from fans, but lags in response time or even blatant rejection meant that I often hit the same dead-ends, and my contact with certain fans would remain at a superficial level. Similarly with Typeform, I found that although the survey format produced instant and easily accessible responses, there lacked a greater depth and quality typical of live interviews, which I found hard if not impossible to obtain while in Peru.

Finally, I also accessed fan-made videos available on YouTube. Some videos were “finished” videos that were meant to showcase a particular fan group’s work as a cover group. Others documented auditions, private rehearsals, as well as public rehearsals in Parque Ramón Castilla, a park designated by fans for dance practice and
a rendezvous site.

Physical fieldwork

On school breaks in 2013 and 2014 I had opportunities to attend events in Lima, where I was able to observe the K-pop fandom in person. These events were mostly large-scale concerts, competitions, and festivals. I also made site visits to venues such as a K-pop café, a mall which featured mostly stores selling K-pop merchandise, some Korean restaurants, and the one Korean grocery store in Lima, located on Av. Aviación.

Because of difficulties I experienced in getting in-person interviews while in Lima, my short period of research allows me a somewhat limited perspective into each fans’ connection to K-pop. Insights and responses cited in this thesis are thus meant to provide snapshots of individual fan members who form part of an expanding network across Lima and in other regions of the country.

One limitation to my physical fieldwork was that I noticed that I would tend to be the only person of East Asian ethnicity at these events. Because of this I drew some attention to what I was doing, and it both helped and did not help my investigative work. At one festival, my presence and that of my friends was pointed out blatantly by a younger fan, who loudly yelled that there were “chinas” (people of Chinese descent) and pointing us out to people near her, making it hard for me not feel extra self-conscious while trying to talk to other strangers attending the event. In other occasions, I felt that for whatever reason, as an Asian person that made it easier
for fans to talk to me. Maybe they were as curious and excited to see an unexpected fan of K-pop as I was when I discovered that local Peruvians were also into this musical genre. On an occasion unrelated to my fieldwork, I was walking around a beachside mall when I was stopped by two young teenagers, who asked to take photos with me, and I later realized after overhearing parts of their conversation that they had mistaken me for a K-pop celebrity. This was a moment where I once again felt like I was an outsider and different from others in Lima because of being Asian, but it was one of the few times in my ten years living there that it did not work against me, or lead to racial slurs or name-calling.

Another important part of my research methodologies included the act of balancing dual identities I’ve developed as a fan and as a researcher. Because I’ve been exposed to the genre and its history in the last five years, many of my observations and ideas stem from discussions with my fellow fans, as well as patterns I subconsciously picked up from reading short news articles, watching many music videos, and listening to the music myself. Many of my guesses as to the relatively insignificant role of language comprehension and enjoyment of the music are based on my own inability to speak or understand Korean, an inability that does nothing to hinder my enjoyment of the music.

Similarly, I have not been to Korea or had much exposure to Korean culture beyond cuisine and music in non-Korean settings. I suppose that because of these facts, I can often relate to the backgrounds of the fans in Lima. When attending K-
pop events in my hometown, I consciously felt an ontological shift within myself, adjusting from being a fan to being predominantly a researcher and ethnomusicology student. However, I was thankful that the fans I contacted were enthusiastic about responding to my messages regardless of my background and purpose of contact.

Summary of chapters

This thesis consists of five chapters: the introduction; a chapter on the virtual fandom; a chapter on the physical fandom; a chapter on the convergence of these two fan worlds; and finally the conclusion, which will discuss future and possible trajectories of the current K-pop fandom.

The chapter on the virtual fan network looks closely at Facebook pages, as well as my online Typeform survey and the responses I received to said survey. I focus especially on a particular Facebook page administrator, Li_At, to see how she constructed her position as an authority figure within the Peruvian fan community, as well as how she chose to be a fan, by assuming this leadership role. In highlighting the virtual side of the fandom, I am also highlighting how a kind of music can circulate locally and with some degree of success, as judged by the continued presence of the fan community around Lima.

In conjunction to this virtual circulation pattern, the chapter on the physical/live fandom focuses on live circulation patterns as manifested through events such as dance festivals, public rehearsals, and K-drama/music video screenings.
Additionally, the subsection on other important physical markers of K-pop fandom – stores, restaurants, etc. – points to the consumerist aspect of this circulation pattern, continuing older ways of circulating music such as through the sale of CDs, posters, and other fan merchandise.

The decision to deal with the virtual and physical fandoms in separate chapters was a theoretical, empirical, and organization one. The fans themselves do not view this distinction; separating them as “virtual” and “physical” fandoms was a decision I made early in my research process. I hope that by talking about them separately I will be able to distinguish their differences before approaching a comparison of how these two kinds of fandoms combine to form the fandom as it presently exists.
CHAPTER 2:  
The Virtual K-pop Community

In the process of doing research for this thesis, many people have asked me how I first heard of the K-pop community in Lima. The answer to this is that without Facebook I would never have discovered this fan-base. In late 2012 I returned to Lima during winter break and noticed on my sidebar “Suggestions” an event titled “K-pop Fest Peru.” Since then there has been an increase in the number of Peruvian K-pop fan pages and groups, or at the very least there has been an increase in my awareness now that I know what to look for and where to find these events.

Though there are many Facebook pages within the Peruvian K-pop network worth discussing, I chose two of these major pages to analyze in this chapter due to their popularity within the network, which I judged by looking at the number of Facebook followers garnered by each page. Additionally, the conversations and exchanges that occur on these pages are what make up this virtual community of Peruvian K-pop fans. Functionally, these pages promote events and create forums for fans to share enthusiasm for K-pop, as well as allowing innumerable networking possibilities that would otherwise be hard to achieve due to the social and geographical boundaries in Lima that create physical margins and logistical difficulties for underage fans.
Facebook Pages: Li_At Entertainment, Hallyu Manyas

In this section I describe two of the major Facebook pages within the virtual K-pop community. These pages are reputable and respected sources in the fandom. The chosen pages are also good examples of how these Facebook pages function within the network of fans though there are many other similar groups at work in the community.

Li_At Entertainment

My primary source for information on K-pop events in Peru is usually the page titled “Li_At Entertainment,” a Facebook page run by the self-named “Li_At.” Li_At is a 24-year-old female student of translation from Lima. On her About page, Li_At writes:

Este espacio es para difusión de información de movida coreana. He creado este espacio para escribir acerca de lo que me gusta, con opiniones personales y un poco de todo. Más por pura diversión, espero les guste ^^

This space is for the diffusion of information related to the “Korean movement.” I created this space to write about what I like, with my personal opinions and a little bit of everything. It's also for pure fun, I hope you enjoy it.

Con respecto a mí, Soy una fan de movida coreana desde hace 5 años, no pienso que sea alienada por mi gusto pues considero que vivimos en un mundo globalizado y que todas las culturas nos pertenecen y debemos saber de todo un poco ^_^

About me: I have been a fan of the "Korean movement" for 5 years. I don't think I should be alienated for my love for this because I think that we live in a globalized world and all cultures belong to us and we should know a little bit of everything.

Me gusta todo lo que es cine, televisión, música, K-pop (pop coreano), comida, moda, etc. Soy organizadora de eventos con más de dos años de
I like anything related to film, television, music, K-pop, cuisine, fashion, etc. I am an event planner with more than 2 years of experience in large-scale events; I've supported some producers with Korean-themed events and I have helped and been interviewed about the Korean movement in Peru and Latin America by TV programs for national TV channels such as Frecuencia Latina, Panamericana Televisión, TV Perú, and international channels such as SBS, MBC, as well as radio shows like Radio San Borja’s “Entre Café y Café.”

In private messages with Li_At she revealed that she first found out about K-pop through her sister, an anime fan who stumbled upon a K-pop music video on the Internet in 2008. Since discovering K-pop, which Li_At describes as “a kind of Korean popular music innovative in elements such as sound, choreography, and visual content,” she has included her appreciation for K-pop in her everyday life in three ways: 1) translating information originally printed in Korean concerning the K-pop industry; 2) planning events to spread awareness of K-pop; and 3) by participating in interviews with local media outlets.

1 Note on translations: Translations of survey responses, Facebook material, and other sources in Spanish to English are my own and included in the main body of the text.
I noticed in my messages with Li_At a tendency to use the word “difundir,” which can mean spread, diffuse, or transmit. Similarly in another major fan page “Hallyu Manyas?” the About section outlines the page’s function as a space to “diffuse” information about the Korean wave/trend. On a global level these pages’ roles may seem insignificant, especially when compared to the industrial power that goes behind promoting the K-pop celebrities, music, and lifestyle. But the South Korean entertainment companies, who until recent years were unaware of the huge K-pop fan base in Latin America, have since started to pay more attention to this section of the world and included Lima on some major groups’ tours, such as that of BIGBANG and SUPERJUNIOR.
Li_At’s page, categorized as an “entertainment website,” provides Spanish updates of celebrity news, promotes upcoming events, and opens up dialogue between fans. One of the most recent prompts by Li_At led to a conversation concerning a divide between “real” Peruvian fans of K-pop as opposed to those who only recently have identified themselves as fans within the Limeñan community. It was through reading the comments in this thread that I realized fans are individual entities first, and the next level above being an individual fan of X group is to be part of a fan club or cover group. Thus despite boasting 9207 likes on Facebook, only a select number of fans participate in these threads on pages like that of Li_At, which made me wonder how much more of the fan community is hidden from public sight, and whether it is even a community or just a body of listeners.

In “Conceptualizing Community: Anthropological Reflections,” Ann Grodzins Gold writes that “community’ evokes a group of people who have something in common and who are actively engaged with one another in a benign fashion” (2005:2). Gold also cites references to Max Weber’s ideas that community implies “a sense of belonging.” These definitions, combined with the medium of the Internet, make up the online or virtual community which I have been describing.

_Hallyu Manyas_

_Hallyu Manyas_ is run as a small nonprofit organization by a team of young Peruvians. “Hallyu manyas” is a phrase that cleverly serves three important purposes. First, it is the name of the informal fan organization founded in Peru in 2011.
Second, “Hallyu Manyas” is the slogan of the titular organization, often asked as a question: “Hallyu manyas?” or simply, “Hanyas?” Its general meaning is: “Hallyu, get it?” or “Hallyu, you know?” Third and most importantly, “Hallyu Manyas,” when uttered between fans, verbally embodies the community of Spanish-speaking fans of Korean popular music. Although Hallyu Manyas’s founders have expressed an idealistic hope for this phrase to be applicable to all Spanish-speaking fans, the slang word “manyas” (meaning in casual terms “Do you understand?” or “Get it?”) stresses the organization’s Peruvian origins and thus primarily refers to the Peruvian fans of Korean culture, communicating a local shared interest in Korean culture.

Beyond creating a virtual space for participation through the medium of Facebook, this core team has organized a number of events in Lima and elsewhere since 2011. This team keeps its subscribers updated on Korean celebrity news and developments within the K-pop industry. In the Hallyu Manyas’ “About” section, the admins convivially describe their page as a space for the diffusion of “all things related to Hallyu.” Although Hallyu Manyas concerns itself primarily with K-pop, the page also promotes the appreciation for Korean dramas, movies, culture, and cuisine. Furthermore, Hallyu Manyas recontextualizes these cultural elements for Peruvian, mainly Lima-based audiences. Hallyu Manyas is subdivided into two sections: local cover bands and local fan clubs. The local fan clubs individually cater to fans of particular artists or K-pop groups. The cover bands are smaller ensemble-type groups that meet with the goal of rehearsing a “cover” version of a K-pop song and the
accompanying dance, usually for performance. These two sections play important roles and form the two primary ways that K-pop fandom is manifested.

