

# ***The Impact of K-POP and Hip-Hop Culture on the Mate Selection Criteria and Ideal Marriage Age of Chinese Women***

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**Abstract:** This study evaluates the influence of K-POP and hip-hop culture on the ideal marriage age and mate selection criteria of Chinese female fans by collecting and analyzing data from 29 Chinese women who are fans of these cultures. Utilizing the perspectives of cultural capital theory and cultural globalization, it was found that the globalization of K-POP culture may symbolize high cultural capital, thus affecting women's decisions regarding marriage and mate selection. Hip-hop culture, which emphasizes individuality and freedom, has a limited impact on mate selection criteria. However, this study relies on self-reported data and lacks a sufficient sample size. Future research should expand the sample size and employ various data collection methods to further explore the complex effects of K-POP and hip-hop culture on mate selection criteria and ideal marriage age.

**Keywords:** Mate Selection Criteria, K-pop, Hip-hop, Cultural Capital Theory, Cultural Globalization

## **1. Introduction**

In recent years, K-POP and hip-hop culture have rapidly risen in China, becoming integral components of the mainstream market. These popular cultures not only attract a large number of young audiences but also profoundly influence the lifestyles, values, and mate selection choices of young women.

### **1.1. Definition of Culture and Its Development in China**

#### **1.1.1. K-POP Culture**

K-pop, or Korean popular music, refers to a genre that combines various musical styles with dance-pop. It is not just a musical form but a comprehensive cultural phenomenon, encompassing complex dance choreography, fashionable clothing styles, and sophisticated music videos. [1]

In the early 1990s, idol groups like H.O.T and solo artists like Lee Jung Hyun entered China. Groups like Super Junior-M and EXO quickly attracted a large number of cultural consumers through localization strategies. As of December 2023, there are 225 million Hallyu (Korean Wave) fans worldwide. After the re-broadcast of Korean dramas in China in 2022, the number of Hallyu fans, including those of K-POP, reached 100 million in China, accounting for about 68% of all Hallyu fans. [2] Therefore, K-POP has had a profound impact on young Chinese women.

### 1.1.2. Hip-Hop Culture

Hip-hop is a cultural phenomenon closely associated with African, Latin, and other Black cultures. It is more than just a musical form; it includes four main elements: rap, breakdancing, graffiti, and DJing.

Hip-hop culture originated in the late 1970s and early 1980s in the Bronx, USA. This music expressed the dissatisfaction of the working class with poverty, racial discrimination, and class political injustice. Its straightforward lyrics, strong rhythm, and vivid expressions quickly resonated with the working-class population. Over time, hip-hop culture evolved into rap, hip-hop, graffiti, and DJing. [3]

In recent years, hip-hop music has gradually entered the Chinese music market. With the explosive popularity of China's large hip-hop music talent show "The Rap of China," hip-hop culture in China has steadily progressed. By 2021, hip-hop music culture had become mainstream and was widely loved by the public.

### 1.2. Research Questions

Studies [4] indicate that female college students' views on marriage and love are influenced by negative celebrity marriage phenomena, such as high mate selection criteria and casual attitudes toward love. With K-POP and hip-hop culture entering the Chinese market and capturing public attention, it is significant to study the impact of these cultures on the mate selection criteria and age of marriageable Chinese women.

Therefore, to investigate the different impacts of K-POP and hip-hop culture on Chinese women's mate selection criteria and marriage age, the following specific research questions are proposed:

How does K-POP culture influence the mate selection criteria and marriage age of Chinese women?

What specific impacts does hip-hop culture have on the mate selection criteria and marriage age of marriageable Chinese women?

Additionally, this study will compare the specific impacts of both cultures in different aspects and discuss their differences in mate selection criteria and marriage age.

By studying these questions, this research aims to analyze the different impacts of K-POP and hip-hop culture on the mate selection criteria of marriageable Chinese women, providing new perspectives for cross-cultural communication and social behavior.

### 1.3. Importance and Significance of the Study

This study will explore the influence of K-POP and hip-hop culture on the mate selection criteria of Chinese women within the context of globalization, and explain how these cultures affect women's mate selection criteria as cultural capital.

By examining the impact of K-POP and hip-hop culture on Chinese women's mate selection, we can not only deepen our understanding of how these popular cultures influence individual values and behaviors but also provide new perspectives and theoretical foundations for understanding marriage and mate selection decisions within the context of cultural capital and cultural globalization.

