



Academic resilience among Korean as a foreign language students experiencing declining interest in K-POP: A case in the Indonesian learning context

Regina Rahayu* and Didin Samsudin

Korean Language Education Study Program, Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia

*Corresponding author's E-mail address: reginarahayu1@upi.edu

ABSTRACT

Academic resilience encompasses students' ability to overcome significant challenges and negative experiences. The waning interest in K-Pop among university students poses a considerable hurdle, impacting motivation and engagement during lectures. This study aims to identify and elucidate the factors influencing academic resilience among students facing declining interest in K-Pop. Through a descriptive qualitative method, Likert scale questionnaires, and a case research approach, Korean Language Education students were investigated. The study collected data from questionnaires and interviews. The research findings underscore the factors contributing to waning interest in K-Pop. They encompass the diminished role of K-Pop as a learning incentive and necessity, a decline in curiosity and attention, and the influence of university environment, friendships, and parental factors. Additionally, academic resilience among students experiencing decreased K-Pop interest encompasses perceiving challenges as growth opportunities, adapting learning styles, valuing achievements, seeking guidance, managing emotions, and nurturing optimism. In conclusion, diminishing interest in K-Pop can erode motivation and impact of Korean language studies; nevertheless, students strive to overcome these challenges, displaying academic resilience to continue their educational journey.

© 2025 Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia

ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received 27 Aug 2025

Revised 18 Sept 2025

Accepted 10 Oct 2025

Available online 30 Oct 2025

Keywords:

academic resilience;

K-Pop;

learning interest,

students

1. INTRODUCTION

In this increasingly advanced era, K-Pop (Korean Pop) has become a form of culture that is gaining popularity in Indonesia. Starting from the song *Nobody* performed by Wondergirl, a girl band from South Korea, made many teenagers interested and plunged into the world of K-pop. The Korean Wave is based on having similar interests, especially with peers, thus encouraging teenagers to form a fandom (community), (Fachrosi, et al. 2020). The Korean Wave in Indonesia makes teenagers interested in things related to South Korea, such as the increasing popularity of the Korean language, K-pop culture can significantly enhance student enthusiasm in learning activities, but with important nuances. K-pop positively impacts students' learning motivation, with benefits including mood enhancement and unique inspirational qualities (Sinaga et al., 2024; Hasanah & Kharismawati 2019; Toshkinboev, 2024). The other research finds that pop culture materials can improve student performance and motivation (Chan & Chi, 2011; Jung, et al., 2022; Kurikova, 2022; Rahmadani et al., 2024) and learning outcomes (Tao & Yang, 2025). In the context of language learning, the utilization of pop culture can impact on students' engagement and reading comprehension (Starke, 2021). However, the enthusiasm is not universal. Some students worry about classroom disruption and prefer to keep pop culture separate from formal learning (Hasanah et al., 2020). The evidence suggests K-pop can be a powerful motivational tool when carefully integrated, but requires thoughtful implementation to maximize its educational potential.

The first phenomenon is that interest in K-Pop has become a global phenomenon and has fans spread throughout the world (Yulianti, 2022). Interest in K-Pop can have positive impacts, such as increasing learning motivation and creativity (Hermawati, 2022). Putri (2019) explained that interest in K-Pop can increase students' learning motivation, especially in learning Korean language and Korean culture. This can help students or college students become more interested in learning and improve their academic achievement. This is also in line with Mawatdah's statement (2022), which states that interest in K-Pop can increase students' creativity in various fields such as music, dance, and visual arts. This can help students or college students develop their talents and enhance their creative abilities.

However, over time, changes or shifts in interest in music can occur along with age, life experiences, and environmental influences. Martha (2023) explained that during adolescence, openness to music seems to decrease, but is also accompanied by a strong increase in interest in specific music. This shows that interest in certain types of music such as K-Pop can change with age. Wijaya (2017) also explained that what happens in the music industry, such as music trends and emerging issues, can influence interest in certain types of music. Research according to Izzah (2020) also shows that listening to music can affect a person's emotions and learning mood in students.

