

Religiosity and Celebrity Worship among Early Adult Muslim K-Pop Fans

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Abstract. Celebrity worship is a feeling of extreme attachment a fan has for their favorite celebrity. Worshiping K-Pop celebrities in Muslim early adulthood can interfere with developmental tasks. This study aims to determine and test empirically the relationship between celebrity worship and religiosity among early adult Muslim K-Pop fans. This study uses a quantitative research design (correlational). The number of participants in this study was 257 K-Pop fans in Indonesia aged 18 to 25 years. The measuring scale used in this study is the Celebrity Attitude Scale (CAS) developed by McCutcheon et al. (1) and the Religiosity Scale for Muslim Subjects developed by Amir (2). The CAS measuring instrument has a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.940. The Religiosity Scale for Muslim Subjects developed has a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.797. This study's results state a significant negative relationship between celebrity worship and religiosity in Muslim early adult K-Pop fans. The correlation coefficient value obtained is $r = -0.117$, with a significance value of $p = 0.030$ ($p < 0.05$). Based on the results of the research that has been done, it can be concluded that the research hypothesis is accepted.

Keywords: Celebrity Worship, Muslim Early Adulthood, Religiosity.

1. Introduction

Celebrity worship is the act of fans exhibiting an extreme attachment toward their favorite celebrity. McCutcheon et al. (1) defined celebrity worship as an admiration for celebrities leading to a delusion of an actual relationship and an addiction that fosters an increasing need for a stronger connection with the individual. According to Horton and Wohl (cited in Bocarnea and Brown, (3)), celebrity worship is a parasocial relationship, an imaginary interpersonal relationship between media consumers and media personas.

Utami et al. (4) research on celebrity worship among early adults found that 41% of the participants were in the high category. Similarly, Maulida et al. (5) research on the level of celebrity worship among early adult fans of K-Pop in Aceh showed that 34.2% of the respondents were categorized as high and 33.9% as moderate. So, this still proves that the problem of celebrity worship still occurs.

According to Santrock (6), early adulthood is a transitional period from adolescence, typically around 18 to 25. Furthermore, Santrock (6) described emerging adulthood as a time of experimentation and exploration. The developmental tasks during this period include exploring desired careers and lifestyles and initiating romantic relationships. Based on the previously presented data, it is evident that many early adults still engage in celebrity worship. When individuals excessively involve themselves in celebrity worship, it can affect their lives, including the potential failure to fulfill developmental tasks, because early adults who engage in it tend to focus solely on their idols. Referring to Erikson's developmental theory, this stage

of emerging adulthood involves both isolation and intimacy. Therefore, early adults who engage in celebrity worship may experience isolation.

According to Laksono and Noer (7), the impact of celebrity worship at the individual level can hinder emerging adults from fulfilling their developmental tasks, particularly in terms of achieving romantic relationships. Zsila et al. (8) suggested that celebrity worship is associated with excessive internet use, maladaptive daydreaming, and a desire for fame. Based on the research by Cahyani and Purnamasari (9), people who engage in celebrity worship display excessive fantasies. This act also contributed to compulsive buying behavior (10). Furthermore, there are several other impacts, such as a desire to undergo cosmetic surgery (11), eating disorders (12), attitudes toward advertisements and purchasing intentions (13), improved quality of life (14), and positive psychological well-being (15). These impacts can interfere with early adult developmental tasks focusing on career, intimacy, and future orientation.

Based on a literature review by Brooks (16), various factors that influence an individual's celebrity worship include demographics (age, gender, culture, and ethnicity), religiosity, tendencies toward fantasy and dissociation, obsessive behavior, self-esteem, relationships with others (attachment) and with parents, as well as romantic relationships. According to case research by Maltby et al. (17), poor mental health conditions (social dysfunction and depressive symptoms) can be associated with celebrity worship. Furthermore, there are several other factors, such as cognitive flexibility and social complexity (18), emotional regulation abilities (19), peer influence (20), as well as parent-child relationships and socioeconomic status (21).

Religiosity refers to the depth of understanding and beliefs of an individual regarding their religion, accompanied by the level of knowledge about it manifested through religious experiences. According to Amir (2), religiosity is the extent to which an individual believes in the existence and decree of God, engages in worship, has meaningful experiences of God's presence, and feels close.

Maltby (in Brooks, (16)) found that celebrity worship decreases as religiosity increases. In subsequent research, Maltby (in Brooks, (16)) found a more significant correlation between celebrity worship and religiosity. Religious individuals who obeyed divine law and religious authority were less likely to engage in celebrity worship. Therefore, religiosity can indeed influence an individual's behavior of celebrity worship. Another research conducted by Sitasari et al. (22) showed that when an individual's religiosity is low, their celebrity worship tends to be high, and vice versa.