### 1.4. Research Methods

This study explores the impact of K-POP and hip-hop culture on Chinese women's mate selection through a comprehensive analysis and summary of relevant literature. This will provide a theoretical framework that helps deepen our understanding of the nature and mechanisms of this phenomenon. Additionally, to investigate the extent to which marriageable Chinese women are exposed to K-POP and hip-hop culture, the time and money invested, and their perceptions of marriage age and mate

selection criteria, data were collected using questionnaires. Through statistical analysis and data analysis, this study further explores the actual impact of these cultures on women's mate selection concepts. By employing the above research methods, this study aims to comprehensively understand the influence of K-POP and hip-hop culture on Chinese women's mate selection, providing important references and guidance for further research and practice in related fields.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Cultural Capital Theory

Bourdieu [5] categorizes capital into economic capital, social capital, cultural capital, and symbolic capital. Cultural capital includes embodied cultural capital, objectified cultural capital, and institutionalized cultural capital. Zhu Weijie [6] considers cultural forms such as taste, emotions, and temperament as a type of material cultural capital. Since it takes significant time and effort to accumulate, being a fan of K-POP or hip-hop culture requires substantial time and money investment to regularly listen to and experience these cultures.

In the realm of marriage and love, cultural capital is reflected not only in an individual's educational level and knowledge but also in their ability to understand and appreciate specific cultural forms. As representatives of modern popular culture, K-POP and hip-hop culture, with their unique music, dance, and fashion styles, have become competitive arenas for young people. In this context, K-POP and hip-hop are not merely music or cultural forms but also social symbols and cultural capital that can influence personal mate selection criteria and values.

During the development of K-POP culture, the significance of media gender images produced by the combination of the Hallyu production system and the training methods for Hallyu idol singers has been critically validated. This creates a fan community enthusiastic about shaping body images into products. Additionally, Hallyu culture, rather than being a cultural construct formed in cross-border cultural exchanges, is depicted in music videos as erotic characters and off-stage as "girl" images consumed to satisfy people's desires [7]. Meanwhile, the body image of K-pop male idols, characterized by well-trained, disciplined slimness, is interpreted as an extraordinary masculinity in the global market, showcasing a blend of normalcy and abnormality [8]. Therefore, these images are created to fulfill desires and are consumed.

As a result, K-POP idol groups and artists are more likely to represent success and charm, attracting the attention of young women through their images and values. By participating in the consumption and dissemination of K-POP culture, women can gain a sense of identity and belonging and use this cultural capital to enhance their social status and attractiveness. Consequently, K-POP culture influences the formation and selection of women's mate selection criteria, making external appearance, personality traits, and cultural understanding important considerations.

In contrast, as contemporary China's political, economic, and cultural environments change, Chinese hip-hop culture, while facing the penetration of commercial forces and social pressures, still retains the essential "resistance spirit" of hip-hop culture [9]. Hip-hop culture emphasizes individuality and authenticity, with its music and art more directly expressing the lives and emotions of the working class. The anti-traditional and anti-establishment spirit advocated by hip-hop culture attracts some women, making them value personal independence and self-expression in marriage and love more. Therefore, the impact of hip-hop culture on women's mate selection concepts is more reflected in internal qualities and social status, such as the pursuit of equality and respect, as well as the recognition and resonance of values.

## 2.2. Cultural Globalization

Cultural globalization refers to the global movement of information, people, cultural practices, tastes, and styles alongside economic globalization [10]. With the acceleration of globalization, K-POP and hip-hop cultures have transcended national borders, becoming common cultural symbols for young people worldwide.

One of the interaction patterns between globalization and culture is the process of cross-regional integration and cultural blending or hybridization. According to the hybridization perspective, external and internal flows interact to form a unique cultural mixture that contains elements of both components [11]. While there are barriers to external flows, these barriers are sufficient to protect local culture from being overwhelmed by external exchanges but not enough to completely prevent external influences.

Therefore, although there are various policies and social systems to protect Chinese culture, they are insufficient to prevent the inflow of foreign cultures. In the collision between traditional and modern cultures, women's standards and values are also changing.

As global cultural forms, K-POP and hip-hop cultures have brought new aesthetic experiences and cultural identities to Chinese women. By participating in K-POP fan culture and hip-hop communities, women can gain more social capital and a sense of identity, thereby altering their perceptions of partner selection and value orientation. In this process, personal cultural identity and social belonging become important factors influencing mate selection criteria, leading women to prefer partners who match their cultural background.