_Hallyu Manyas’s_ Facebook page provides fans with a space of virtual participation. In this public forum fans affirm their passion for K-pop – they exchange music and share news regarding musical trends and local tastes for particular K-pop groups. In addition to engendering local community, this Facebook page also serves to keep Peruvian fans connected to a larger global K-pop community.

Thus at the most basic level, the _Hallyu Manyas_ page allows fans to find out about upcoming organization events, concerts, as well as access a database of merchandise stores and Korean restaurants. But the nature of virtual participation goes beyond this distribution of information. Fans are invited to contribute ideas
about future events and are often encouraged to participate in discussions about which K-pop group to invite to Peru. Though fans are not involved in formal administrative duties of the organization they often have an important voice on the website. It is they who keep the organization afloat with their support and participation.

Page updates, with the comment feature, constantly provide outlets for subscriber feedback, an important feature that creates the space for dialogue between event planners and potential attendees. Feedback regarding how events could be improved seem to be especially appreciated as administrators are seen responding to such posts on a timely manner and sometimes alter later events to prevent the same mistakes (i.e. too small venues, not enough seating, etc.) Additionally, the page offers a list of stores carrying K-pop and Hallyu Manyas merchandise, as well as Korean grocery stores and restaurants around Lima. Since its inception, the Hallyu Manyas page shows that the organization itself has become a particularly localized way of keeping up with an entirely different city’s local culture, in this case the capital of South Korea, Seoul.

Two key examples further show how the Hallyu Manyas page works as a virtual space for participation. The first one is a key thread titled “K-pop concerts in Peru: concerns and realities.” This thread launched an extensive discussion regarding the logistic reasons explaining the lack of K-pop concerts in Peru. Among these practicalities was Lima’s lack of appropriate venues for such large-scale concerts. The
venue debate was of particular concern since it was predicted that other South American K-pop fans, in addition to the local Peruvian ones, would likely attend a mainstream K-pop performance. One commenter even wrote, “We don’t have ‘adequate’ venues because for a long time no one – not even God – would come to Peru.”

This discussion thread exemplifies not just the fans’ knowledge of K-pop concert productions but the their knowledge of Lima, its facilities, and their limitations. These limitations are further complicated by the extremely high costs of travel between Lima and Seoul. To temporarily appease fans’ desires to see concerts and other important events, the Hallyu Manyas page has become a hub for Internet links of live streams of concerts: as page admin and author Li_At pointed out, a K-pop fan anywhere in the world can easily access the K-pop world through the Internet, and she encouraged the continuation of this practice while K-pop producers and local fan organizations continued to work out how to bring K-pop to South America. As we will later see through the example of the 2013 festival in Peru, Hallyu Manyas events have also become temporary substitutes for performances by the “real” K-pop bands.

As a second example of virtual participation, a post on useful Korean slang encouraged fans to learn Hangul and gave page subscribers phrases written out in Hangul, Spanish Romanization, and then translated into Spanish. This kind of didactic post highlights how Peruvian fans’ affinity for K-pop has affected their way
of self-expression.

Physical changes in self-expression are also apparent in photos of Hallyu Manyas fan events, where fans are photographed using gestures borrowed from K-pop idols, such as winks and the peace sign, which are not uniquely Korean but are often associated with the female K-pop stars as seen in the music videos. Elements of Koreanness can also be observed on the Hallyu Manyas page, where fans type what is commonly referred to as the ‘shy’ Asian emoticon (^_^) or combine Spanish and Hangul phrases within the same sentence. The ‘shy’ emoticon seems to be the equivalent of the smiley face, as it is often meant to convey happiness or simply create a friendly tone in a wall
These instances of codeswitching reveal important aspects of identity construction among this Spanish-speaking fan community. First, that the local Peruvian teenagers’ love for the sound of Korean music extends to love of the sung language itself. Second, codeswitching shapes a collective sense of fan identity and structures their ways of interacting with each other both in personal and in virtual contexts.

The instances of virtual participation that I have described serve important functions within the Peruvian K-pop fan community. The interactions between members are evidence of a constant flow of communication and exchange of ideas. These ideas range from opinions of new musical developments in South Korea to brainstorm sessions of ways to bring K-pop performances to Peru, making *Hallyu Manyas* a distinctively local fan organization but one with an acute awareness of external events concerning K-pop performance. In addition, persistent efforts are made by the organization to merge the external (outside of Peru) and the internal (Peru itself). More importantly, the consistency of Peruvian fan participation through the Internet means that there is a continued need for all things related to Korean music and culture, thereby ensuring the continuation of *Hallyu Manyas* as a non-profit organization.
Analysis of Typeform survey responses

To reach some of these fans, over the summer of 2014 I made a survey using an online tool called Typeform. I sent the link to this survey to major pages like the ones described in the previous section. In this survey I asked the following questions:

- How long have you been listening to K-pop?
- How did you discover K-pop?
- How would you explain K-pop to a novice listener?
- What other musical genres do you enjoy?
- What are your favorite K-pop groups?
- What specifically do you enjoy about K-pop?
- Do you know of any other K-pop fans in Lima/Peru?
- How do you access K-pop? Via the Internet? YouTube?
- What other parts of Korean culture do you enjoy?
- Do you speak Korean?
- How does your love for K-pop manifest in your everyday life?

I also asked fans to provide basic biographical information such as name, age, occupation, and hometown. Most of the fans who responded were based in Lima, though a few were from the southern city of Arequipa. The participants’ ages ranged from 16-28. Most were female fans. To my surprise, 44% of the survey participants were longtime listeners of contemporary K-pop and were fans for at least 3-5 years.

One of my initial questions asked the participants to describe K-pop to a novice listener. I received a wide range of answers. The most concise answer explained K-pop as “a combination of singing, visual arts, urban dance, and electronic music.” Another fan summarizes the genre as “a new style of pop music that really takes into account the choreography and plot.” Many pointed the obvious trait of “K-pop” as being Korean and a form of popular music. Some fans chose not to describe the
musical characteristics and instead focused on affective qualities. One fan wrote, “I wouldn’t explain it. I would make them listen to the song and watch the video with translations. It could be a romantic song that reaches to your heart or a fun one. Then I would start explaining. That’s what I did with my mother and my cousins.”

Within the answers to my questions I noticed some trends. For example, when asked how they had heard about K-pop, many cited the activity of watching Korean dramas (soap operas). One respondent, Lili, indicates, “I was first watching animes and then my friend urged me to watch ‘doramas’ and I think from then on I started to like K-pop.” (The spelling of the word “drama” as “dorama” appeared many times in my survey responses, and is not a typo.) Dramas were mentioned often in these survey responses. The fans who responded to the survey demonstrate how TV and music have been successfully connected in their minds, no doubt due to the planning of the entertainment industry forces back in South Korea. Some fans seem virtually unable to differentiate the two forms of entertainment from another.

To some, these K-dramas represent a large part of Korean culture. In response to the question “What other aspects of Korean culture do you enjoy?” fan Carolina wrote, “Dramas, the Korean stories (plots) are very different from normal novelas, they have more feelings and not that much evil.” Another fan attributed dramas with containing “nice messages,” and similar sentiments seem to apply to the lyrical content of K-pop music, which is somewhat mysterious as the same fans who had meaningful interpretations of either music or drama professed little or no knowledge
of the Korean language. Instead, “meaning” in the music was associated to how one felt during the experience of listening to K-pop. One fan even clarified that “… despite not being able to understand it, [K-pop] makes you feel a lot.”

In terms of how these fans discovered K-pop, some of them seem to have experienced random or chance encounters with the genre. One fan described seeing a K-pop music video for the first time playing on a TV set as an appliance store demo. Another common thread: introductions by family members or close friends. Additionally, some fans just happened to stumble upon K-pop through explorations on sites such as YouTube. These responses made it difficult to discern any patterns in explanations for the force behind K-pop transmission to South America and around Peru, though it is clear that the Internet is a primary contributing factor and its absence would probably make it impossible for Peruvian listeners to be exposed to the music in the first place. A survey participant who described herself as well-connected in the network explicitly credited the Internet and Facebook as communication tools, saying, “Social networks help a lot. Before them it wasn’t as easy to find someone else who was also interested in K-pop.”

As a K-pop fan myself I have often been unable to describe in words what I enjoyed about K-pop. This was another of my survey questions, and I found that other fans in Lima exhibited similar difficulties in describing precisely why they enjoyed the music. One survey participant wrote, “[What I enjoy is] The music itself, the lyrics … what also captivates me is the synchronized choreography and
preparation of the groups, the music is fresh and personally I think they are complete artists and given this we use them as role models in order to know what we really want to be in life.” And, as with the question of the meaning in K-pop, some fans simply attributed enjoyment to how they felt during the act of listening to the music or watching a music video: excitement, happiness, sadness, etc.

Many fans also pointed out the desire to feel connected to a particular singer or celebrity as a reason for engaging in local fan activities as well as multiple listenings or viewings of a music video. My findings in this matter thus far led me to a temporary conclusion that why an individual fan enjoyed K-pop depended not only on subjective tastes but specifically on what they were trying to get out of the experience of listening to the music, whether it is the enjoyment of visual aesthetics or dance choreography, or the interpretation of some kind of moralistic “message” contained in a song or video. How they obtained this kind of message seems to depend either on translations of lyrics or even just through visual understanding of what is happening in a given music video, as fans who mention these “messages” in songs also professed a lack of fluency in Korean.

However, one question in the survey and its resulting answers made me rethink this reasoning. I asked participants about other musical genres they enjoyed and received many diverse answers. Other kinds of Asian popular music were named, as well as local styles such as cumbia or reggaeton. The absence of a pattern led me back to this idea of randomness and the K-pop phenomenon: perhaps why it became
popular cannot be explicated after all and will soon fade from global attention once a new style of music or trend comes into place. Although I did not delve further with this line of questioning concerning enjoyment of other kinds of music, reading these answers often caused me to reconsider the analytical framework which I have been applying to this study of the Peruvian fandom, where I see this mass subscription to a non-Western music as special, extraordinary. In today’s world fueled by social media, YouTube, and fast-paced turnovers for what could be “popular,” why couldn’t something like K-pop gain such a reception as it does in present-day Peru?

To complete my basic idea of each fan’s engagement with the music, I asked how each person incorporated the love for K-pop into their everyday life, if at all. Unsurprisingly this entailed various listens to the music in the car, after school, with friends, etc. More active fans helped with the organization of events and some, such as Mauricio Davila and the user Li_At, were known for their consistent attendance and major and minor local gatherings. Another fan wrote, “I don’t just listen to it in the mornings before school and in the afternoons, but also [engage with it] by learning the choreographies and lyrics, and making covers of songs and dances.”

The Typeform surveys were more personal than I had expected though they did not render as profound an effect as they might have had the questions been asked in personal interviews. However, that the fans took the time to write out such detailed responses, in a digital age where abbreviations and the demand for everything to happen instantaneously can create aloofness and apathy, showed a dedication to K-
pop I found repeatedly in observations both online and in the real world. And since so many fans relied on the Internet, it made sense for me to conduct some of these interactions in their familiar cyber world.

