

Vy Trinh

**GLOBAL MARKETING OF THE KOREAN MUSIC INDUSTRY
TURNS INTO GLOBAL MARKETING OF KOREA**

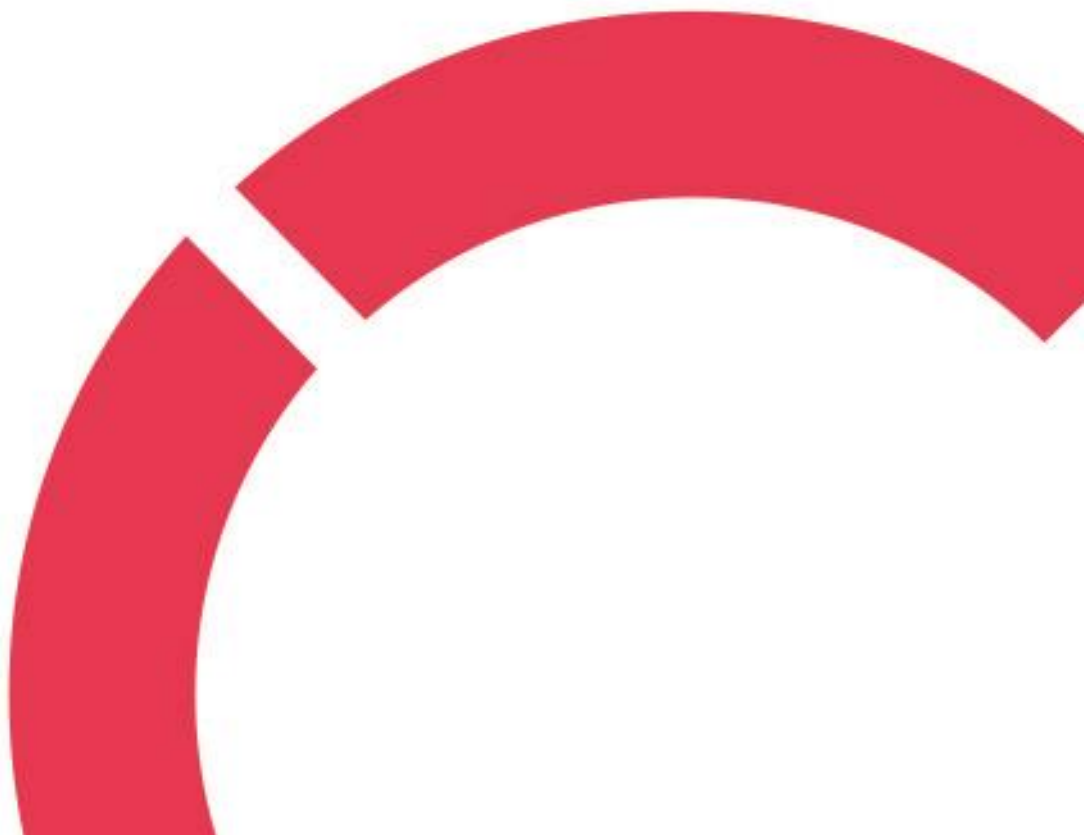
Case study: K-pop group BTS

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ABSTRACT

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<p>In recent years, the world has witnessed a booming growth in the Korean music industry with significant impacts that are not only limited to entertainment. This rapid development is based on successful marketing strategies at a global scope to promote the Hallyu wave in the international market, which also results in boosting the progress of Korea in every aspect of society as well as the economy.</p> <p>The objective of the thesis is to point out the success of global marketing strategies of the music industry, in particular, the Korean group BTS. Hence, the success of the music industry brings about impressive promotion for Korea globally. The thesis focuses on the promotional activities of the group together with notable effects on the general development of Korea.</p> <p>There are three main phases of the thesis including the theoretical framework and the empirical analysis of the case study BTS. The first section is about the basic concepts of marketing and the second section is about the general music industry as well as the Korean music industry. The last part is to evaluate how marketing strategies contributed a huge part in bringing BTS spectacular achievements and how the BTS effects get Korea significant advantages. The research was conducted with the help of secondary data.</p>		
<p>Key words ARMY, BTS, culture, economy, K – pop, Korea, marketing, marketing strategy, music industry, promotion</p>		

ABSTRACT
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1 INTRODUCTION

Music is not an indispensable part of life, but music still plays a crucial role in life. In some way, music appears in the lives of every person, from the time we were born until we get older. It is difficult to picture life without music that would be more monotonous and silent. Besides relaxing and elevating the mood, music brings various benefits affecting directly human health. The power of music decreases the level of stress and pressure along with healing the injured souls. Therefore, nowadays, music is more than a field of entertainment; it is mental therapy.