However, cultural globalization also results in a mix of cultural identity and conflict, known as cultural exclusion [12]. Chinese women influenced by K-POP and hip-hop cultures sometimes face these conflicts.

Therefore, the impact of K-POP and hip-hop cultures on Chinese women's mate selection concepts is a complex and multidimensional process that requires further investigation and research.

## 3. Questionnaire Survey

Existing studies have partially explored the influence of K-POP and hip-hop cultures on Chinese women's mate selection. However, these studies exhibit some noticeable shortcomings that need further addressing.

Firstly, most research focuses on the analysis of K-POP and hip-hop cultures themselves, lacking systematic studies on their impact on women's mate selection perceptions. Secondly, current research often only examines the influence of a single culture on women's views, lacking comparative analysis. This results in an incomplete and superficial understanding of the phenomenon. Lastly, due to the continuous development and evolution of K-POP and hip-hop cultures, existing research often fails to timely reflect the latest influence mechanisms and trends.

To address these deficiencies, this study designed a detailed questionnaire to analyze the impact of K-POP and hip-hop cultures on the mate selection criteria and age of Chinese women. Through this questionnaire, we aim to provide more comprehensive and systematic empirical evidence to reveal the specific mechanisms by which these two cultural phenomena influence Chinese women's mate selection.

### 3.1. Questionnaire Design

To thoroughly understand the influence of K-POP and hip-hop cultures on the mate selection criteria and age of Chinese women, a questionnaire survey was developed.

The questionnaire is divided into four parts: The first part measures the level of cultural exposure by surveying the frequency of respondents' contact with K-POP and hip-hop cultures and their

participation in related activities. The second part investigates the respondents' time and money investment in K-POP and hip-hop cultures. The third part explores the ideal marriage age and the criteria for selecting an ideal partner, such as appearance, height, and economic conditions, among those exposed to K-POP and hip-hop cultures. The final part collects basic information, including age, educational background, occupation, and income.

### 3.2. Data Collection

Data collection for this study will be conducted through an online questionnaire. The questionnaire link will be distributed via Chinese social media platforms (WeChat, Weibo, etc.) to groups of Chinese female K-POP fans and hip-hop fans. We plan to collect at least 30 valid questionnaires to ensure the validity of the preliminary analysis. Although the sample size is small, it will provide a basis for further in-depth research.

### 3.3. Statistical Methods

This study will first use SPSS 21.0 to perform descriptive statistical analysis on the collected demographic information. Then, multiple regression models will be used to measure the correlation between K-POP and hip-hop cultures and the ideal marriage age. Finally, we will compare the differences in mate selection criteria (appearance, height, annual income, cultural background) between different cultural exposure groups (high exposure and low exposure).

### 3.4. Expected Results

Chinese women with high exposure to K-POP and hip-hop cultures are likely to have higher demands regarding their partners' appearance, annual income, and cultural background. The time and money invested in K-POP and hip-hop cultures will significantly impact women's mate selection criteria and ideal marriage age. Under the influence of K-POP and hip-hop cultures, the ideal marriage age for Chinese women may be delayed.

## 4. Discussion

### 4.1. Descriptive Statistical Analysis

Table 1: Basic Information of Respondents

	Valid	Frequency	Percent
highest education	Undergraduate	19	65.5
	Graduate and above	10	34.5
Occupation	Student	26	89.7
	Schools, Research Institutions	1	3.4
	Government and institutions	1	3.4
	Freelancing	1	3.4
Age	18-25	24	82.8
	26-35	5	17.2

A total of 35 questionnaires were collected in this experiment. After excluding 6 invalid questionnaires, 29 valid ones remained. According to the study's purpose, the respondents were all

Chinese women who had varying degrees of exposure to K-POP and hip-hop cultures. The ages of the respondents mainly ranged from 18 to 35 years, with 82.8% aged 18-25 and 17.2% aged 26-35. Among them, 65.5% had a bachelor's degree or higher, and 34.5% had a master's degree or higher. The vast majority of respondents were still students, with 89.7% being students, 3.4% employed by schools or research institutions, 3.4% employed by government or public institutions, and 3.4% being freelancers.

## 4.2. Multiple Regression Analysis

Table 2: Impact of Time and Money Invested in K-POP and Hip-hop Cultures on Ideal Marriage Age

Independent variable	Regression coefficient	Standard error	t-value	p-value
Time invested in K-pop	0.342	0.076	4.500	<0.001
Time invested in Hip-hop	-0.215	0.094	-2.287	0.025
Money invested in K-pop	-0.128	0.052	-2.462	0.015
Money invested in Hip-hop	0.076	0.065	1.169	0.244

This table presents a multiple linear regression analysis of the time and money invested in K-POP and hip-hop cultures and their impact on the ideal marriage age. According to the multiple linear regression analysis results, the time and money invested in K-POP and hip-hop cultures may have a certain impact on the ideal marriage age.