High academic pressure can also cause individuals to shift their focus and interests to other hobbies or activities, including K-Pop. When individuals feel burdened by high academic demands, they are more likely to reduce the time they previously spent listening to or watching K-Pop and focus more on studying and completing academic assignments (Putri, 2019). Heavy academic workloads and busy schedules can leave individuals feeling limited in the time and energy to express their interest in K-Pop. This can lead to a decrease in interest and engagement in K-Pop (Surayya et al., 2022). Interest in K-Pop has a positive correlation with motivation to learn Korean. When interest in K-Pop decreases, motivation to learn Korean can also decrease (Maria, 2018).

Sadirman (2007) also explained that if students' interest and motivation decline or disappear, it will inevitably have a negative impact on their learning outcomes. When students lose interest, they may have difficulty concentrating on lessons and become less enthusiastic about actively participating. Furthermore, low motivation can result in a lack of ability to overcome learning challenges and a lack of enthusiasm for achieving optimal results.

Academic resilience can help students overcome educational challenges and contribute to academic success. Bakir (2019) explains that academic resilience is an individual's ability to persist and complete their education despite difficult conditions or unpleasant situations, and to resolve

academic challenges. High academic resilience can help students cope with academic stress (Paramitha, 2022). According to Kumalasri & Akmal (2020), academic resilience in students can be influenced by social support, including support from lecturers. Academic resilience can help increase student engagement and learning motivation (Rizka et al., 2022). A decline in student interest in K-Pop can affect student motivation and creativity (Putri, 2019). Academic resilience can help students stay focused on their education and complete academic assignments despite changes in interest in K-Pop.

Previous literature has reported on the academic resilience of students in diverse contexts. Research conducted by Sari and Indrawati (2016) focused on examining the positive relationship between peer support and academic resilience. Using a similar methodological approach, research conducted by Saufi et al. (2022) attempted to measure the correlation between self-regulated learning and student academic resilience. Meanwhile, Utami (2020) explored gratitude as another factor affecting students' academic resilience, using the Connor-Davidson resilience theory.

Furthermore, a study conducted by Sitepu et al. (2023) aimed to examine the interests, barriers, stress, and resilience of senior high school students in facing various challenges. The research focused on addressing stress through the development of resilience. Meanwhile, the study conducted by Yenti et al. (2022) aimed to analyze the influence of Korean popular culture (K-Pop) on university students' learning motivation. The research focused on examining how exposure to K-Pop culture affects students' motivation and engagement.

Previous studies have examined resilience, learning interest, learning motivation, and the influence of popular culture on student learning outcomes. However, these variables have been studied separately and within different educational contexts. Therefore, this research is urgent because there has been no research on how declining interest affects learning motivation and how academic resilience is affected. It is also crucial for educators to understand the role of interest and motivation in shaping student learning success and to create an environment that stimulates interest and maintains high student motivation. The following questions drive the present study.

1. What factors influence Korean language students' declining interest in K-POP?
2. How is the academic resilience of students experiencing a decline in interest in K-POP?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Academic Resilience

Rirkin & Hoopman (in Wahidah, 2018) define academic resilience as an individual's ability to adapt when faced with various difficulties and pressures, improving both social and academic abilities. According to Hendriani (2017), academic resilience is the learning process undertaken by individuals when faced with complex conditions or situations during learning activities. Mallick & Kaur (2016) explain that resilience is the ability to maintain good academic performance even when faced with difficulties during the educational process.

According to Cassidy (2016), academic resilience is the ability or capacity possessed by an individual to improve academic success even when faced with difficult situations. There are three aspects of academic resilience mentioned by Cassidy (2015), namely: (1) Perseverance, describes a person who is consistent in working, does not give up easily, has perseverance in facing obstacles, and focuses on the steps and goals to be achieved. (2) Seeking adaptive help (Reflecting and adaptive help-seeking), a person who can introspect his potential and limitations and can seek help, support, and inspiration from others as part of an effort to adjust his individual behavior. (3) Negative affect and emotional response, is a description of feelings of anxiety, less positive emotions, optimistic-pessimistic attitudes, and non-positive acceptance experienced by a person throughout their life.