In this chapter I looked at two of the major web sites available to Peruvian K-pop fans. I also analyzed and drew out recurring trends embedded in the survey responses I obtained last year. The virtual K-pop fandom here in Lima exists primarily on social media networks, namely Facebook. Given the proven efficiency Facebook has provided to this network, I would guess that the fan community’s continued existence would rely on the ability for these Facebook pages to maintain local and national interest in local events, as well as fans’ willingness to remain engaged and active in a virtual space where it becomes easy to remain a silent spectator or even to completely disengage from an Internet-based community. I found it useful and important to look at this aspect of the fandom because it has served me and clearly the fans as an efficient tool that keeps one attuned to the various happenings in the community and in the area.
CHAPTER 3:
The Physical K-pop Community

This chapter looks at the physical manifestations of the Peruvian K-pop fandom: events such as dance competitions, festivals, public screenings, and public rehearsals; as well as locations around Lima that point to the existence of the fandom. As much as this fandom’s existence depends upon the Internet, what happens away from the Internet is also important in an exploration of Peruvian K-pop fandom. Virtual expressions of fandom are complemented by acts of participation, or physical manifestations of fandom.

*K-Pop Fest 2013*

Two years ago, I attended K-Pop Fest 2013, organized by Hallyu Manyas. The event took place during the summer, in mid-January, at a public high school. The school courtyard featured a stage at the far end from the entrance, a standing area for audience members, while the periphery was lined with collapsible kiosks and stands. Demographically, audience members were mostly local teenagers. As I approached the square, I could see that these temporary stalls helped define the square to festival guests. Each stall had a theme and brought to life the subsections on the Hallyu Manyas page, specific local fan clubs that identified themselves by K-pop group. For example, one or two clubs supported mainstream groups such as 2NE1, Girls’ Generation, and BIGBANG. A small number of stalls had a didactic purpose: one
advertised a sign saying “Learn Korean!” and another stall showcased Korean cuisine and where to find it in Lima.

At the time of my arrival, a cover dance group was finishing their set on the stage. This group performed one of the then-popular singles of 2012, but I was not sure whether the performing group was performing its own choreography or imitating the original dance that accompanied the song. However, when the next dance group took the stage and 2NE1’s “I AM THE BEST” played of the sound system, I immediately recognized the dance as an exact performance of the original M/V. The group members (4 girls – as there are 4 in the original 2NE1) perfectly mirrored what I remembered from the music video. It was almost as if 2NE1 were on the stage before me, except for the lack of high tech visual effects, elaborate sets, and glamorous wardrobe.

These kinds of sets continued throughout the afternoon, and the festival lineup was punctuated with occasional raffles giving away Hallyu Manyas merchandise: T-shirts, CDs, posters, and other fan paraphernalia. Organization administrators used their stage time to plug the Facebook page and encourage the audience to continue their active online presence. A select number of performers featured original choreography. Additionally, some groups lip-synced the lyrics while others sang the songs in Korean. Cover groups that were not dressed like the original K-pop idols wore identical shirts emblazoned with their group name.

The performances that I observed at K-Pop Fest 2013 are what Thomas Turino
describes in his book *Music as Social Life* as “sequential participatory music” (2008:48). Sequential participatory music occurs in situations where “everyone takes a turn alone or smaller groups perform for the other people in the event” (2008:48). Turino’s clearest example of sequential participatory music is karaoke. K-Pop Fest 2013, like karaoke, provided a participatory space for its interlocutors to “imagine and project themselves as presentational performers, against the background of prerecorded music” (2008:49). Turino stresses that karaoke is a form of play, and I saw elements of this “play” at the festival in the form of dance cover competitions, and the festival also became a suitable space for fans to meet up and share their love for K-pop songs using live performance.

K-Pop Fest 2013 exemplifies a number of the patterns identified in Turino’s definition of participatory performance. I am referring namely to the emphasis on the participants themselves and their role in a performance event. Performance at K-Pop Fest focuses on “the types of activity, artistic roles, values, goals, and people involved in specific instances of music making and dance” (2008:27). As an organization, *Hallyu Manyas* further emphasizes the nature of participatory performance that transpired at the 2013 festival by maintaining the all-important “ceiling of challenges:” an array of activities that ensure active levels of engagement at the event from people who participate for different reasons. K-pop fans that want to demonstrate their dance skills can sign up to perform. K-pop fans that want to see performances outside of YouTube show up to the festival to enjoy the “live” aspect of
the dance cover competitions. In addition to these forms of physical participation, fans can visit the surrounding booths to further engage with other members of the fan community. As Turino points out, “The etiquette and quality of sociality is granted priority over the quality of the sound [or dance, in this case] per se … Participatory music and dance is more about the social relations being realized through the performance than about producing art” (2008:35). In other words, having a good time is at the top of the festival agenda for Hallyu Manyas. Physical opportunities for bonding as a fan community present themselves at such a festival. Despite the undeniable integrity of the Facebook page itself, online interactions cannot achieve the empowering sense of connection in a large group setting.

While Turino’s model for participatory performance aptly describes the social functions of performance at K-pop Fest 2013, Peruvian K-pop fandom and the festival itself exhibit a key divergence from Turino’s definition of participatory performance. Turino wrote that participatory performance has no artist-audience distinction and that this distinction is solely applicable to presentational performances. However, it was very clear to me during the festival that there was a divisive line between cover group and audience even though these performances were clearly by amateurs and for amateurs. This line between artist and audience was the soundstage, the icon for formal performance. Within Turino’s dichotomy of participatory and presentational performances, Peruvian K-pop fans have found their own way of combining the two in one performance event. By encouraging
performances by cover groups, the annual *Hallyu Manyas* festival has become a showcase of performed participation.

These showcases and performances at K-Pop Fest are products of efficient local organization. Performing subgroups of *Hallyu Manyas* meet weekly at public parks for weekend dance rehearsals. Being a part of the annual festival is a level of distinction that makes a group stand out from others, and participating groups are later judged through online polls, where page subscribers can vote for their favorite performers. This internal recognition within the fan organization is important because, Turino observed, it points to performative values determined by the community and not by external performative ideals. These values are based once again on the social aspect of music and a successful performance is defined as one that draws enthusiastic engagement from audience members. The cultivation of enthusiastic engagement is key as it enables organizations like *Hallyu Manyas* to continue to foment interest in Korean culture.

*Korean Dance 3rd Stage*

In the summer of 2014, I attended an all-day dance competition in Lima. As we sped down the Via Expresa, my friends pointed out the huge park where that day’s event was to take place. Despite the fact that I’d lived in Peru for most of my childhood and throughout my high school years, I seldom came to this part of the city: downtown Lima. The area is known for housing many important historic and government buildings. I realized that beyond these basic details I actually knew very
little about this central area of the capital city.

We heard the event attendees before we saw them. Emerging from the parking lot, all we had to do was direct ourselves towards the source of the loud noise. A long line had formed in front of the entrance to the amphitheater. We purchased three tickets: they were priced cheaply: for S/. 20, you were given a seat in the upper levels, where many barras congregated and rehearsed. For an extra S/. 5, you got a seat in the lower levels. (In 2015, S/. 20 = ~ US$6.40.)

When we arrived to the venue, it was already 1:30pm. The event was scheduled to start at 1pm, though the Facebook event suggested an earlier start of 11am that would permit sufficient time for all performers to have an equal amount of stage time. Things eventually got underway around 2:30pm. None of the participants seemed remotely surprised: Limeñan events are infamously known to operate on “Peruvian time,” meaning they inevitably started much later than advertised, giving new definition to the idea of being “fashionably late.”

Food vendors walked up and down the stairs selling thickly frosted chocolate cake, triple sandwiches, chorizo tucked into hamburger buns, popcorn, American and Peruvian soft drinks, Korean ramen, mochi, and a variety of Korean soft drinks. Two boys in front of me split an enormous bowl of instant noodles and stopped a lady for a drink, only to send her away loudly, proclaiming, “4 soles for a Coke?! No way.”

Most of the attendees seemed to be in their late teens, some in their early twenties, and an assortment of parents chaperoning the few numbers of younger kids.
One little girl stopped in front of me in the ticket line and openly stared at our group until her mother pulled her away. This was one of the moments where we realized we were the only Asians in the crowd, apart from two older Korean gentlemen who were owners of the food service. Throughout the rest of the day, side glances at us occurred often, which made it somewhat uncomfortable and hard for me as an observer, much less as a participant. My friends also commented, more than once, that they never imagined such a fan following for K-pop in Lima, much less what was about to occur before our eyes.

![Figure 4 -- Korean Dance Third Stage 2014](image)

dance clothing: low slung jeans, sunglasses, baggy shirts, etc. The judges were later introduced and lauded for their expertise in the area of hiphop dance, with some
having experience in K-pop dance.

When the MCs of the day finally emerged, within five minutes onstage they had revealed their incompetence as hosts and their clear lack of knowledge of what was going on. They clumsily introduced the judges and explained the structure of the event: two dance groups would compete against each other and after each round, the panel of judges would determine a winner and then the winning group would go on to compete with another winning group from a different round. At this point my friend wondered, “But what is their criteria for a winning team? Talent?” The implication was that it would seem difficult to compress talent into a checkbox list of criteria. Eventually, for us as audience members, “winners” were those who seemed to have great stage presence and loud, exaggerated moves, which were necessary for the large stage. We found that boy groups tended to outshine the girls as their moves were “big,” and the girls seemed too timid of the stage and occupied mere fractions of it at a time.

In addition to dance, duos sang in Korean or performed without audio playback accompaniment. In anticipation of the first performance, the event host’s lack of organization was immediately brought to our attention when an unseen voice announced that they were still waiting to download the necessary songs from the Internet. Then, repeatedly throughout the day, things would be restarted, people yelled at the sound booth staff, and another group’s introductory video clips were played for the wrong group.
Needless to say, the organization of the event was lacking, and a huge hindrance to the enjoyment of said event, both for our group and for the other attendees. I say that in retrospection not in judgment, but in frustration. This frustration was later echoed on the event’s Facebook page, which became host to a number of complaints, expression of opinions, criticisms, and external post-mortems.

However, whenever the dance groups took the stage, or whenever the singing began, I could really see the audience’s investment in K-pop in their rapt faces, clapping, and responses to the performers. It was a level of audience-performer support that I rarely observed as these were amateur performers, but even the amateur status didn’t deprive them from the behavior and support shown to the big celebrities. Amateurism was evident in so many aspects of the events, including the costuming, the MCs outrageously inappropriate behavior (catcalling or flirting with underage performers), and the general quality of production. Costumes closely imitated the short skirts, cropped tops, big blazers popular in actual K-pop videos. The teen performers’ hairstyles were dyed to simulate Korean colorings of light brown with highlights, cropped bangs, etc.
The ensuing hours were a succession of mind-numbing dance numbers, punctuated by occasional raffles for an upcoming K-pop concert by celebrity group TEEN TOP. Everything was sung or lip-synced in Korean, though the MCs spoke to the audience in Spanish. At one point I approached a staff member and asked to be brought backstage, and I was surprised when she agreed though we soon realized that even though I gained access to the behind the scenes chaos, it was precisely that: chaos. I only managed to write down the name of a performing group before they all rushed on stage. Around me, group members were either frenetically rehearsing or yelling at each other for their mistakes. Within a group, members were encouraging
and affectionate, while to rival groups they would subtly scout out their competition. I was introduced to the leader of one such group, who immediately gathered the rest of her performance group to speak to me as a unified entity.

The staff member who herded me back stage told me that around 1500–2000 people were in the audience and that her company, B4L Producciones, had been organizing the event for months. B4L Producciones is an event planning organization that seeks to “promote urban arts,” and has started preparations for the 4th Korean Dance event.