Several authors have mapped previous literature similar to this research. However, no research has examined the relationship between religiosity and celebrity worship among early adult Muslim respondents in Indonesia who belong to different fandoms. Therefore, the investigation team was interested in researching the relationship between religiosity and celebrity worship among early adult Muslim respondents. Thus, this study aims to determine whether there is a negative relationship between religiosity and celebrity worship among early adult Muslim K-pop fans.

2. Literature Review

McCutcheon et al. (1) defined celebrity worship as the worship of celebrities that leads to delusional relationships and addictive tendencies, creating a growing need for more substantial involvement to feel connected. According to Horton and Wohl (in Stever, (23)), it is a parasocial

relationship, referring to an imaginary interpersonal relationship between media consumers and personalities. Meanwhile, according to Brown (in Brooks, (16)), celebrity worship refers to an intense form of psychological attachment that makes one's relationship with a favorite celebrity the central focus of their life. It develops from a strong identification and intense devotion toward the celebrity, characterized by loyalty and a willingness to invest time and finances into that individual.

According to McCutcheon et al. (1), there are three aspects or levels of individuals involvement in idolizing their favorite celebrities, namely:

- a. *Entertainment-social stage.* The entertainment-social stage is the lightest stage, where fans' activities are primarily for entertainment purposes. In this stage, individuals perceive their favorite celebrity as a source of social entertainment. The behavior in this stage is characterized by individuals seeking out all information, including the personal life of their favorite celebrity, solely for entertainment. The person enjoys discussing and sharing information about their favorite celebrity as an expression of interest.
- b. *The intense-personal,* intermediate stage, in which fan activity increases to a higher level, is characterized by intense personal feelings. These feelings are defined as thoughts that individuals have due to constantly thinking about everything about their favorite celebrity, even when they don't want to. In this stage, people become obsessed with everything related to a favorite celebrity, exhibiting impulsive and compulsive behaviors such as collecting items associated with their idol and fantasizing about them.
- c. *Borderline-pathological stage.* In the borderline psychological stage, fans have more intense, compulsive, and obsessive feelings toward their idol. The fans tend to have irrational and uncontrollable thoughts about their favorite celebrity, whereas other activities involve excessive empathy towards their idol and an exaggerated sense of identification. Additionally, they may have delusions that their idol belongs to them, leading to an obsession with even the most minor details.

The definition of religiosity is based on an Islamic perspective, according to Amir (2), which states that religiosity is about the extent to which individuals believe in the existence and provisions of God, the degree to which individuals worship God, and the extent to which they have meaningful experiences of God's presence and feel close. According to Dali et al. (24), it is a complete way of life, thinking, ideology, and acting, not limited to beliefs and rituals. This definition views religion in its totality, covering all aspects of life, such as politics, economics, society, law, and government. Meanwhile, according to Mahudin et al. (25), from an Islamic perspective, religion is a bond between God as the ultimate reality and creation (humans as one of their creations).

According to Amir (2), by referring to the theoretical construct of Hill (2), religiosity has three aspects that follow Islamic teachings, namely:

- a. **Religious Beliefs:** The foremost belief that forms the basis of Islamic values and norms is the belief in the Almighty God (Allah). This belief in the Oneness of God is known as Tawhid. Allah is the source and purpose of human life. In other words, human beings originate from Allah, live according to Allah's guidance, and ultimately return to Allah.
- b. **Religious Practice:** Belief in Allah should be manifested in tangible behavioral practices. As the primary reference source, the Qur'an guides such actions and behaviors. Another reference source is the Hadith of Prophet Muhammad. It includes the prophet's sayings,

actions, and decisions regarding various aspects of life, such as worship and its rituals, organization, attitudes toward nature, social issues, and more. Therefore, religious practices should be carried out with the intention of obedience, submission, and devotion, called acts of worship.

- c. Religious Experience. From the Islamic perspective, individuals have the most meaningful religious experiences when their religious practices are solely aimed at obedience, submission, and devotion to Allah. In this regard, they experience feelings like happiness, tranquility, closeness to God, self-regulation abilities, and others when they engage in religious activities and other endeavors with a submissive and obedient heart solely for the sake of Allah. In other words, the positive impact of worship is connected to personal experiences in practicing religion.

This study aims to determine the direction and correlation between religiosity and celebrity worship in early adulthood.