Interest

Based on the arguments put forward by Purwanto (2020: 66), it can be explained that interest plays a very important role for each individual in carrying out all their activities optimally. This is due to

the fact that interest has a strong driving force on an individual's willingness to be actively and enthusiastically involved in carrying out various types of activities. Interest is relative and inherent in a person's personality. The influence of interest is very significant on the activities carried out by an individual, because through their interest, the person will engage in actions that are in accordance with their interests. Conversely, without interest, the individual is likely not to carry out the activity (Purwanto 2010: 66). The definition of interest also explains that the presence of interest allows a person to do something optimally. Conversely, if there is no interest, the implementation of something will not reach the maximum level. As expressed by Purwanto (2010: 56), interest plays a very important role as a driver of action towards predetermined goals, as well as providing motivation that encourages the actor to take steps towards achieving them. Referring to the views of several experts, it can be concluded that interest has a significant influence in shaping a person's efforts to achieve specific goals or objectives. Objects that interest an individual can provide or motivate them to be more active and improve.

The author decided to adopt Reber's concept in Muhibbin Syah, which indicates that the factors influencing interest consist of internal factors and external factors. (1) Internal factors, as described by Sumadi Suryabrata (1998: 233), are components that arise from within each student. In this context, these internal factors include various psychological aspects, personal values, and life experiences that shape each student's views and attitudes towards learning situations and personal development. In this context, these factors are intrinsic and originate from the characteristics, motivations, and personal views held by each individual student. Muhibbin Syah (2005: 151) describes internal factors which include: a) Attention, b) Curiosity, c) Motivation, and d) Needs. (2) External Factors, Reber in Muhibbin Syah (2005: 151) explains that elements that come from outside or are known as external factors are things that trigger students' interests, which arise from sources outside the student. These external factors include: a) Parental support, b) Support from teachers or lecturers, and c) Colleagues.

Motivation

Mc. Donald in Sardiman (2007) stated that motivation is a change in energy such as a feeling within a person and begins with a response to the existence of a goal. Asnawati Matondang (2018) explained that student motivation in learning influences the achievement and learning outcomes of the students, which also explains the importance of motivation in learning as follows: a) being aware of carrying out goals at the beginning of learning, the learning process, and the final results of learning; b) The strength of effort in learning compared to peers; c) Directed learning activities; d) Enthusiasm for learning that is raised; e) Reminding about the learning journey, until then working. Individual strengths are honed in order to succeed.

3. METHOD

The method used in this study is a descriptive qualitative method with a focus on qualitative description. In this approach, the researcher serves as the primary instrument and adopts a post-positivism philosophy based on utilizing the natural conditions of the research object. Data collection was conducted using a triangulation approach, which combines various sources of information to strengthen the validity of the findings. Data analysis in this study was carried out inductively/qualitatively, where the main emphasis is placed on giving meaning to the observed phenomena. This approach aims to gain a deep understanding of the events that occurred, going beyond simply making statistical generalizations. The author carefully observed the events that occurred, then interpreted them by considering the context and objectives of the study. This study relied on data collection techniques that collected responses and views from Korean Language Education students who were the research subjects (respondents). The data used in this study were questionnaires and interviews. Data were obtained through questionnaires, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Then, the data was analyzed in three stages, namely (1) reduction, listening, recording the results of the questionnaire and interviews and documenting the results of the questionnaire and interview process, (2) data presentation, classifying data according to data

collection techniques and based on the codes of factors that influence the decline in interest and academic resilience, and (3) drawing conclusions, making conclusions from the results of the analysis descriptively to find out the factors that influence students experiencing a decline in interest in K-Pop and the academic resilience of students who experience a decline in interest in K-Pop.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Factors That Influence Students' Declining Interest in K-Pop

The initial data findings in this study were obtained through a questionnaire administered to 51 respondents. This was done to screen or sort respondents who met the research criteria. After screening or sorting, 16 respondents met the research criteria. These 16 respondents were then subjected to in-depth interviews to obtain the final results. The research data was obtained from the questionnaire and in-depth interviews with students who had already been interested in K-Pop at the beginning of the semester and had currently experienced a decline in interest.

The questionnaire was distributed to the classes of 2020, 2021, and 2022 from July 10, 2023, to July 16, 2023, through their respective class representatives. Furthermore, respondents who met the research criteria underwent in-depth interviews. The author conducted final data collection using interview documentation techniques, via Zoom meetings. Data collection took place on July 20, 21, and 22, 2023, with the schedule adjusted to the informants' availability. All interviews were recorded using Zoom. Prospective informants were willing to sign a statement of willingness to become research informants before the interview. Factors influencing Korean Language Education students' declining interest in K-Pop included student opinions obtained through questionnaires and interviews. Respondents' interpretation of the questionnaire refers to a Likert scale of 1-5.