Right before we left, the MCs were trying (and failing) to get the barras part of the day started, where fan clubs that had prepared cheerleading-like lyrics and pompom moves froze, one by one, when cameras zoomed in on them. Some fan clubs were actually too preoccupied with how their faces looked onscreen to remember their own routine, which frustrated both audience and MC to no end. The sound booth staff also played the wrong cues again for the barras, at which point my friends and I finally decided to leave the venue before it was too dangerous for us to be in the downtown area after dark.

The two events I described above represent one of the main kinds of events – dance festivals - that happen throughout the year in Lima. Hallyu Manyas has had fewer events in the last year and a half and fans have already begun to adopt nostalgic tones when talking about events organized by HM. The dance festival I attended was the third in a yearly series and not as well-organized though it was well attended. The
quality of the little event paraphernalia — entrance tickets, flyers, merchandise — clearly went through improvements, as indicated by the latest event I attended.

Both K-Pop Fest and Korean Dance 3rd Stage draw attention to this “cover culture” that has emerged in the Peruvian K-pop fandom. In George Plasketes’s 1992 article “Like a Version: Cover Songs and the Tribute Trend in Popular Music,” he discusses cover songs in the context of one recorded artist “covering” the work of another. Plasketes specifically defines the act of covering as “one artist recording or performing another composer’s song” (1992:2). This type of “cover” differs from the ones I observed and described as the Peruvian K-pop covers involve amateur performers covering pieces by known celebrities. Where Plasketes’s work in the early nineties focuses on the act of covering as a way that the pop music industry recycled material to be sold to consumers, the kind of cover culture examined in here is not for profit, and more for the benefit of the fan and/or amateur performer. Cover performances also tend to add or change something about the original work to be covered, for example the choice to do an acoustic performance of a pop song. None of this seems to happen in the way Limeñan dance groups perform K-pop songs. The general pattern is one of direct imitation. The closer one’s performance resembled the original, the better. And as shown in some of the Typeform survey responses, performing a cover of a K-pop song led some fans to feel “closer” to the idols, while others enjoyed the socializing aspect of rehearsals. Again, these reasons differentiate this new kind of cover culture as exhibited by the Peruvian K-pop fandom.
Bringing a beloved and oft-replayed K-pop music video to life through these cover performances is the closest thing that resembles a live performance by the actual K-pop celebrities, which until recent years was lacking in Lima and even other South American countries. As a K-pop fan myself, watching the amateur performances became adrenaline-filled experiences even despite the persistent feeling that what I was seeing would always be just an approximation of “the real thing.” Having attended these events and witnessed for myself the popularity of these cover competitions and festivals, it is apparent that the attendees were there in camaraderie and solidarity as K-pop fans residing in the same city supporting their fellow fans, and thus were less focused on judging the performance quality.

**Screenings and public rehearsals**

In addition to competitions and festivals, public screenings around Lima take place frequently and involve large projections of selected K-dramas or playlists of K-pop music videos. These meet-ups provide regular opportunities for new and old fans to gather and enjoy the activity of watching the music videos.

The most recent screening I visited took place on New Year’s Eve in 2014, at a newly opened “K-pop Cafe.” The sparsely furnished space consisted of tables along two walls, and a small ordering station at the back of the room. The event, planned by Li_At, was advertised as a 18+ party and admission included a small glass of soju, a popular Korean rice liquor. The room was packed though there was a large empty space in the middle that seemed to be waiting to be filled by dancing attendees. At
the front of the room, a large high definition TV screen played different K-pop videos. Fans sat in small groups at different tables and there was little interaction between different groups, giving the entire screening a strange feeling. Many fans were not even paying attention to the screened video and instead focused on their smartphones.

I was often puzzled by these screenings, as of all the events I observed, these were the most passive activities for a K-pop fan to attend. To me, it brought out the private activity of viewing a music video on YouTube into a public space. Having observed another K-pop fan and friend watch a video and react to it, it was strange to be in a room with stoic audience members watching music videos that in other occasions inspired more enthusiastic reactions (i.e. in between acts at festivals).

Physical Markers of “fandom”

A fourth public and physical manifestation of the K-pop fandom takes the form of rehearsals that occur at a park in the neighborhood of Lince, Parque Ramón Castilla. The park has various concrete surfaces and mini “arenas” made up by stone benches, which form good makeshift performance spaces. Occasionally, weekend practices are open to newcomers who just want to learn some basic moves. The choice to use this neighborhood seems based on the large number of fans who reside in this part of town.
Other public spaces around Lima that demarcate the niche community of the K-pop fandom include a few Korean restaurants, as well as the three sites described below.

**ASSI Market, Av. Aviación, San Borja**

A small supermarket owned by Korean immigrants, opened approximately 10 years ago. Currently, it sells imported Korean food, beverages, and household items. K-dramas play on the TV, and the store is decorated by posters of K-pop groups and advertisements of soju. When it was first opened, the market seemed to target Korean expatriates, though now more Peruvians — and especially teenage K-pop fans — frequent the store. In addition to food items, ASSI stocks household appliances imported from South Korea, such as rice cookers or Korean BBQ portable stoves.
CENTRO COMERCIAL ARENALES, *Av. Arenales 1737, Lince*

A multi-level shopping center in a lower-class, heavily populated area of Lima. Shops sell electronics and clothing. Around 12 percent of the stores in the center are related to Korean culture, but owned by local Peruvians. Small stores sell imported Korean ramen, bubble tea, kimbap (Korean sushi), and Korean candies. Storefronts with seating allow customers to watch projections of Korean dramas. Stores not selling food have leftover fan merchandise from past concerts, pirated copies of K-pop concerts, pirated copies of K-dramas, posters, etc. A couple of stores sold “Korean urban fashion items,” with limited stock of basic hoodies and T-shirts.

![Image of Centro Comercial Arenales](image)

*Figure 7 -- the Arenales mall*

The mall also hosts stores that cater to fans of Japanese culture, known locally as “otakus.” These stores carry stuffed animals, anime models, posters, and DVDs.
Bigger storefronts were cyber cafes that allowed customers to play computer games on wide-screen computers with other friends. Other such virtual cafes featured video games such as Rock Band and Guitar Hero. When I visited, the mall had few customers. However, local newspapers describe it as busy and packed on Saturdays and Sundays.

K-POP CAFE & RESTAURANTE, Av. Aviacion 2852

This newer venue is a cafe and bakery, offering a minimalistic menu for lunch and dinner. It seems to have become the more viable option for nighttime events. The venue is equipped for karaoke, as well as screenings of K-pop music videos. Like ASSI Market and an older Korean restaurant, No Da Ji, K-POP Cafe is located on the major Av. Aviacion in the neighborhood of San Borja, a district with many restaurants and commercial centers.

These physical “markers” of the presence of Peruvian K-pop fans are mostly for those who belong in the community and know of it through social networks or by
word-of-mouth, although their central locations could facilitate opportunities for initiates to K-pop and Korean culture to encounter them by chance, i.e. just by being in the area and stopping in to one of these places. However, as with the large-scale festivals and events, in most cases one must definitively know of the existence of such places in a city as big as Lima in order to visit it. For places like the Arenales mall, the little stores serve intentional purposes and present ways for fans to incorporate their love for K-pop into their everyday life beyond listening to a song in the privacy of their own home.

In this chapter I considered fan activity and fan space in a different, non-virtual context. In the first section I described two events I attended in order to provide a snapshot of what a large-scale K-pop event entails. I then listed some public spaces that foment K-pop fan activities. Activities in this physical domain are significantly more active and contribute to the creation of a tight-knit fandom. Additionally, the making of new spaces, such as the opening of the new K-pop cafe and the continued use of Parque Ramón Castilla, are ways current fans ensure the sustainability of their subscription to a type of music that prior to the existence of such places could not flourish or maintain a following. Fans in rural areas of Peru, and especially in the south, have followed their counterparts in the capital by arranging similar gatherings, structuring particular ways of belonging as a Peruvian K-pop fan.
CHAPTER 4:
The convergences of the two sides of the fandom

Having discussed the two main manifestations of the Peruvian K-pop fandom, I now consider how these two parts of the fandom converge, as well as some of the similarities and differences that exist between the two sides. The most obvious distinction between the two lies in its form of existence, that is to say that the “physical” fandom resides in the real world while the “virtual” takes place in a humanly constructed space. Perhaps another way of distinguishing the two is that the physical fandom can rely on sensorial experiences, i.e. activities such as performing a dance cover or attending a live festival.

The choice to create a distinction between virtual and physical enabled me to better understand ways different K-pop fans could choose to participate in the fan-created, local community. Fans who did not have much time to dedicate themselves to planning, and sometimes even running the network, such as the administrator Li_At, could access the virtual side of the fandom through Facebook and/or YouTube. Other fans such as Mauricio Avila may not “run” the network as Li_At does but can assume a voice of authority both online and at public events. Limeñan fans are thus presented with choices regarding the level of engagement they want to have with community of local K-pop fans.

Though I did not cover this aspect, there are also K-pop fans both in Peru and elsewhere who may not elect to attend regular events nor do they make an effort to
follow the fandom via the Internet: broad definitions for the word “fan,” which could simply refer to being enthusiastic for something or someone, means that there can be a lot of flexibility when an individual makes decisions on how they may want to express their identities as a fan.

For the case of the Limeñan K-poppers, it is not just through the Internet and through these physical events that they create identities as specifically Peruvian K-pop fans; in the process, they are also structuring ways of belonging in the fandom as well as ways of continuously living as a K-pop fan throughout everyday life. This was also seen through the ways some K-pop fans in Lima become regular visitors of places like Parque Ramón Castilla or the Arenales mall.

Creating these categories of virtual versus physical fan behavior leads to a holistic view of the entire fandom at work. In my attempts to look at the two main components of the fandom I found three main ways that virtual and physical realms converge: first, the virtual network, e.g. Facebook, provides a channel of communication that facilitates networking, the acquisition of information, and the planning and execution of local events. The second kind of convergence bridges passive consumption of K-pop and active ways of engaging with the music. Fans who elect to be part of a cover group transition from watching a music video for purposes of entertainment to watching the same video, but this time as a source of reference. Finally, the two sides of the fandom form the structural integrity of the community and work in tandem in efforts to maintain the existence of the current fandom. In the
next sections I will discuss these three forms of convergence.

Channels of communication

One of the more obvious ways that the virtual network is useful to the fandom as a whole is that the Internet has found a number of ways for people near and far from one another to communicate and congregate. As I have stated previously, without the Internet, and especially Facebook and YouTube, it is hard to picture K-pop even being a presence in Peru. In one of the survey responses, one participant’s answer stood out to me because she indicated that she had no awareness of other K-pop fans in her part of Peru. In the same survey another respondent openly observed that without the Internet it would have been much harder to find other fans in the area.

Given that most fans I surveyed and observed seemed to be in their late teenage years (some even younger), I would guess that Facebook becomes one of the few initial ways for one fan to communicate with another. (This is discounting any happenstance meetings at large concerts or similar events.) Facebook also provides geographical distance for the screening of strangers, a necessary consideration for younger fans in Lima. I also noticed that Facebook became a useful tool for fans to arrange meet-ups before going to a part of Lima that one would find risky to visit if on their own.

Because of the Internet’s increasing importance in our everyday lives, the existence of the current and physical K-pop fan community in Lima is supported
entirely by the virtual network. As the Hallyu Manyas and Li_At Entertainment pages have highlighted, the Internet and Facebook have become primary ways of disseminating information. Habits we might now take for granted, for example the act of Googling, have provided convenience to fans residing in a space like the city of Lima, who probably just have to type in a search phrase in either Google or Facebook to find out about an upcoming event. It is almost impossible to imagine, as a contemporary of these fans, how else one would stay “in the know” within this community.