However, music is also a potential source of revenue as well as employment. With the swift spread of the Internet and social media in this day and age, music demonstrates how it can have an influence on everything in the world, from the economy to society. From an economic standpoint, the music business has grown significantly in the last two decades, when this sector represents a large number of earnings obtained from releases and broadcast music. In the report of two economists, Robert Stoner and Jéssica Dutra of Economists, Inc., the economic contribution of the music industry to the U.S market, the largest music market in the world, was \$170 billion in value in 2018. (Stoner & Dutra 2020.) The growth of the Hallyu wave, particularly in music, has greatly contributed to Korea's success, boosting its economy by an estimated USD 12.3 billion (Roll 2021). Additionally, the impact of BTS on Korean economic development is the strongest illustration yet of the dramatic benefits the music business brings to a nation.

The music industry, in particular, the Korean pop industry, has suffered many decades to find its position in the market, but in comparison to the global music industry, it is a great challenge to state the capabilities of this potential genre. Until the debut of BTS, their music paved the way by breaking all the rules and limits for Asian artists attending the US mainstream music market, stepping on the way to conquering the global music market.

Besides the catchy rhythms and meaningful messages inside their music, the effective global marketing strategies of their company to popularize them for approaching broader listeners create the success of this group. Since the popularity of the Internet and social media has increased the number of chances to access other regions of the globe, there are more hurdles to establishing a position standing out among thousands of rivals in the music industry. It is comparable to economic marketplaces, where corporations must emphasize their items in order to increase sales and profits. As a result, excellent

marketing techniques can reach more customers and broaden possible customer segments in search of greater development opportunities. That is the reason why this thesis will focus on the effectiveness of marketing strategies to attain great achievements in the realm of the music industry.

From the significant success of the boy band, they gradually promoted their country at every step of their career. As the sixth-most powerful nation in 2022, according to U.S. news research, the world can now observe how Korea is growing in popularity (KBS World 2023). If the previous generation mentioned Korea along with Samsung, Hyundai, or football, generation Z currently gets K-pop and BTS beside Korea. Therefore, how BTS and the K-pop industry, in general, contributed to the rapid progress of Korea is also a crucial research point for this thesis.

The key target of this thesis is to research and study the significance of marketing strategies for artists in subjugating the global music market by analyzing the case study group BTS from their marketing activities and how this success becomes a powerful weapon to advertise Korea in the international market.

The research is divided into two parts. The initial goal is to offer theoretical content about marketing methods employed in the music business in general, as well as for the case study BTS in particular. Detailed analysis of the marketing strategies will also be presented to build a basic framework for the research. Therefore, an overview of the topic can be clarified as a foundation to analyze the case study for more accurate conclusions about the impacts of global marketing strategies.

2 BASIC PRINCIPLES OF MARKETING

In the current context where all aspects of the world are dominated by advanced technologies for a more contemporary and comfortable lifestyle, it is no longer a hard problem for businesses to improve and upgrade the quality of products to attract more clients. Hence, this reality puts a question for all entrepreneurs regarding how to differentiate their products amongst various competitors who can own more prominent and preeminent products than yours. That is why companies begin to invest in the way they introduce and advertise the products to grab more attention from the customers, or it also implies the necessity of building effective marketing strategies has become more primary.

This chapter will analyse the basic principles of marketing strategies to clarify what marketing is and its importance in a business to attract more potential customers. A focus on the marketing mix as well as the globalization and glocalization processes will be presented in this chapter as it is relevant to the subject of the thesis.

2.1 What is marketing?

There is no room for doubt that marketing is a broad concept, and different viewpoint can define it in different way. Marketing involves determining, generating, and exchanging demands between a seller and a buyer in the aspect of trading. Back to the past, according to etymologists, in the 1560s, marketing was considered as a verbal noun of "market", which is basically meant as the act of business transaction including purchasing and selling. In 1701, it added the act of produce into the term "marketing". And until 1897, the first completed definition of marketing was attested as the process of delivering products from producer to customers with a strong focus on promotion and sales. (Douglas.) Regarding the modern marketing, there are more and more explanations created to clarify the activity of marketing based on different cases studies using it to support business operations. For example, how we explore, create, and deliver values to a certain market to meet the demands and earn profit can be considered as a definition of marketing based on how it works. By determining the unfulfilled demands and aspirations of customers, marketing will estimate, evaluate and quantify the market scope as well as potential benefits. Besides, appropriate marketing strategies can point out promising segments which are likely to fit the capacity and potentiality of the company in order to optimize the promotion of services and products. (Kotler Marketing Group.) On the other hand, it can be described more

simply as the process of making potential consumers fond of your products and/or services. (Ward 2022.)