Based on the data obtained from the research results from questionnaires and interviews, data was obtained regarding the factors that influence the decline in students' interest in K-Pop. Based on the data obtained from the results of the questionnaire and in-depth interviews, on internal factors, respondents have the opinion that their curiosity and attention to K-Pop has decreased because their favorite idols have disbanded or gone on hiatus. The disbandment or hiatus of idolized groups makes some students not interested in exploring K-Pop anymore, even though the boy band has a comeback, it doesn't feel as fun as before. This explanation is also supported by the results of the questionnaire data which has a fairly high mean value of 3.37, the questionnaire item reads 'less interested in attending K-Pop events', then also followed by a questionnaire item that has a fairly high mean value of 3.37, which reads 'not updated information about K-Pop idols'. This has an impact on their interest in K-Pop to decrease because there is no longer any motivation that makes them continue to like K-Pop. This motivation also makes students' motivation to learn Korean decrease. K-Pop is no longer just entertainment or a necessity to relieve stress from campus issues, as students have already discussed Korea and K-Pop extensively in lectures. Then, when a hobby becomes a routine, it becomes less engaging.

Furthermore, things that are included in external factors are academic pressure. Academic pressure in lectures makes students busier with various demands and assignments so that students experience a decrease in interest in K-Pop. The environment that tends to continue discussing Korea and K-Pop makes students bored, so that it makes students look for or have an interest in other things outside of K-Pop, such as liking western songs, J-Pop (Japan Pop) songs, anime, to participating in anime cosplay events. This boredom is shown in the questionnaire item that reads 'bored with K-Pop and Korean, has a fairly high average value of 4.25.

Academic Resilience in Students Experiencing Declining Interest in K-Pop

In this study, student academic resilience is defined as the respondents' expressions or responses regarding their experiences or processes in facing the challenge of declining interest in K-Pop as students majoring in Korean Language Education. The respondents for this study were Korean

Language Education students from the 2020, 2021, and 2022 intakes who met the research respondent criteria. Academic resilience in students experiencing declining interest in K-Pop encompasses student opinions obtained through questionnaires and interviews. Respondents' interpretations of the questionnaires refer to a Likert scale of 1-5. Academic resilience in this study uses Cassidy's (2016) theory, which consists of three aspects.

Based on the data obtained from the research results from questionnaires and interviews, data was obtained regarding academic resilience in students who experienced a decline in interest in K-Pop. Academic resilience includes three indicators: perseverance, self-reflection and seeking help (reflecting and adaptive help-seeking), and negative affect and emotional responses (negative affect and emotional).