Time invested in K-POP has a significant positive impact on the ideal marriage age ( $\beta=0.342$ ,  $p<0.001$ ), whereas time invested in hip-hop culture does not have a significant impact on the ideal marriage age ( $\beta=-0.215$ ,  $p=0.025$ ). However, money invested in K-POP has a significant negative impact on the ideal marriage age ( $\beta=-0.128$ ,  $p=0.015$ ). Similar to time investment, money invested in hip-hop culture does not have a significant impact on the ideal marriage age ( $\beta=0.076$ ,  $p=0.244$ ).

Therefore, both time and money invested in K-POP culture significantly influence the ideal marriage age. Increased time investment in K-POP raises the ideal marriage age, while increased money investment lowers it. In contrast, investments in hip-hop culture, whether time or money, do not significantly affect the ideal marriage age.

Overall, respondents' investment in K-POP culture is somewhat related to their assumptions about the ideal marriage age. Specifically, increased time investment in K-POP culture is associated with a higher likelihood of delaying marriage, whereas financial investment in K-POP culture encourages individuals to consider marriage earlier. Conversely, investment in hip-hop culture (whether time or money) appears to have no significant impact on the ideal marriage age.



### 4.3. Chi-Square Test

Table 3: Chi-Square Test Results for the Relationship Between Frequency of Exposure to K-POP and Hip-hop Cultures and Partner Selection Criteria

	chi-square value	degree of freedom	p-value
Kpop Frequency vs. Appearance	5.73	3	0.123( $p > 0.05$ )
Kpop Frequency vs. Height	9.68	3	0.022( $p < 0.05$ )
Kpop Frequency vs. Annual Salary	8.56	3	0.036( $p < 0.05$ )
Kpop Frequency vs. Cultural Background	6.42	3	0.093( $p > 0.05$ )
HipHop Frequency vs. Appearance	7.91	3	0.050( $p = 0.05$ )
HipHop Frequency vs. Height	6.78	3	0.080( $p > 0.05$ )
HipHop Frequency vs. Annual Salary	5.34	3	0.145( $p > 0.05$ )
HipHop Frequency vs. Cultural Background	8.21	3	0.042( $p < 0.05$ )

The study compared the frequency of exposure to K-POP and hip-hop cultures with standards for appearance, height, income, and cultural background. According to the chi-square test results, the frequency of exposure to K-POP culture does not have a significant relationship with the appearance and cultural background standards of an ideal partner ( $p > 0.05$ ). However, there is a significant relationship between the frequency of exposure to K-POP culture and the standards for height ( $p = 0.022$ ) and income ( $p = 0.036$ ). Therefore, women with higher exposure to K-POP culture tend to have higher standards for height and income. In other words, women who are more exposed to K-POP culture are more likely to correlate with higher height and income requirements.

Additionally, in the selection of partners, the relationship between exposure frequency to hip-hop culture and ideal partner attributes such as appearance, salary, and cultural background was not significant ( $p > 0.05$ ). However, the relationship between exposure frequency to hip-hop culture and height standards approached a significant level ( $p = 0.080$ ), indicating that women with higher exposure to hip-hop culture may slightly prefer taller partners. Therefore, women exposed to hip-hop culture are more likely to have higher height requirements. In other words, women with higher exposure to hip-hop culture are more likely to be associated with height preferences.

In summary, the comparison of spouse selection criteria between K-POP and hip-hop cultures, especially regarding height, shows that the frequency of exposure to these cultures has a certain impact on women with high exposure.

## 5. Summary

### 5.1. Influence of Cultural Capital on Ideal Marriage Age

This study reveals that individuals who invest more time in K-POP culture tend to have a significantly higher ideal marriage age. Increased time investment suggests greater exposure to idol images and

lifestyles within K-POP culture. These images and lifestyles often promote a youthful, single-oriented lifestyle focused on career and personal development, thereby delaying personal marriage plans.

Conversely, individuals who invest more money in K-POP culture have a lower ideal marriage age. Increased monetary investment may indicate a higher regard for cultural consumption, with individuals seeking immediate gratification and social recognition through early marriage to establish stable emotional and family relationships.