I gave the virtual fan world a level of importance in my study of the entire fan community because to some individuals the virtual fan world is the fan community. Interactions and conversations that take place on the Internet make it a community, rather than a group of statistics, numbers that indicate x number of K-pop listeners in a given geographical space.

Furthermore, the ease with which one might choose to be passive on the Internet means that those who do appear to be highly engaged in discussion threads on the Facebook pages, or those who regularly post updates related to local activities, are choosing to participate in the community, making it not entirely a one-sided experience for the fan who primarily engages with K-pop in a Peruvian context through the Internet. I also experienced the negative effects of Net passivity, when a number of fans were unresponsive to messages informing them of the survey or requesting in-person meetings. The existence of multiple fan pages and local K-pop
resources means that energy is going into making these things available and accessible to followers.

What is even more remarkable is that the South Korean cultural forces that engendered K-pop in the first place have little to do with the creation and maintenance of the fandom, short of producing the music and videos that never fail to draw fans to the genre. These production companies, and the celebrities themselves, seem to exist worlds apart and screens away. The virtual way of participating and being a K-pop fan is thus important because it maintains a connection between fan and celebrity.

Despite the best efforts of certain fans and fan clubs, the South Korean entertainment industry has yet to fully prioritize South America as a target market. This disconnect between Peru and K-pop’s origin country is transparently tangible; groups often meet to discuss strategies, and even online discussions (such as the one cited in chapter 2) show that efforts are being made to attract attention from the entertainment companies to bring more K-pop in more ways — specifically concerts and celebrities — to Peru.

Passive and active ways of “consuming” K-pop

A K-pop fan in the virtual and physical contexts adopts either a passive or active manner of consuming the cultural product intended by South Korea to be an exportable aspect of their pop culture. Sitting in front of a computer is a stationary position of reception for the fan, though some have described watching videos as
adrenaline-filled experiences. A different kind of adrenaline is produced during a performance or in the physical activity of dance.

When I talk about “active consumption,” I am talking about how a dance is absorbed by the fan’s individual and physical body through the act of learning a dance and concretizing it in mental and muscle memory. The more passive form of consumption is represented in the act of listening to a song or watching a music video online — reception at one of its most basic forms.

Other forms of virtual and passive consumption take place through the research of events, celebrity trivia, and updates related to the K-pop music industry. Having done example searches myself, this activity can become highly overwhelming as the industry experiences a number of changes in a day, and groundbreaking news for invested K-pop fans, such as the break-up of a popular group, were extremely common in 2014. As a follower of some of these Facebook pages, my own newsfeed became inundated as the fan base struggled to catch up with a rapidly evolving musical world. It occurs to me that this might be intentional on the part of the industrial powers of K-pop, forces that strive to create distinction and exclusivity and elitism: all of which undeniably contribute to the allure of the musical genre.

Limeña fans that go beyond the passive activities of watching countless YouTube videos on repeat seem to have done so due to feelings that just watching a music video was not enough. This leads to the desire for more involvement with the music that they have come to love, whether it involves being part of a cover group,
eating ramen and watching an episode of a K-drama at the Arenales shopping center, and of course attending the concerts of actual celebrities. This seems to be the ultimate goal for the Peruvian fans, but for the time being amateur performances and festivals seem to have staved off the persistent push for more K-pop celebrities to tour Peru and other parts of South America.

The virtual and physical parts of the K-pop fandom thus converge by bridging and creating spaces for these active and passive acts, again with the Internet serving as a channel of communication. Both passive and active modes make up what it means to be a fan of K-pop in Peru.

*The Internet as the physical fandom’s structural foundation*

The first two ways of convergence between the physical and virtual fan realms build up to the third one: where the Internet seems to serve as the Peruvian K-pop fandom’s foundation. The Internet figures into the relationship between media (K-pop) and fandom as the primary medium. In the case of the Peruvian fandom, the Internet also operates as a space in which anybody can create and assume an identity: we see that with Li_At serving as an authority figure and a familiar source. Upon forming a dance cover group, these same groups often end up finding their own fans online and amateur ensembles adopt some level of fame and celebrity, demonstrated especially at events such as Korean Dance 3rd Stage.

The connection between virtual and physical world will remain important for the K-pop fan residing in Peru because the Internet is the primary way through which
a fan can access new music or other media. (This seems to be true for most fans regardless of country of residence.) While I could have focused solely on the physical manifestations of the K-pop fandom in Lima, I also knew that I could not ignore the virtual manifestations as they are also what fuel and feed into fandom as it is performed or enacted in the real world.

For the 2015 K-pop fan, it is impossible to ignore the Internet’s role in structuring the system in which K-pop flourishes. Pages like that of Li_At’s are modeled after larger scale news sites such as AllK-pop.com, with regular posts containing carefully worded, mysterious news updates that create hype and simulate the work of the actual K-pop stars’ publicists. The cycle of mimicry is mirrored in both the physical and virtual fan worlds: pages like Li_At Entertainment and Hallyu Manyas imitate worldwide sites such as AllK-pop, while dance competitions and festivals simulate the real concerts performed by K-pop celebrity groups.

Because K-pop needs to physically travel across great distances, the Internet will remain indispensable in order for fans to continue to “consume” the music, but also for the fandom to continue to exist and develop. The two components of the sphere of K-pop fandom form a symbiotic relationship with one another.

In this chapter I discussed the ways the two main forms of fandom converge and work together. The three convergences center on how Peruvian K-pop fans on the Internet structure their own physical world, and vice versa. First, the Internet is a channel of communication, linking Peru and South Korea, as well as linking fans
across the same nation. Second, fans are given choices as to how they want to be a K-pop fan in Peru, be it passively as an observer and consumer on the Internet or actively as a cover group performer and festival attendee. The Internet introduces to the K-pop fan a new way of existing, and for the Peruvian K-pop fans, the Internet is an opportunity for them to gain attention on the worldwide map of K-pop fan communities. Finally, I frame the Internet as the physical fandom’s backbone as without it as an origin point the Peruvian fandom would not exist as it currently does. It is useful to look at these convergences because it allows insight into how the Peruvian fandom operates.
Conclusion

“...there has been a lack of investigation of how newly developing cultural consumption practices give consumers unprecedented leverage to affect the global flow of cultural commodities.”

(Hye-Kyung Lee 2011)

This quote was from the 2011 article “Participatory Media Fandom: A case study of anime fan-subbing.” In this article, Hye-Kyung Lee talks about the ramifications of audience members creating subtitles and translations of Japanese anime. Where many studies across multiple disciplines have looked at the production and reception in the world of mass media and pop culture, my study, like that of Hye-Kyung Lee's, looks at the intermediary parties and the consumers of the products (in this case, music) that have done so well across various markets.

In this thesis I have looked at the fundamental parts of a growing community that many did not anticipate. In the last two years, in response to the question, “What are you researching?” many have reacted with varying degrees of surprise and disbelief when I say I am looking at the K-pop fandom in Lima. Eventually and through engaging superficially with some fans, I began to move away from seeing the fandom as something surprising or even “out-of-place.” If K-pop had found overwhelmingly positive reception in other parts of the world, why couldn’t it achieve the same effect in Peru?

Though I could not do so for this project, I would have liked to explore why non-fans were astonished by the existence of a K-pop fandom in Peru. Some fans I surveyed equated Korean popular music to the Korean culture and even Korea as a whole, but
many times I found myself asking what, if anything, K-pop represents of its origin country and where “meaning” lies within this music. In my review of the scholarly literature on K-pop, I found that finding meaning or significance – “why is this relevant?” – could mean looking at the listeners of a kind of music, and in this case it was not optional. The fans in this case were indispensable to a study of this community built around a musical genre.

Beyond looking at the listeners of K-pop, i.e. the fans, I wanted to focus on the experience of said fans. In Tia DeNora’s *Music in Everyday Life*, she writes: “At the level of the listening experience, music seems imbued with affect while, at the level of analysis, it seems perpetually capable of eluding attempts to specify just what kind of meaning music holds and just how it will affect its hearers” (DeNora 21). Since my survey responses were not as effective in depicting individual experiences and the resulting affects, this quote resonated with some of my frustrations in the process of finding “meaning” amongst the experiences of the Peruvian K-pop fans.

I approached my project by looking at this community by organizing it by the two points of entry into the fandom: virtual and physical portals that one must know how to find beforehand, unless you happened to stumble upon one or the other by chance. I would like to reiterate the fact that these virtual and physical worlds are derived from my observations and serve as my tool to better understanding the fandom; the members of the community did not intentionally make these distinctions. By breaking it down into these two levels, it gave me some sense of a reality that comprises these two ways of living for current K-pop fans: online and offline, away from the Internet.
These two fundamental sides of the fandom thus make up the main body of my thesis. The virtual nature and online manifestations of fandom are addressed in the second chapter while aspects of the physical fandom are discussed in the third chapter. Finally, I put these two sides together and analyze their convergences in the fourth chapter.

In the second chapter, I wanted to highlight the efficiency that characterizes this fandom, which I think is the result of individual efforts as well as the Internet as medium. I found studying the Internet and especially Facebook an interesting intellectual exercise as I came to discover how Facebook has conditioned its users, in this case the K-pop fans, to know how to use it systematically and to achieve their goals. By now most Facebook event pages in the Limeñan fan community follow a fan-designed format and one which is unique to the Peruvian fans both because of colloquial language and their way of organizing information. I also used this chapter to bring in what I was able to find out from the fans and through the Internet. The survey responses I analyzed and used in this chapter were highly useful to me and helped me begin to map the fans across Lima.

In the third chapter I focused on how fandom is brought to life and beyond the computer screen. I gave this aspect of the fandom the makeshift category of “physical fandom” because the word “physical” distinguished it from “virtual” in the sense that the former involved our senses and physical bodies being present at an event, as opposed to a digital presence on the Internet. I described events I attended as well as physical locations throughout the city that pointed to K-pop’s existence and popularity in Lima. The primarily web-based fandom has made minor changes to the general and ever-changing, cosmopolitan landscape of Lima by encouraging and even demanding physical venues
where they may gather to celebrate their love for this music, whether through the activities of public screenings, dance competitions, or public weekend rehearsals.

To connect the two sides, I looked at how they overlapped in the final chapter and how these convergences functioned to the maintenance of the fandom. This was useful though it really showed how my understanding of the fandom is that it seems to overtly depend on the Internet and what services Facebook is able to provide to the fandom. This was also because my own access to the Peruvian fandom was through the Internet; I have no deeper understanding how another individual, i.e. someone who belongs in a cover group, organizes his or her orientation to said fandom. For me, my first step is to usually check one of the Facebook pages like that of Li_At or Hallyu Manyas. For someone who belongs in a fan club or cover group, the alternative to this could be checking in with a fellow member or within smaller social circles within the fan community.

Currently, Peruvian K-pop fans pride themselves on being the most dedicated fans, though Li_At has previously written a post on whether Peruvian fans take the task of being a fan too far, in a note titled “Fans Peruanas, ¿las nuevas sasaengs fans?” (“Peruvian fans, the new sasaeng fans?”) “Sasaeng” fans are known within the global K-pop fandom as fans who often invade the privacies of celebrities or demonstrate an “excessive” obsession to all things Hallyu (Wikipedia). The context for this post comes from remarks and reactions from neighboring South American K-pop fandoms, who note that Peruvian fans often behave outrageously at airport stakeouts of K-pop celebrity arrivals as one example of “saesang” behavior. In the same post, Li_At brings to light how newer and younger fans have focused on superficial reasons such as physical beauty, and
encourages new fans to pay attention to the music and dance. Such posts and the resulting discussions demonstrate how some members of this community are conscientious of their continental reputation and want to give a good image back to the K-pop corporate figures in an effort to bring more celebrities to Latin America.