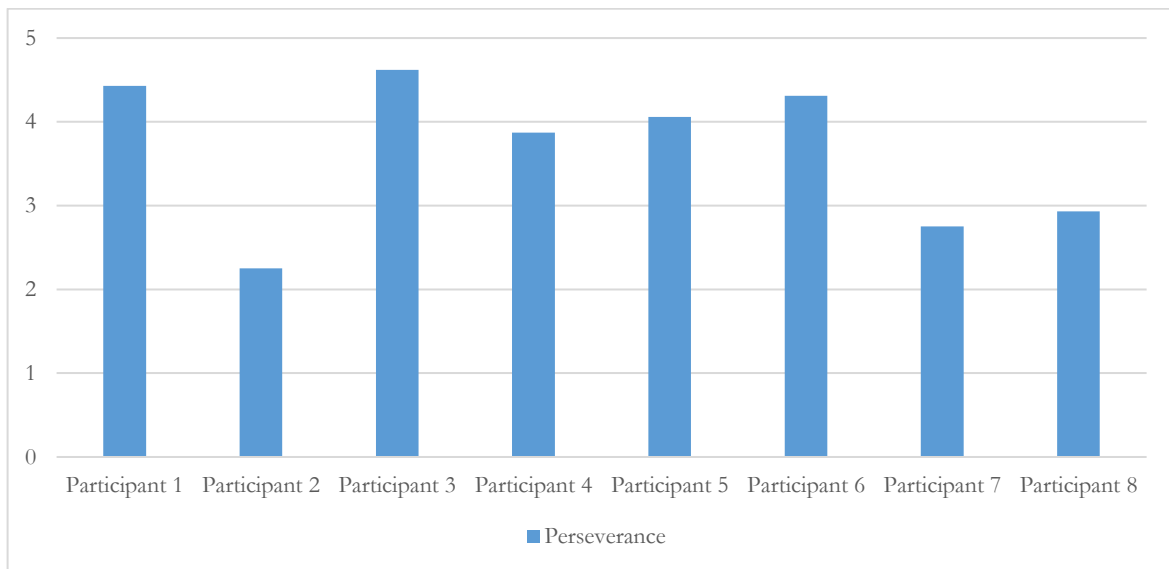
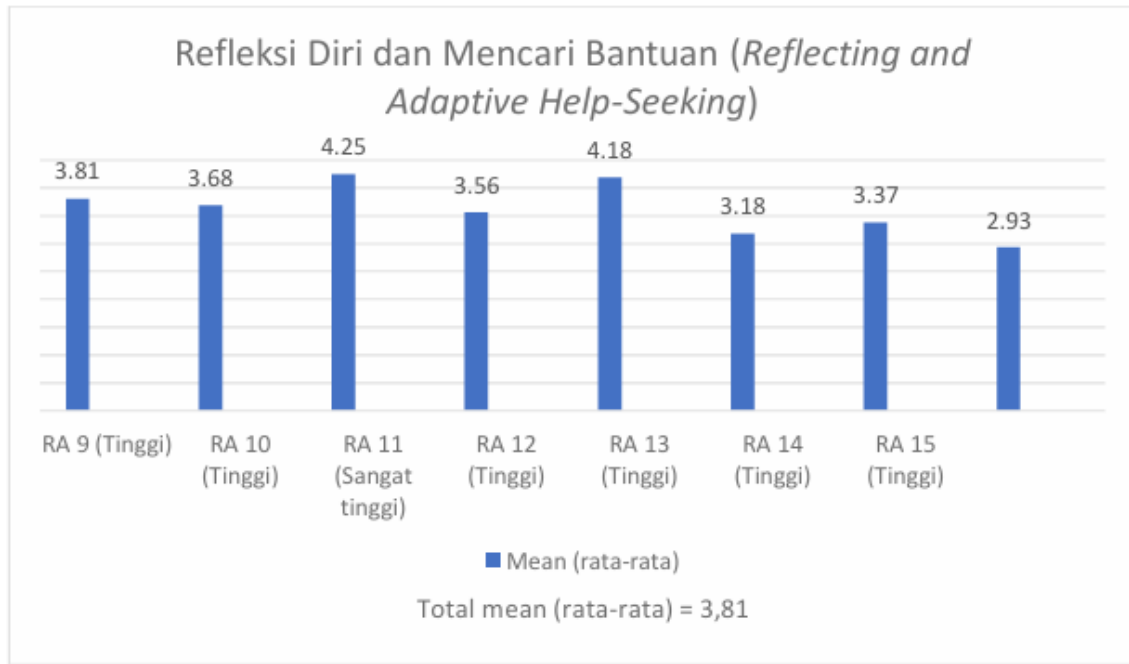


Figure 1. Perseverance

In the perseverance indicator, students continue to try to keep learning Korean despite their declining interest in K-Pop and want to complete their studies until graduation. Students try to overcome this problem by positioning difficulties as opportunities to continue to grow by participating in the MBKM program, although it started from just looking for an escape or diversion due to declining interest in K-Pop, but it turned out to have a positive impact that made students try to seek new experiences.