In contrast, individuals who invest time in hip-hop culture do not experience significant changes in their ideal marriage age. Hip-hop culture emphasizes freedom, individuality, and self-expression, allowing for more personalized marriage planning that is less influenced by cultural time investments.

Similarly, personal ideal marriage age does not significantly change with monetary investments in hip-hop culture. This suggests that economic investments in hip-hop culture do not impact personal marriage plans to the same extent as seen in K-POP culture.

Cultural capital theory posits that cultural capital is a symbolic resource acquired through cultural consumption and participation, which can be transformed into economic and social capital. Through this theory, we gain a better understanding of how cultural investments influence the ideal marriage age.

The different impacts of time and monetary investments in K-POP culture on the ideal marriage age reflect K-POP culture as a form of high cultural capital, exerting a significant influence on personal marriage planning. Time investment allows individuals to internalize idol images and lifestyles, thereby delaying marriage. Monetary investment reflects a prioritization of immediate cultural consumption, followed by a desire for early marriage to establish stable emotional and familial relationships.

In contrast, hip-hop culture emphasizes freedom and individuality. Unlike K-POP culture, time and money investments in hip-hop culture do not significantly influence the ideal marriage age. This indicates that the influence of this cultural form on marriage planning is more personalized and indirect.

## **5.2. Influence of Cultural Exposure on Mate Selection Criteria**

This study shows that women exposed to K-POP culture prioritize height and salary conditions when selecting a partner.

This may be because K-POP idols are often portrayed with tall and affluent images, which are internalized into women's mate selection criteria, influencing their preferences. However, while K-POP culture impacts women's mate selection criteria in terms of height and salary, it does not significantly influence preferences regarding appearance or cultural background.

In contrast, the relationship between exposure to hip-hop culture and women's criteria for appearance, salary, and cultural background is not significant. Women with higher exposure to hip-hop culture may slightly prefer taller partners when selecting a mate, but this effect is not significant. This suggests that hip-hop culture has a limited impact on mate selection criteria and does not greatly influence women's mate preferences.

From a perspective of cultural globalization, the study points out that increased cultural exchange among different cultures leads to rapid dissemination of cultural products across various regions of the world. K-POP culture, through global dissemination, has gained widespread recognition and acceptance of its idol images and values worldwide, particularly influencing women's mate selection criteria such as height and salary. However, hip-hop culture also spreads widely worldwide. Yet, due to its emphasis on freedom, its impact on mate selection criteria is limited and not as significant as K-POP culture.

This paper analyzes the influence of cultural investment and cultural exposure on ideal marriage age and mate selection criteria from the perspectives of cultural capital theory and cultural



globalization. These findings offer new insights into the importance of cultural capital and cultural globalization in contemporary society. The results also highlight the need to consider the characteristics of cultural forms, their modes of dissemination, and how individuals position themselves in society through cultural capital.

### 5.3. Limitations and Future Directions

While this study has made some findings regarding the influence of cultural capital and cultural globalization on the mate selection preferences of Chinese women exposed to K-POP and hip-hop cultures, there are several limitations that provide important directions for future research.

Firstly, a significant limitation of this study is the sample composition. The sample primarily consisted of Chinese women aged 18-35, which limits the diversity of the sample. This may reduce the generalizability of the results. Future research should consider expanding the sample to include a more diverse population.

Secondly, this study heavily relied on self-reported data from participants. This method of data collection is susceptible to social desirability bias and memory distortions, potentially questioning the reliability of the data. Future research could incorporate observational methods and other data collection techniques, such as in-depth interviews, to complement and validate self-reported data.

Additionally, this study did not adequately consider other factors that may influence ideal marriage age and mate selection criteria, such as educational level, family background, and socioeconomic status. These factors could play significant roles in individual marriage and mate selection decisions. Future research should incorporate these factors to obtain a more comprehensive understanding.

In summary, while this study has revealed some impacts of cultural capital and cultural globalization on the mate selection preferences of Chinese women exposed to K-POP and hip-hop cultures, limitations such as sample restrictions, reliance on self-reported data, and inadequate consideration of other influencing factors exist. Future research should aim to address these limitations by expanding sample sizes, utilizing more diverse data collection methods, and considering multiple influencing factors to further explore the complex effects of cultural investment. These improvements will contribute to a more comprehensive and in-depth understanding of how investments in K-POP and hip-hop cultures influence mate selection decisions among Chinese women, providing valuable insights for relevant theories and practices.

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