Marketing is not just a term. It is a complicated process from building the product image to building the brand image. Research, promotion, distribution, and sales of the goods and/or services make up a full marketing cycle (Ward 2022). The priority of this process is not only on selecting and presenting the most superior features along with characteristics, but it mainly focuses on presenting what customers need and want. Because the key to marketing is to meet customer necessities at a profit, it is important to understand what clients would like to know and what pursue their purchase decisions. The core of marketing is not about selling the products and/or services, it is about building the brand and customer relationships.

2.2 Marketing strategy – marketing mix

The marketing mix is described as a concept that includes a variety of approaches impacting product or service promotion. In 1950s, according to E. Jerome McCarthy in a book named *Basic Marketing: A Managerial Approach*, marketing mix is frequently associated with the 4Ps: product, price, place, and promotion as described in figure 1 below (Kenton 2023). What you sell to clients is described as product. Price shows how much customers are willing to pay for your product. Place represents for where you sell your product, which can be on online platforms or distributed to different agents or stores. And promotion encompasses all activities aimed at popularizing your goods to reach more clients.



FIGURE 1. Elements of 4Ps Marketing Strategy (Pratt 2022)

However, due to the digitalization trend, it is discussed that there should be more factor Ps instead of 4Ps in the marketing mix. The People, Physical Environment, and Process are added by Booms and Bitner in 1980 that can be seen from figure 2 (Brooks 2022). The upgrade version of marketing mix is regarded to be focused more on customer service in the age of technologies.



FIGURE 2. Elements of the 7Ps Marketing Mix (Brooks 2022)

2.3 Globalization

In general, globalization is a term to indicate the growing connections between nations in the world. From an economic viewpoint, the Committee for Development Policy demonstrates globalization as the consequence of the rapid development of the worldwide economy leading to the growing interdependence in cross-border commerce, international capital flows and the swift dissemination of technologies at a global scale. (Shangquan 2000, 1.) The union of all countries is regarded as a tremendous source of power for assisting and complementing each other in order to grow and advance. The increasing economic interdependence of countries has reflected the worldwide spread of globalization, which may be defined as the integration of countries all over the world. Globalization opens new opportunities for global free trade as well as the spread of technologies and cultures across borders. This

global tendency has resulted in a variety of noteworthy outcomes, including a reduction in poverty and a rise in living standards, thanks to rapid developments in communication and transportation.

2.4 Localization

According to the definition of Globalization and Localization Association (2020), localization, on the other hand, is the process of making individuals more local and less global, in contrast to the globalization tendency. This process focuses on bringing a deeper approach to customers by accommodating products and/or services to a certain locale. The primary goal is not to convert products into an entire new version, but to tailor products and services to a given nation or culture, allowing firms to easily dominate that market. Once a business would prefer to go global, it is essential to go local. Localization is regarded as the key foundation for comprehending and approaching clients by studying, evaluating, and selecting the most effective marketing tactics to attain customer happiness. By addressing consumer needs, businesses may establish trust and cultivate customer loyalty as a solid background in order to stand out in the current competitive market among rivals, laying the groundwork for future growth.

2.5 Glocalization

The interdependence of globalization and localization is increasing, culminating in the development of the concept of glocalization. This is a concept that combines the terms globalization and localization and is used to outline a marketing strategy for products and/or services when entering a new market. Glocalization is the process of developing products and/or services for the global market while simultaneously tailoring them to the needs of local consumers (Blatter 2022; Hayes 2022). This marketing strategy gives a broader approach to potential customer segments that companies can both go local and global at the same moment for a shorter time and cost in investigating and prevailing the market.

2.6 Digital marketing

Since we are all living in the Digital Era with massive support from technologies in every aspect of lives, marketing is not an exception to its impact. The proliferation of the Internet has freed businesses

and corporations from the constraints of the traditional marketing framework, allowing them to market and advertise their products in more innovative and engaging ways. In the early 2010s, billboards were a common form of advertising. Many experts, however, have made bold assertions about billboards' prospects in this era of digitalization and mechanization. The existence of billboard advertising, along with other traditional marketing methods such as printing press or magazines is put in question whether it still attracts an audience or not. The response is still yes, but with the diversity of modern commercials, it is on a downward trend. Roughly 5 billion people around the world use the internet today for various reasons, including shopping, education, entertainment, and even employment. Google and Facebook make more money than any conventional media company because of the large number of people who have access to the internet. (Patel.) That is why investing in digital marketing is crucial: your target audience is online. Therefore, more and more businesses are considering how to modify their current marketing strategies to keep up with the rapid development of digital media.

Digital marketing is basically marketing, but in the digital context. Digital marketing is the practice of promoting goods and services through different kinds of digital channels such as the Internet, or social networking sites. (Barone 2022.) By using digital channels to communicate with both current and potential customers, it is regarded as a new way for businesses to interact with consumers and gain insights about consumer behaviours.