RA : Resiliensi Akademik

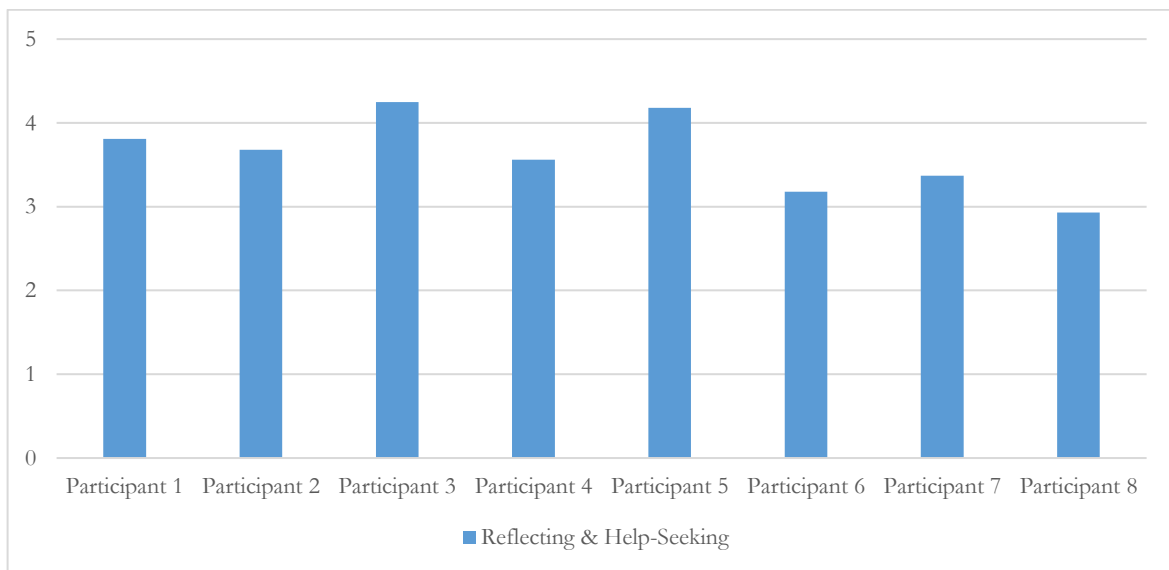


Figure 2. Reflecting and Adaptive Help-Seeking

Furthermore, in the self-reflection and adaptive help-seeking indicator, students sought effective ways to better understand Korean, striving to complete assignments on time, and attempting to participate in competitions and ultimately winning championships. Overcoming the difficult times of declining interest in K-Pop, which some students considered a reason or motivation for choosing Korean Language Education, impacted their motivation to continue their studies. Students sought help by seeking counseling from a psychiatrist or simply confiding in friends or romantic partners for input and advice, or simply to vent their feelings.