A similar post asked whether the K-pop movement was coming to an end in Peru, which caused me to feel panic as I had not yet finished my fieldwork then. This post led me to consider the fandom’s ultimate sustainability (as well as the overall sustainability of the genre: how much longer will K-pop remain this popular?). Despite individual branches of the Peruvian fandom showing considerable effort to keep and foment interest in K-pop, plan events, etc., poor attendance, infrastructural barriers both of the city and of the fandom, as well as other hurdles keep the fandom at present as a small niche community. Additionally, I feel that there should be more effort on the part of the South Korean entertainment agencies to direct their attention to the needs of the fans in Latin America in order for the fandom to grow and not come to a standstill. And as for the genre itself, K-pop can be considered a micro-example of a musical genre that responds to the transnationalism that develops in conjunction with migratory movements and national economic success. But while this facet of transnationalism seems to have produced trendy pop music and a successful industry, I am not sure it guarantees any longevity, because not even the industrial masterminds of K-pop can control their listeners and potential changing musical tastes.

I noticed that Li_At often called K-pop a “movement,” and if this term is applicable to the current K-pop scene, it seems logical to conclude that this movement must eventually end, either because interest dies out or because momentum behind event-
planning also begins to decrease. I also wonder whether young fans who eventually grow up will also grow out of the habit of listening and liking K-pop, bringing me to the question as to whether the K-pop fandom is predominantly a form of “youth phenomenon” or “youth culture.”

To my knowledge, the global K-pop craze is predominantly what could be called a “youth phenomenon” in that it features and blatantly prefers young celebrities, and targets young teenagers and adults. However, this does not mean that there are not fans above the age of 25, which in the industry they consider “old” for a performer. At a BIGBANG concert in Newark, NJ, the fans I saw there represented different age groups: in my section, the oldest couple were in their late 30s, which I interpreted to mean that like other musical genres, there is no way of predicting who might appreciate this music and/or how old they might be.

In the case of the Peruvian fandom, my research identified that the main demographics for the fan community comprised fans (mostly female in my fieldwork experiences) between the early teen years to the early twenties. While I do not think that this is “youth music,” in the sense that youth music is to only be enjoyed by youths/teens, I do think that the energies and efforts of these youths are what make up the backbone for the Peruvian fandom, therefore to this extent the K-pop scene in Peru is a youth phenomenon for the youth and empowered by the youth in Lima and other regions of the country.

Some bigger questions I would also have liked to explore in this project come down to the mystery that seems to constantly plague journalists, economists, sociologists, and other minds. Why K-pop? In this case, why Peru? This was an unwieldy investigative
question to include in my research process. In many cases I would hit dead ends with responses like “It’s catchy.” A part of me did not want to over analyze the elements of catchy music, the same part which wanted to credit K-pop’s popularity to the fact that the music just happened to appear and be circulated at the right time in history. Another part of me desperately wanted to know the elements that gave way to this reportedly formulaic music (termed as such by reporters, bloggers, and music journalists), and why it appealed to so many people, and how the South Korean music industry knew how to play this game.

DeNora’s *Music in Everyday Life* again provided me with some answers to the questions I outline in the previous paragraph:

...no music will reliably move all listeners. But for particular listeners and perhaps types of listeners, certain musical figures, devices, genres, forms or works may serve as triggers or latches that draw music’s recipients into the process of entrainment and hence into particular modes of agency (ibid. 161).

I appreciated DeNora’s way of framing particular attractions exhibited by groups of people to a particular kind of music. In this case, it is K-pop, and in the case of Peru, these “particular modes of agency” are especially drawn out in the virtual and live social behaviors exhibited by the Peruvian fans. There is no entity demanding that these fan clubs be established and dance events be planned; this hub of fan activity is purely driven by the fans, who for inexplicable reasons draws them into such devotion to the music and its surrounding culture.

Having thought about the question as to why so many people are attracted to this kind of music, there were many moments where I also attempted to answer the question on my own, since I was a fan of K-pop long before I was a researcher of it. I found that
the frustrations I experienced with certain answers from survey respondents I experienced with myself: I have no way of pinpointing precisely why I enjoy listening to K-pop – I just do. I jokingly have grumbled about hearing the answer “[K-pop] is catchy!” and feeling as though it was a bit inadequate for the purposes of my study, yet that seems to be the only way to describe the experience of listening to K-pop to someone who is perhaps unfamiliar with the genre. In fact, I would go as far to say that it is the experience of listening to K-pop itself, and not anything within the music, that which draws so many initiates to the genre and makes them feel as if they are addicted to it.

In focusing on the ways the different forms of fandom—either the cyber or physical world—I wanted to further piece together what it meant to be a specifically Peruvian fan of K-pop, or what it means to be a K-pop fan in Peru. My analyses of the physical and virtual manifestations of fandom can also be viewed as attempts to show how geographical and social contexts shape behavior, or how the means and mediums affected actions. In other words, one had far more flexibility in how to behave at a festival, whether it means participating in the barras or being an observer. This is extremely different to the limitations presented by a cyber space, where words, emoticons, and punctuation make up the gestural tools of a fan. However, as I tried to show in chapter 4, the convergences hopefully demonstrate how the two cooperate with one another and allow the K-pop fan in Peru to choose how best to show their love for K-pop.

A final point which I was unsure of where to place looks to how K-pop stands out against Peruvian history. In Peru, where Chinese and Japanese descendants have lived a history of undisguised racial discrimination, local K-pop fans have subverted the
traditional disparagement of things typically associated with stereotypes of Asian people: physical appearance, everyday attitudes, and even language. In my study, I encountered a number of instances that trace this subversion. The adoption of Korean fashion styles, overt respect for the older brother (“oppa”) figure, acceptance and enthusiasm for Korean cuisine and television, and the aforementioned language acquisition stand out not only within the history of Asian influence in Peru but also within the general history of external influence.

Peruvian fans are identifying themselves within the global K-pop fan community. In April of this year (2015), the South Korean president, Park Geun-hye visited Peru and took the time to visit with 15 K-pop fan club leaders. Li_At covered this visit on her Facebook page and wrote that this significant visit was the Korean government’s way of acknowledging the strong presence of a K-pop fan-base in Peru. It was undoubtedly a highly important and meaningful event to local fans.

Since the founding of these Peruvian organizations, clubs, and cover groups, Peruvian fans have found local and unique ways of specifically identifying themselves as fans of Korean popular music. For Peruvians, this means attending concerts, participating virtually on Facebook pages, consuming as many physical commodities related to Korean culture, and finally by re-enacting K-pop live performance in dance cover competitions and festivals. In the last five years, Peruvian fans have demonstrated a persistent and frenzied need to consume – in as many forms as possible – K-pop, K-dramas, and the portrayals of Korean culture. If they accomplish their central goal of transporting K-pop to Latin America in much larger flows, what will be interesting then is to see how the Korean component of the K-pop industry reacts to this region of their global fandom and
how they can complete the equation of transnational exchange between Peruvian listeners and Korean producers.
References


Appendix – Survey responses

TEMPLATE

NAME – age – Hometown (Occupation)

How long have you been listening to K-pop?

How did you discover K-pop?

How would you explain K-pop to a novice listener?

What other musical genres do you enjoy?

What are your favorite K-pop groups?

What specifically do you enjoy about K-pop?

Do you know of any other K-pop fans in Lima/Peru?

How do you access K-pop? Via the Internet? YouTube?

What other parts of Korean culture do you enjoy?

Do you speak Korean?

How does your love for K-pop manifest in your everyday life?

Contact info:
How long have you been listening to K-pop?
5+ years.

How did you discover K-pop?
By chance. I’ve been watching Asian soap operas (novelas) since I was 8 years old ... my mom bought me some posters for my room but she could only buy what was left in stock and among these posters were some Latin pop and rock stars, but also one of 2NE1, so I looked them up and then began to really get to know K-pop.

How would you explain K-pop to a novice listener?
I would just say: “Listen to it, you won’t regret it.”

What other musical genres do you enjoy?
I like classical music, rock, 70s and 80s pop, and soundtracks.

What are your favorite K-pop groups?
EXO.

What specifically do you enjoy about K-pop?
EVERYTHING. That question is too hard to answer.

Do you know of any other K-pop fans in Lima/Peru?
Of course. Social networks help a lot. Before them it wasn’t as easy to find someone else who was also interested in K-pop.

How do you access K-pop? Via the Internet? YouTube?
Internet more than anything, and also some CDs.

What other parts of Korean culture do you enjoy?
Historical dramas are by far my favorites other than the music, the history is very interesting, it’s not just Joseon, but there were other kingdoms and dynasties before that one.

Do you speak Korean?
I study Korean on my own, I have books and I take a Web seminar (I study tourism, so I like languages), but it is hard if you don’t have anyone to practice with.

How does your love for K-pop manifest in your everyday life?
I listen to it all the time.
Yessica – 18 – Tacna (Engineering student)

How long have you been listening to K-pop?
3-5 years.

How did you discover K-pop?
More than anything, through my friends at school and via TV.

How would you explain K-pop to a novice listener?
A healthy kind of music that has many messages, nothing like reggaeton.

What other musical genres do you enjoy?
Hip hop, pop.

What are your favorite K-pop groups?
SHINee, SHINee, SHINee, BTS, VIXX, Miss A, Red Velvet, MBLAQ, 2PM, BEAST.

What specifically do you enjoy about K-pop?
The dances and the rhythm of the music.

Do you know of any other K-pop fans in Lima/Peru?
Yes, many.

How do you access K-pop? Via the Internet? YouTube?
Internet more than anything, and CDs too.

What other parts of Korean culture do you enjoy?
Cuisine, traditional apparel, history, and of course the dramas.

Do you speak Korean?
No, the most I know are basic words.

How does your love for K-pop manifest in your everyday life?
I listen to it every day, it’s already a part of my life.

Contact info: yesikax100pre13@hotmail.com
How long have you been listening to K-pop?
3-5 years.

How did you discover K-pop?
My friend really liked it and got me into it.

How would you explain K-pop to a novice listener?
Music that makes you happy, that does not follow a certain rhythm, can be slow at times, or a really crazy song, but in any case it has good rhythm and it will stick to you for sure (catchy).

What other musical genres do you enjoy?
Rock <3.

What are your favorite K-pop groups?
BTS, SNSD, BoA.

What specifically do you enjoy about K-pop?
That it gets you as soon as you listen to it, and it also has its own style that draws your attention.

Do you know of any other K-pop fans in Lima/Peru?
Yes.

How do you access K-pop? Via the Internet? YouTube?
Through the internet.

What other parts of Korean culture do you enjoy?
Dramas, the Korean stories (plots) are very different from normal novelas, they have more feelings and not that much evil.

Do you speak Korean?
NO.

How does your love for K-pop manifest in your everyday life?
I listen to it when I’m in the car and I watch MVs.
Yesenia – 20 – Arequipa (College student)

How long have you been listening to K-pop?
5+ years.

How did you discover K-pop?
Through K-dramas.

How would you explain K-pop to a novice listener?
A new style of pop music that really takes into account the choreography and plot.

What other musical genres do you enjoy?
Alternative rock, indie, pop.

What are your favorite K-pop groups?
SS501, MBLAQ, BEAST.