3. Methodology

This research used a correlational quantitative method, and a non-probability sampling technique, namely convenience sampling, was employed. The focus was on K-pop fans with at least one Korean idol, around 18-25, and Muslims. The Celebrity Attitude Scale (CAS) developed by Maltby et al. (26) with 22 items was used to measure celebrity worship. Entertainment-social stage (ex. *“Keeping up with news about my favorite celebrity is an entertaining pastime”*). Intense-personal stage (ex. *“I am obsessed by details of my favorite celebrity’s life”*). Borderline-pathological stage (ex. *“If I was lucky enough to meet my favorite celebrity, and he/she asked me to do something illegal as a favor, I would probably do it”*). The scale’s reliability was assessed using Cronbach’s alpha, which yielded a high and stable value of 0.940.

The religiosity scale used in this research for Muslim subjects was developed by Amir (2) and consisted of 13 items. The scale’s reliability was assessed using Cronbach’s alpha, which yielded a high and stable value of 0.797.

The hypothesis was that there is a negative relationship between religiosity and celebrity worship among early adult K-Pop fans practicing Muslims. The data analysis method used the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) 25.0.0 software for Windows. The investigation team used the parametric Pearson Correlation test to test the hypothesis. Additionally, for supplementary analysis, the experts used Pearson Correlation for correlation analysis, Independent Sample T-test, and One-Way ANOVA for group comparison.

4. Result

Before the hypothesis test is carried out, the normality test, the results are presented in Table 1:

Table 1. Normality Test Results

Variable	Significance Coefficient Value (p)	Description
<i>Celebrity Worship</i>	0.071	Normal
<i>Religiosity</i>	0.057	Normal

The results of the linearity test are described in Table 2 :

Table 2. Linearity Test Results for Celebrity Worship and Religiosity Variables

Variable	Linearity	F	P	Description
Celebrity Worship	Linearity	3.546	0.061	linear
Religiosity	Deviation from Linearity	0.885	0.575	Not Deviating from Linear Lines

The results of the correlation analysis between Celebrity Worship and Religiosity can be seen in Table 3.

Table 3. Correlation Test Results of Celebrity Worship with Religiosity

Variable	r	r ²	p	Description
Celebrity Worship Religiosity	-0.117	0.013	0.030	Significant

Table 4 explains the results of the intercorrelation analysis of the aspects of celebrity worship with religiosity.

Table 4. Results of Intercorrelation of Aspects of Celebrity Worship with Religiosity

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Celebrity worship	1							
Stage of Social Entertainment	.859**	1						
Intense-Personal Stage	.910**	.607**	1					
Borderline-Pathological Stage	.679**	.364**	.625**	1				
2. Religiosity	-.117*	-.111*	-.081	-.121*	1			
Religious Beliefs	-.193**	-.116*	-.182**	-.241**	.624**	1		
Religious Beliefs	-.046	-.102	.011	-.007	.870**	.266**	1	.
Religious Experience	-.074	-.026	-.080	-.110*	.759**	.374**	.487**	1

**p<0.01 *p<0.05

The results of the sex-based difference test analysis are described in Table 5.

Table 5. Celebrity Worship Different Test Results Based on Gender

Variable	Gender	Mean	p
Gender and Celebrity Worship	Male	66.16	0.010
	Female	76.48	

The difference test results based on income are written in Table 6.

Table 6. Celebrity Worship Different Test Results Based on Monthly Income/Pocket Money

Variable	p	Income	Mean
Monthly Income/Pocket Money and Celebrity Worship	0.035	< 1.000.000	76.87
		1.000.000-3.000.000	74.50
		> 3.000.000	83.08

Table 7. Celebrity Worship Different Test Results Based on Being Joined in the Fan Community

Variable	p	Joined the Fan Community	Mean
Join the Community of Celebrity Fans and Worship	0.000	Yes	79.15
		No	72.72

5. Discussion

The normality test used in this research was the Shapiro-Wilk technique. The data distribution is expected when the significance value (p-value) is more significant than 0.05. When the data distribution is expected, the decision-making can be applied to the entire population. Table 1 showed normality test results on celebrity worship and religiosity variables yielded significant coefficients of 0.071 and 0.057 with ($p > 0.05$). These results showed both variables were normally distributed.

This research examined linearity using the Compare Means technique. The two variables are said to have a linear relationship when the value of Deviation from Linearity Sig. > 0.05 . Table 2 showed linearity test results for celebrity worship and religiosity variables, showing a deviation from linearity F-value of 0.885 with a p-value of 0.575 ($p > 0.05$). These results indicated that celebrity worship and religiosity variables demonstrated a linear relationship and did not deviate from the linear line.

After conducting tests for normality and linearity, it was found that the data results for the variables of celebrity worship and religiosity were normally and linearly distributed. Subsequently, hypothesis testing was performed using the parametric Pearson Correlation test technique. The Table below presents the research hypothesis test.