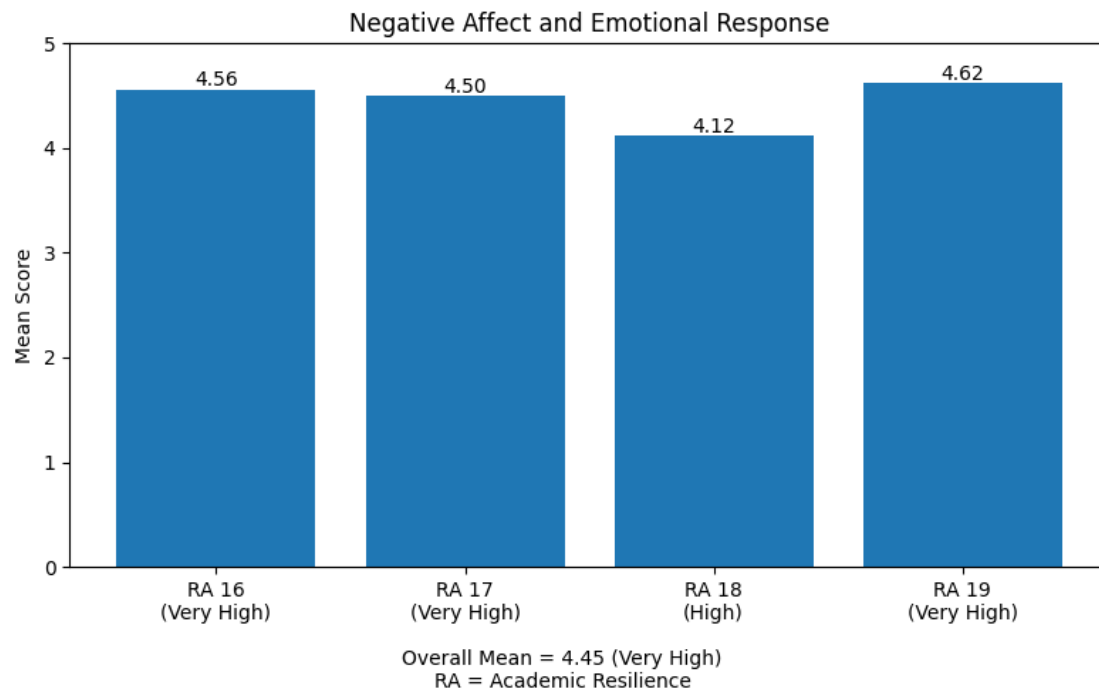


Figure 3. Negative and Emotional Affect

Furthermore, in the negative affect and emotional response indicator, students felt stressed, bored, frustrated, and depressed when faced with the declining interest in K-Pop, which impacted their motivation to study, learn Korean, and pursue academic pursuits. In dealing with these feelings, students attempted to validate them. In this situation, social support from family, friends, romantic partners, and those closest to them significantly contributed to students' resilience and continued education.

The final grades in compulsory courses such as *munpeop*, *malhagi sseugi* and *deutki ilki* in 16 respondents were quite good, ranging from A, B, and C. Although there was one informant who got a C, this grade was enough to illustrate that the student had mastered the course. It can be concluded that the 16 informants had a good level of academic resilience.

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and discussion in the previous chapter, it can be concluded that from 16 respondents who fit the research criteria, based on data obtained from questionnaires and in-depth interviews, the decline in students' interest in K-Pop is influenced by internal and external factors, such as because the students' favorite K-Pop idols have disbanded or gone on hiatus, K-Pop is no longer a necessity or escape when tired because students are fed up with discussions about Korea and K-Pop in lectures, making them look for escape in other things. Then when hobbies become routines, they become no longer interesting. Academic pressure is also a factor. Some students also have other interests such as western songs, things related to Japan such as anime, anime cosplay and so on.

The process of adapting to these changes can affect students' academic resilience. Acceptance of change: Students with high levels of resilience tend to more easily accept changes in interests and can adapt to new situations without experiencing a drastic decline in their academic performance. Despite experiencing a drastic decline and impacting their academic performance, students try to bounce back and find ways to persist in this major. A decline in interest in K-Pop causes students to withdraw from the social environment in college and reduce interactions with friends in college because their interest in K-Pop has decreased and they no longer have similar interests. However, strong social support from close friends and family strengthens students'

resilience in facing these changes. The higher the support from the surrounding environment (friends or family), the higher the academic resilience.