What specifically do you enjoy about K-pop?
Effort and delivery (product?)

Do you know of any other K-pop fans in Lima/Peru?
Many.

How do you access K-pop? Via the Internet? YouTube?
Internet, CDs, DVDs, blogs, websites.

What other parts of Korean culture do you enjoy?
Drama, history.

Do you speak Korean?
Basic Korean, I’m studying.

How does your love for K-pop manifest in your everyday life?
[I listen to it] every day.

Contact info: b_salas_j@hotmail.com
Flavia Valdivia Carpio – 20 – Arequipa (Student)

*How long have you been listening to K-pop?*
More than 5 years.

*How did you discover K-pop?*
Through ‘dorama’ OSTs.

*How would you explain K-pop to a novice listener?*
A Korean musical equivalent of pop, hence the name K-pop.

*What other musical genres do you enjoy?*
Everything.

*What are your favorite K-pop groups?*
Super Junior <3 and f(x)

*What specifically do you enjoy about K-pop?*
The music and the celebrities.

*Do you know of any other K-pop fans in Lima/Peru?*
Yes.

*How do you access K-pop? Via the Internet? YouTube?*
Both.

*What other parts of Korean culture do you enjoy?*
Dramas, which I consider to be a very entertaining form of TV.

*Do you speak Korean?*
Basic.

*How does your love for K-pop manifest in your everyday life?*
Yes, I listen to it every day.
Maribel – 20 – Mollendo (student)

How long have you been listening to K-pop?
3-5 years.

How did you discover K-pop?
watching dramas (novelas)

How would you explain K-pop to a novice listener?
“Hi, you know, K-pop makes me feel good every time that I listen to it. I would totally recommend it.”

What other musical genres do you enjoy?
Rock and ballads.

What are your favorite K-pop groups?
BIGBANG, Nu’est, A DOUBLE AA, MR. MY NAME, Phantom, TEENTOP, Girl Days, Tiny G.

What specifically do you enjoy about K-pop?
The feelings expressed in the songs.

Do you know of any other K-pop fans in Lima/Peru?
Yes, many (f).

How do you access K-pop? Via the Internet? YouTube?
Through the internet.

What other parts of Korean culture do you enjoy?
Cuisine.

Do you speak Korean?
Basic knowledge.

How does your love for K-pop manifest in your everyday life?
I listen to the music everyday and I also watch doramas and movies.

Contact info: mexi186@hotmail.com
Angie – 18 – N/A (College student)

How long have you been listening to K-pop?
5+ years.

How did you discover K-pop?
Internet.

How would you explain K-pop to a novice listener?
K-pop is more than pure dance. K-pop has a unique style and a message in the songs that reach your heart. The music brings me closer to the idols.

What other musical genres do you enjoy?
Ballads, funk, R&B, pop, rock – all in Korean obviously.

What are your favorite K-pop groups?
I have only one and it is SUPERJUNIOR!!

What specifically do you enjoy about K-pop?
Original musical style and wonderful lyrics.

Do you know of any other K-pop fans in Lima/Peru?
Yes, many.

How do you access K-pop? Via the Internet? YouTube?
Mainly through the internet.

What other parts of Korean culture do you enjoy?
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Do you speak Korean?
Yes.

How does your love for K-pop manifest in your everyday life?
It manifests everyday at full volume and everywhere.

Contact info: kim_hye_96@hotmail.com
Apolion – 28 – Peru (Bouncer and graphic designer)

How long have you been listening to K-pop?
More than 5 years.

How did you discover K-pop?
I was surfing the Internet for videos and the first video that made me like K-pop was KARA’s “Secret the World.”

How would you explain K-pop to a novice listener?
“It’s K-pop.”

What other musical genres do you enjoy?
Hindu hiphop. Mostly everything but not ballads.

What are your favorite K-pop groups?
KARA, SNSD, 2NE1, SECRET, RAINBOW, BIGBANG, SUPERJUNIOR, SHINee, MBLAQ, UKISS, INFINITE, GOT7, BTS.

What specifically do you enjoy about K-pop?
The coordination of the dances, the culture, and how polite Koreans are.

Do you know of any other K-pop fans in Lima/Peru?
Yes, many.

How do you access K-pop? Via the Internet? YouTube?
Internet and I buy a lot of CDs.

What other parts of Korean culture do you enjoy?
Culture more than anything.

Do you speak Korean?
No but I learned the meaning of the letters (characters?).

How does your love for K-pop manifest in your everyday life?
It manifests every day at every hour.

Contact info: apolion123@yahoo.es
Lili – 17 – Arequipa (med student)

*How long have you been listening to K-pop?*
1-2 years.

*How did you discover K-pop?*
I was first watching animes and then my friend urged me to watch ‘doramas’ and I think from then on I started to like K-pop.

*How would you explain K-pop to a novice listener?*
Well, I would say that it is another type of music and that it’s beautiful and it makes every molecule of your being vibrate (?).

*What other musical genres do you enjoy?*
Just K-pop, and well, Adele.

*What are your favorite K-pop groups?*
Ranked as follows: TEENTOP; SHINee, UKiss.

*What specifically do you enjoy about K-pop?*
Of the music, I like what it conveys through the lyrics, and as a genre it is different, I think I was a bit tired of many English songs and I came upon this style of music.

*Do you know of any other K-pop fans in Lima/Peru?*
Yes.

*How do you access K-pop? Via the Internet? YouTube?*
Through both.

*What other parts of Korean culture do you enjoy?*
Of course, almost all of the culture but there are small things that I disagree with.

*Do you speak Korean?*
Yes.

*How does your love for K-pop manifest in your everyday life?*
I listen to it every day and additionally I promote it on social networks.

Contact info: lilianita124@hotmail.com
Emma Salinas – 16 – Arequipa (High school student)

*How long have you been listening to K-pop?*
5+ years.

*How did you discover K-pop?*
Seven years ago I accidentally bought a hiphop CD and in it was “Ironic” by Wonder Girls, since then I’ve started following the genre more and began to like it more.

*How would you explain K-pop to a novice listener?*
A genre of music that through rhythms, melodies, and lyrics can transmit a lot, as well as cheer you up.

*What other musical genres do you enjoy?*
Hip hop, salsa, bachata, anime, rock.

*What are your favorite K-pop groups?*
SS501, Wonder Girls, 4Minute, Shinee, UKiss, 2NE1, KARA, EXO-K, Trouble Maker.

*What specifically do you enjoy about K-pop?*
Everything, melody, combination of rhythms, lyrics, singers and songwriters, choreographies.

*Do you know of any other K-pop fans in Lima/Peru?*
I know very few, most of them are girls from my dance group, and others through events and social networks.

*How do you access K-pop? Via the Internet? YouTube?*
Internet but I also use CDs.

*What other parts of Korean culture do you enjoy?*
Mainly dramas, but also the language itself, the customs, and the delicious food.

*Do you speak Korean?*
Basic Korean, which I am learning through online courses and which I supplement with non-subtitled dramas.

*How does your love for K-pop manifest in your everyday life?*
Every day. I don’t just listen to it in the mornings before school and in the afternoons, but also by learning the choreographies and lyrics, and making covers of songs and dances.

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Yire – 16 – Lima / Callao area (student)

How long have you been listening to K-pop?
3-5 years.

How did you discover K-pop?
Through Girls Generation on YouTube.

How would you explain K-pop to a novice listener?
It’s Korean music with good taste and style.

What other musical genres do you enjoy?
English-language music.

What are your favorite K-pop groups?
SHINee, BIGBANG, GG, 2NE1, Girls Day.

What specifically do you enjoy about K-pop?
The dances.

Do you know of any other K-pop fans in Lima/Peru?
Yes.

How do you access K-pop? Via the Internet? YouTube?
Through the internet.

What other parts of Korean culture do you enjoy?
Cuisine, because it’s not something you encounter a lot here.

Do you speak Korean?
Some phrases.

How does your love for K-pop manifest in your everyday life?
I listen to it everyday and practice the dances.

Contact info: yirematzza@hotmail.com
Stephanie – 18 – Arequipa (Student)

How long have you been listening to K-pop?
Some months.

How did you discover K-pop?
A friend introduced me to the music and I liked it.

How would you explain K-pop to a novice listener?
It’s a genre of music that is very different from the rest, it includes diverse and fresh musical styles for a very public (varied?) audience.

What other musical genres do you enjoy?
Electro, music in English, ballads, J-POP, instrumental, rock, indie rock, blues, ballads (?), among others.

What are your favorite K-pop groups?
EXO, SHINee, SS501, CNBLUE, TEEN TOP, 2PM, INFINITE, NU'EST, Girls' Generation, T-ara, f(x), Kara, SISTAR, RED VELVET, among others.

What specifically do you enjoy about K-pop?
The music itself, the lyrics ... what also captivates me is the synchronized choreography and preparation of the groups, the music is fresh and personally I think they are complete artists and given this we use them as role models in order to know what we really want to be in life.

Do you know of any other K-pop fans in Lima/Peru?
I have not had the chance to meet others who share this like for this music but I would love the opportunity.

How do you access K-pop? Via the Internet? YouTube?
Through the internet.

What other parts of Korean culture do you enjoy?
Well, I enjoy doramas, they are very entertaining and nice, and they also have interesting and innovative plots; the food, the traditional food of the country (SK) is something that piques my curiosity and it would make me happy to enjoy [the food].

Do you speak Korean?
No, I think it is a little difficult but I think that I could learn it because I like challenges and I would do it with a lot of patience and persistence.

How does your love for K-pop manifest in your everyday life?
Well, I am not very expressive (introverted?) but in my house I dance, exercise, and I have a life that is more closely linked to movement, because this music attracts you, I listen to it more than other genres that I used to listen to all the time, it’s really very good.

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Joselyn – 14 – (High school student)

How long have you been listening to K-pop?
3-5 years.

How did you discover K-pop?
Through SHINee (my favorite group), and some doramas.

How would you explain K-pop to a novice listener?

What other musical genres do you enjoy?
Everything: pop, ballads, etc.

What are your favorite K-pop groups?
SHINee, INFINITE, TEENTOP, B1A4, MISS A.

What specifically do you enjoy about K-pop?
Everything. K-pop is my life.

Do you know of any other K-pop fans in Lima/Peru?
Yes, at my school and at other events.

How do you access K-pop? Via the Internet? YouTube?
Through the Internet and CDs, but mostly through Internet.

What other parts of Korean culture do you enjoy?
Yes, the dramas.

Do you speak Korean?
No just some words.

How does your love for K-pop manifest in your everyday life?
It manifests through my conversations about it with friends.
Nicole Noa Caceres – 16 – Arequipa (high school student)

How long have you been listening to K-pop?
3-5 years.

How did you discover K-pop?
Through dramas.

How would you explain K-pop to a novice listener?
It’s Korean pop. Beautiful melodies, beautiful lyrics, all very beautiful.

What other musical genres do you enjoy?
Pop.

What are your favorite K-pop groups?
EXO, SHINee.

What specifically do you enjoy about K-pop?
The song lyrics.

Do you know of any other K-pop fans in Lima/Peru?
Yes.

How do you access K-pop? Via the Internet? YouTube?
Internet.

What other parts of Korean culture do you enjoy?
Dramas, because each drama has a nice message.

Do you speak Korean?
A little.

How does your love for K-pop manifest in your everyday life?
I listen to K-pop everyday, at every hour, except when I’m in school.

Contact info: Nicole_winx06@hotmail.com
Jhaneth – 21 – San Juan de Lurigancho, Lima (Nurse)

How long have you been listening to K-pop?
3-5 years.