Table 3 shows the correlation test results showing that the correlation coefficient between celebrity worship and religiosity is $r = -0.117$ and $p = 0.030$ ($p < 0.05$), meaning there is a significant negative relationship between celebrity worship and religiosity. Therefore, the

proposed hypothesis is accepted. The coefficient of determination is 0.013, meaning religiosity's effective contribution to celebrity worship is 1.3%.

The results of the intercorrelation provide evidence of differences in the correlation between aspects of celebrity worship and religiosity among early adult K-pop Muslim fans. The strongest significant correlation was between border-pathological stages and aspects of religious belief, with a value of -0.241^* ($p < 0.05$), followed by a correlation between celebrity worship and religiosity, with a value of -0.117^* ($p < 0.05$). Finally, there is a correlation between borderline-pathological stage aspects and religious experience, with a value of -0.110^* ($p < 0.05$).

The results showed a significance value of $p = 0.010$ ($p < 0.05$), indicating a significant difference between celebrity worship among early adult male and female K-Pop fans. The difference in the mean values of celebrity worship was 66.16 for males and 76.48 for females. Regarding the average scores, early adult males had a lower level of celebrity worship than females. The results of the One-Way ANOVA difference test showed a significance value of $p = 0.035$ ($p < 0.05$), meaning there was a significant difference in celebrity worship among K-pop fans based on their monthly income/allowance. K-Pop fans with monthly income/money > 3,000,000 have the highest celebrity cult.

The results showed a significance value of $p = 0.000$ ($p < 0.05$), meaning there was a significant difference in celebrity worship among early adult K-pop fans who were members of the fan community and those who were not. K-pop fans who are members of the fan community have a higher level of celebrity worship compared to those who are not part of the fan community.

Based on the data analysis results, it was found that there was a significant negative relationship between celebrity worship and religiosity among early adult K-Pop fans who are practicing Muslims. Therefore, the research hypothesis was accepted. The correlation coefficient value showed a feeble strength of the relationship as it falls between 0.1-0.3. Additionally, religiosity can contribute effectively to celebrity worship by 1.3%.

Research has shown a significant negative correlation between celebrity worship and religiosity. Sitasari et al. (22) found that Pearson's product moment value was Sig. $p = 0.000$ ($p < 0.05$), and the correlation coefficient (r) was -0.662 . In addition, research by Lestari and Nugrahawati (27) shows a regression coefficient value of 0.660 . Maltby et al. (26) have a correlation value (r) -0.48 . Individuals with high religiosity show obedience to religious authority and teachings, so they are not interested in celebrities.

The results of the intercorrelation showed differences in correlation between each aspect of celebrity worship and religiosity. The most influential aspect of celebrity worship is religious belief. These findings are consistent with Sitasari et al. (22) that individuals with high religiosity tend to have strong beliefs about religion. People with strong religious beliefs have a deep knowledge of their religion. Therefore, those with high religiosity entrust all aspects of their lives to follow religious teachings and are not interested in idolizing celebrities.

This research also analyzed celebrity worship and religiosity based on gender. The test results showed a significant difference in celebrity worship among male and female K-pop fans. Regarding the average scores, male K-pop fans had a lower level of celebrity worship than females. This finding is consistent with a literature review by Brooks (16) that males are slightly more likely to support celebrities.

Additional celebrity worship and religiosity analysis was conducted based on monthly income/allowance. The tests showed a significant difference in celebrity worship among K-pop

fans with different monthly incomes/allowances. Regarding the average scores, K-pop fans with a monthly income/allowance >3,000,000 had a higher level of celebrity worship than the other two respondent groups. This finding is consistent with a literature review by Brooks (16), which suggested that materialistic values positively correlated with celebrity worship.

Additional analysis on celebrity worship and religiosity based on involvement in fan communities was also conducted. The different tests showed a significant difference in celebrity worship among K-pop fans who are members of fan communities and those who are not. Regarding the average scores, K-pop fans who are members of fan communities had a higher level of celebrity worship than K-pop fans who are not part of any fan community. This finding is consistent with research by Laksono and Noer (7) that individuals with high levels of celebrity worship are involved in specific fan communities and may even become leaders.

Based on the analysis, it can be concluded that religiosity can influence the decline in celebrity worship among K-Pop fans, although the effect is insignificant. The correlation between the two variables was considered weak, contributing only 1.3%.

This research has many shortcomings in the implementation process. The investigation team assumed that the data were not evenly distributed in the process of spreading. The obtained demographic data were not balanced between males and females. Furthermore, the deficiencies in this research did not consider how long the respondent had been a K-Pop fan, the respondent's area of origin, and the relationship with parents, peers, and the opposite sex.

6. Conclusion

The study showed a significant negative association between celebrity worship and religiosity among K-Pop fans during their early adult development as Muslims. That is, the higher the level of worship of celebrities, the lower the religiosity of early adult K-Pop Muslim fans.

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