6. REFERENCES

- Akmaliyah, S., Mubina, N., & Rohayati, N. (2021). Motivasi belajar dan resiliensi akademik selama pembelajaran jarak jauh di masa pandemi COVID-19. *Empowerment: Jurnal Mahasiswa Psikologi Universitas Buana Perjuangan Karawang*, 1(3), 6–14. <https://doi.org/10.36805/empowerment.v1i3.629>
- Anwar, C. R. (2018). Mahasiswa dan K-pop. *Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi*, 1(1). <https://doi.org/10.33005/jkom.v1i1.12>
- Ashari, N. W., & Salwah, S. (2020). Pengaruh resiliensi terhadap prestasi belajar mahasiswa. *Pedagogy: Jurnal Pendidikan Matematika*, 5(1), 1–8. <https://doi.org/10.30605/pedagogy.v5i1.267>
- Cassidy, S. (2015). Resilience building in students: The role of academic self-efficacy. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 6, Article 1781. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2015.01781>
- Chan, W. M., & Chi, S. W. (2011). Popular media as a motivational factor for foreign language learning: The example of the Korean wave. In F. Helm & S. Guth (Eds.), *Media in foreign language teaching and learning* (pp. 151–188).
- Djaali. (2009). *Psikologi pendidikan*. Bumi Aksara.
- Edy Syahputra. (2020). *Snowball throwing: Tingkatkan minat dan hasil belajar*. Haura Publishing.
- Hasanah, U., & Kharismawati, M. (2019). Penggunaan budaya pop Korea dalam proses pembelajaran bahasa Korea bagi mahasiswa dengan gaya belajar campuran. *JLA (Jurnal Lingua Applicata)*, 3(1), 10–19. <https://doi.org/10.22146/jla.49657>
- Hendriani, W. (2017). Adaptasi positif pada resiliensi akademik mahasiswa doktoral. *Humanitas: Jurnal Psikologi Indonesia*, 14(2), 139–149.
- Izzah, L. I. (2020). Pengaruh mendengarkan musik terhadap mood belajar pada mahasiswa Manajemen Dakwah UIN Suska Riau. *Nathiqiyah*, 3(1), 38–43. <https://doi.org/10.46781/nathiqiyah.v3i1.82>
- Jung, Y. A., Choi, S., Shin, H. Y., Steeley, S., & Haley, M. H. (2022). Korean teachers' perceptions of embedding pop culture into classrooms. *NECTFL Review*, 88, 37–53.
- Kriukova, O. (2022). Korean pop culture reshaping Korean teaching. *ITL – International Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 173(2), 172–196.
- Maria, M. (2018). *Hubungan antara minat terhadap musik K-pop dengan motivasi belajar bahasa Korea pada remaja* (Skripsi, Universitas Gadjah Mada).
- Meleong, L. J. (2013). *Metode penelitian kualitatif* (Edisi revisi). Remaja Rosdakarya.
- Muhibbin Syah. (2010). *Psikologi pendidikan dengan pendekatan baru*. Remaja Rosdakarya.
- Mutaali, W. O., & Pratisti, W. D. (2019). *Fanatisme pada penikmat musik metal* (Skripsi, Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta).
- Rahmadani, B. W., Sunandar, A., & Sobri, A. Y. (2024). The influence of Korean pop (K-pop) culture on learning motivation of senior high school students in Tulungagung Regency. *Proceedings Series of Educational Studies*, 47–61.
- Ramadhan, M. (2021). *Metode penelitian*. Cipta Media Nusantara.
- Sardiman, A. M. (2007). *Interaksi dan motivasi belajar mengajar*. RajaGrafindo Persada.
- Sari, P. K. P., & Indrawati, E. S. (2016). Hubungan antara dukungan sosial teman sebaya dengan resiliensi akademik pada mahasiswa tingkat akhir Jurusan X Fakultas Teknik Universitas Diponegoro. *Jurnal Empati*, 5(2), 177–182.
- Saufi, M., Budiono, A. N., & Mutakin, F. (2022). Self regulated dengan resiliensi akademik mahasiswa. *Jurnal Consulenza: Jurnal Bimbingan Konseling Dan Psikologi*, 5(1), 67–75.

- Regina Rahayu and Didin Samsudin Academic resilience among Korean as a foreign language students experiencing declining interest in K-POP: A case in the Indonesian learning context* | 148
- Sinaga, O. G., Harahap, R. H., & Annisa, S. (2024). Analysis of the influence of the Korean pop culture phenomenon (K-pop) on student learning motivation. *Journal of Sumatera Sociological Indicators*, 3(2), 298–307.
- Sitepu, E., Hasugian, J. W., & Simamora, M. R. (2023). Interests, barriers, stress, and resilience of high school students: A caring Christian Religious Education teacher. *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research*, 22(3), 325-340.
- Starke, K. C. (2021). How pop culture increases student engagement and reading comprehension. In A. T. Tolbert and K. C. Starke (Eds.), *Disciplinary literacy connections to popular culture in K–12 settings* (pp. 341–361). IGI Global. <https://doi.org/10.4018/978-1-7998-4724-5.ch017>
- Tao, S., & Yang, Y. (2025). Pop culture in the classroom: Associations with student learning outcomes and the underlying psychological mechanisms. *Behavioral Sciences*, 15(6), 1–17.
- Toshkinboev, S., & Oh, S. (2024). Cultural factors influencing Korean EFL learners' motivation and achievement. *International Journal of Literature and Languages*, 4(11), 60–64.
- Utami, L. H. (2020). Bersyukur dan resiliensi akademik mahasiswa. *Nathiqiyah*, 3(1), 1–21. <https://doi.org/10.46781/nathiqiyah.v3i1.69>
- Wahidah, E. Y. (2019). Resiliensi akademik perspektif psikologi Islam. In *Proceeding National Conference Psikologi UMG 2018*, 1(1), 114–140.
- Yenti, N. S., Syamsir, Mairiza, N., Anggraini, N., Febriani, E., & Fadilla, P. (2022). Dampak budaya Korea POP (K-POP) terhadap tingkat motivasi belajar mahasiswa Universitas Negeri Padang. *ENGGANG: Jurnal Pendidikan, Bahasa, Sastra, Seni, Dan Budaya*, 2(2), 176–191. <https://doi.org/10.37304/enggang.v3i1.4941>