How did you discover K-pop?
Through dramas.

How would you explain K-pop to a novice listener?
It’s a kind of music that conveys a lot of feeling, the song lyrics make you think/reflect a lot.

What other musical genres do you enjoy?
J-pop, pop, ballads.

What are your favorite K-pop groups?
UKiss, CNBlue, Nu*Est, INFINITE, BIGBANG, JVJ, SUPERJUNIOR, SS501.

What specifically do you enjoy about K-pop?
The choreography and costuming.

Do you know of any other K-pop fans in Lima/Peru?
Yes.

How do you access K-pop? Via the Internet? YouTube?
Internet.

What other parts of Korean culture do you enjoy?
Dramas. They always leave you with a parting message. Their food is quite healthy.

Do you speak Korean?
Sometimes.

How does your love for K-pop manifest in your everyday life?
I listen to it from the moment I wake up until I fall asleep.

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Katherine – ? – Villa Maria del Triunfo (Accounting student)

How long have you been listening to K-pop?
More than 5 years.

How did you discover K-pop?
Through dramas.

How would you explain K-pop to a novice listener?
It’s a genre unlike others... Fun and unique.

What other musical genres do you enjoy?
Romantic music.

What are your favorite K-pop groups?
B1A4, BOYFRIEND, NUEST, CNBLUE, FT ISLAND, SUPERJUNIOR, EXO, SHINee.

What specifically do you enjoy about K-pop?
The music and lyrics.

Do you know of any other K-pop fans in Lima/Peru?
Yes.

How do you access K-pop? Via the Internet? YouTube?
Internet.

What other parts of Korean culture do you enjoy?
Dramas, the culture, the education, I am interested in these because they are different from our culture.

Do you speak Korean?
Just the basic.

How does your love for K-pop manifest in your everyday life?
I have all of the songs on my cellphone.

Contact info: katypp501@gmail.com
How long have you been listening to K-pop?
1-2 years.

How did you discover K-pop?
Through the music.

How would you explain K-pop to a novice listener?
It’s a combination of singing, visual arts, urban dance, and electronic music.

What other musical genres do you enjoy?
Rock, ballads, hip-hop, R&B, electronic, pop.

What are your favorite K-pop groups?
SHINee, BIGBANG, UKiss, EXO, SUPERJUNIOR.

What specifically do you enjoy about K-pop?
The vocal melodies and the instrumental accompaniments.

Do you know of any other K-pop fans in Lima/Peru?
No.

How do you access K-pop? Via the Internet? YouTube?
Internet.

What other parts of Korean culture do you enjoy?
Cuisine, it interests me because it’s something new and I like discovering new cultures.

Do you speak Korean?
Some Korean.

How does your love for K-pop manifest in your everyday life?
I listen to it frequently, but never every day.

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Melissa – 20 – Arequipa (university student)

How long have you been listening to K-pop?
3–5 years.

How did you discover K-pop?
Boys over Flowers drama.

How would you explain K-pop to a novice listener?
It’s a musical genre that despite not being able to understand it, it makes you feel a lot.

What other musical genres do you enjoy?
Ballads and salsa.

What are your favorite K-pop groups?
2NE1 and BIGBANG.

What specifically do you enjoy about K-pop?
I like what each individual song makes me feel, there is no violence, no sex, nothing in that style (in the videos that I’ve seen).

Do you know of any other K-pop fans in Lima/Peru?
Yes.

How do you access K-pop? Via the Internet? YouTube?
Internet.

What other parts of Korean culture do you enjoy?
Dramas, they’re different from Latin American telenovelas.

Do you speak Korean?
No.

How does your love for K-pop manifest in your everyday life?
My notebooks (?) and yes, I listen to it every day.

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Mauricio Davila Altuna – ? – Chorillos (Student, choreographer?)

How long have you been listening to K-pop?
3-5 years.

How did you discover K-pop?
Through dramas such as Dream High, Dream High 2, Stairway to Heaven, and that’s how I began my dream at ACIEPA thanks to these dramas.

How would you explain K-pop to a novice listener?
It’s music that relaxes you, destresses you, and you also learn the Korean language.

What other musical genres do you enjoy?
Reggaeton, cumbia.

What are your favorite K-pop groups?
GOT7, BTS, and I’d like to "cover" both groups and also 2NE1.

What specifically do you enjoy about K-pop?
That you begin to know different people whom you become familiar with within Korean culture and dance.

Do you know of any other K-pop fans in Lima/Peru?
Yes.

How do you access K-pop? Via the Internet? YouTube?
Internet.

What other parts of Korean culture do you enjoy?
Cuisine, and if one day I can visit the country, the language as it is logically one of the most important (primordial) things of the culture.

Do you speak Korean?
Intermediate level.

How does your love for K-pop manifest in your everyday life?
Yes, on a daily basis, and I help out at Peruvian K-pop events.

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Sandra – 28 – Lima (student?)

*How long have you been listening to K-pop?*
5+ years.

*How did you discover K-pop?*
Through my sister, who showed me a Taiwanese drama.

*How would you explain K-pop to a novice listener?*
Well it’s a kind of music that moves you and which uses complicated choreographies; it encompasses so much more, the people who put the music together are close to their fans and they deserve respect.

*What other musical genres do you enjoy?*
Japanese and Taiwanese music.

*What are your favorite K-pop groups?*
UKiss, DBSK, NUEST, SUPERJUNIOR.

*What specifically do you enjoy about K-pop?*
How the idols give their all to their fans and make efforts to be the best at what they do.

*Do you know of any other K-pop fans in Lima/Peru?*
Yes, there are a lot.

*How do you access K-pop? Via the Internet? YouTube?*
Through the internet; also if you belong to a fan club you buy your group’s original CDs.

*What other parts of Korean culture do you enjoy?*
The language, in order to communicate with my artist (?).

*Do you speak Korean?*
No, but I understand a bit.

*How does your love for K-pop manifest in your everyday life?*
I listen to it every day, I follow a website that provides me updates on celebrities and music industry updates; I wish all of Peru would listen to it, this is not a passing trend: it will be here for life.

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Katherin Huarhuachi Espinoza – 19 – Lima (engineering student)

*How long have you been listening to K-pop?*
3-5 years.

*How did you discover K-pop?*
Through Korean dramas.

*How would you explain K-pop to a novice listener?*
Popular music of South Korea that includes dance, rap, hip hop, rock, etc.

*What other musical genres do you enjoy?*
J-pop, British pop.

*What are your favorite K-pop groups?*
EXO, SUPERJUNIOR, BEAST... [see original document].

*What specifically do you enjoy about K-pop?*
The rhythm, the choreographies, the voices, the language, and the boys.

*Do you know of any other K-pop fans in Lima/Peru?*
Yes.

*How do you access K-pop? Via the Internet? YouTube?*
Internet.

*What other parts of Korean culture do you enjoy?*
I love Korean food and of course the dramas.

*Do you speak Korean?*
In process... I’m learning right now.

*How does your love for K-pop manifest in your everyday life?*
Every day, I have a lot of music on my PC and on my cellphone as well.

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Silvana – 14 – Lima (high school student)

_How long have you been listening to K-pop?_
3-5 years.

_How did you discover K-pop?_
I was in an appliance store one day and I saw on one of the TV monitors a M/V of Girls’ Generation’s “Run Devil Run” and I’ve liked [K-pop] ever since.

_How would you explain K-pop to a novice listener?_
The K stands for “Korean” in English. It’s Korean popular music, just Korean music but in pop form.

_What other musical genres do you enjoy?_
Pop, rock, reggae.

_What are your favorite K-pop groups?_
Exo ♥, SHINee, SNSD, SJ, F(X), Red Velvet, A Pink, Miss A, Big Bang, SISTAR, 2NE1, Ladies Code ♀, T-ARA, Orange Caramel, Teen Top, MBLAQ, CNBLUE, etc...

_What specifically do you enjoy about K-pop?_
Its unique form, fun and extroverted way of making music and getting people’s attention.

_Do you know of any other K-pop fans in Lima/Peru?_
Yes.

_How do you access K-pop? Via the Internet? YouTube?_
The Internet.

_What other parts of Korean culture do you enjoy?_
Yes. The dramas, because they’re not like other novelas, the dramas are simpler but sweet.

_Do you speak Korean?_
Some words and phrases.

_How does your love for K-pop manifest in your everyday life?_
I listen to K-pop every day and follow K-pop news stories all the time.

**Contact info:** silvana-alexa@hotmail.com
Jennifer Ulloa Barzola – 21 – Lima, San Juan de Lurigancho (Product development?)

How long have you been listening to K-pop?
5+ years.

How did you discover K-pop?
I saw this band’s poster included in a magazine which had been highly ranked. I decided to check the band out and see why it was ranked so highly. I ended up really liking the lyrics, the group, and the melodies.

How would you explain K-pop to a novice listener?
I wouldn’t explain it. I would make them listen to the song and watch the video with translations. It could be a romantic song that reaches to your heart or a fun one. Then I would start explaining. That’s what I did with my mother and my cousins.

What other musical genres do you enjoy?
Pop in English.

What are your favorite K-pop groups?
TVSQ, Orange Caramel, FT Island.

What specifically do you enjoy about K-pop?
For me it’s a lot of things, it’s difficult to say just one specific thing.

Do you know of any other K-pop fans in Lima/Peru?
Yes, there are a lot.

How do you access K-pop? Via the Internet? YouTube?
Internet.

What other parts of Korean culture do you enjoy?
Dramas. Before knowing about K-pop, I watched these K-dramas my dad watched. I now watch them with my mom and sisters and they love them as well.

Do you speak Korean?
No.

How does your love for K-pop manifest in your everyday life?
I listen on my computer to K-pop radio stations while I am at work. I go to K-pop concerts with my friends and sisters. It doesn’t matter if we’re not fans of a particular group, we are still there to support the performers!

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How long have you been listening to K-pop?
1-2 years.

How did you discover K-pop?
Through YouTube videos.

How would you explain K-pop to a novice listener?
It’s something fantastic.

What other musical genres do you enjoy?
Pop.

What are your favorite K-pop groups?
EXO, SUJU, SHINee, BTS.

What specifically do you enjoy about K-pop?
The songs and the way they dance.

Do you know of any other K-pop fans in Lima/Peru?
Yes.

How do you access K-pop? Via the Internet? YouTube?
The Internet and CDs.

What other parts of Korean culture do you enjoy?
The doramas and the food, I also like the soap operas, they’re really good and I think the food is incredible.

Do you speak Korean?
More or less.

How does your love for K-pop manifest in your everyday life?
I listen to it every day.

Contact info: torresana_11@hotmail.com
How long have you been listening to K-pop?
1-2 years.

How did you discover K-pop?
Through a friend.

How would you explain K-pop to a novice listener?
It’s an Asian music genre that is very appealing and pleasant.

What other musical genres do you enjoy?
Rock, indie, pop.

What are your favorite K-pop groups?
TEENTOP, MISS A.

What specifically do you enjoy about K-pop?
It’s very complete, they have great choreographies, good voices, good sound quality, and the overall presentation is attention-seeking and dazzling.

Do you know of any other K-pop fans in Lima/Peru?
Yes.

How do you access K-pop? Via the Internet? YouTube?
Internet.

What other parts of Korean culture do you enjoy?
Cuisine, dramas, fashion, because they are interesting.

Do you speak Korean?
No.

How does your love for K-pop manifest in your everyday life?
I vote for my favorite groups, and I sometimes buy CDs.

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