The purpose of digital marketing is to promote and sell as much as possible. In more detail, advertisement and sales should be optimized by leveraging digital channels as much as possible. The widespread and quick spread to a broader customer segment makes digital marketing perform better. The Internet has no limits, and the Internet helps maximize the proficiency of digital channels to do marketing. Businesses can succeed with any marketing. However, as digital channels have become more widely available, the significance of digital marketing has grown. As a result, more and more companies have started to develop digital marketing strategies and move the business into this new area so that every corner of the world can reach their products with only a click.

3 INTRODUCTION TO THE KOREAN MUSIC INDUSTRY

Over the past three decades, the music industry has seen significant advancements in both the production and distribution of music as well as in the way that people listen to it. The expansion of the Internet is the primary motivator driving the fast transition. Online platforms have become an important aspect of many sorts of activities in our Information Age, allowing individuals to experience them from anywhere and at any time. The advent of the Internet represents a watershed moment in the history of the music business, marking a new age in which the power of the music business can have a significant impact on the growth of the economy and society.

3.1 History of music industry

In the state-of-the-art society, it is clear to witness the fast development of the music industry alongside its global impact. However, the term “music industry” has been used for decades since its beginning with recorded music. Throughout the years, the music industry has varied in different forms to increase the listening quality for users and expand its market. Currently, there is no room for doubt about the success of this realm in the market with worldwide applause. To have a deeper understanding of the music industry, a brief introduction of decades of dramatic developments will be presented in this chapter.

3.1.1 The music industry: from physical to digital

It took a long time for the music industry to transition from vinyl to streaming. Vinyl records were the most common medium for producing music in the mid-twentieth century. The name "vinyl" comes from the materials to create the rotating disks for storing music (What Is Vinyl). RCA Victor issued "Program Transcription" records in 1930, the first vinyl long-playing record to be made commercially (The Vintage Record 2014). Initially, due to the shellac-based resin materials, these were known as phonograph disc records, gramophone records, or simply records. Since records were often fragile in delivery, both Columbia and RCA Records switched from making LPs and EPs on brittle shellac to vinyl production. (Kendall 2017.) However, this invention was not an ideal solution, especially when more and more types of music media were created more modern and conveniently such as portable CD

players, iPods or streaming services. As a result, in 2008, vinyl sales comprised only 0.1% of the total 1.88 million music sales, which decreased by 14% across the board (Kreps 2009). However, surprisingly, vinyl records were the focus of a "remarkable resurgence" for the first time in over 30 years despite the challenges in preserving the delicate materials (Biron 2023). RIAA reports that in 2022, vinyl records were sold 41 million units, accounted for 70% of all physical sales and generating \$1.2 billion (Friedlander & Bass 2022).

The next music format in the chronology was the introduction of compact cassettes in the 1960s. Compact cassettes, also known as cassette tapes, were developed in 1962 by Philips in Belgium and introduced to European markets the following year at the Berlin Radio Show. (Sommerfeld.) It was regarded as a revolutionary invention to be able to independently record stereo audio tracks on magnetic film that was housed on two tiny spools and had a 45-minute maximum play time of stereo audio per side. The convenient miniaturization of the compact cassette marked a significant step forward in the evolution of the listening habits. More than that, cassettes gave rise to the mixtape culture, a repository for the works of underground musicians like rap artists and DJs (Kendall 2017). However, this era quickly faded due to the rise of the CD in the 1990s. Three billion compact cassettes were sold even before their popularity peaked (Rylah 2022).

During the zenith of compact cassette, the 8-track tape and floppy disk seemed to be faded out of the industry. Regarding the 8-track tape, this audio format used to be popular because of the growing automobile industry, such as Ford Motors' introduction of 8-track players in their whole range of automobiles launched in 1966. (Kendall 2017.) The 8-track tape was praised for its portability and affordability compared to vinyl, but even the most ardent 8-track supporters lost interest once they became aware of its flaws, such as the inability to rewind, easy to get jammed or dirty. 8-track tapes lost their advantage as cassettes grew smaller and thinner. (Elliott.) As a result, the 8-track was rendered largely antiquated both then and now. On the other hand, floppy disks were only ever a niche product for the music industry, as most people associate them with archiving data on desktop computers. (Kendall 2017.)

The CD format was developed to address the shortcomings of vinyl records, which were excessively large and fragile, and tiny cassettes, which were limited to listening to music from a predetermined list. The advent of the CD was a success at the time because it could meet all of the demands of listeners, including high-quality music that was portable, inexpensive, and small. The sales of CDs in 2007 were documented that over 200 billion CDs had been bought and sold globally (BBC 2019). However, since

the expansion of the Internet and online streaming platforms, the usage of CDs has been less common than it was in the period from 1970s to 2000s. Although there were many predictions about the death of CDs since more modern and portable listening devices were invented along with the domination of online streaming platforms, CDs sales have gone down since 2004 but rising dramatically again recently (Kariuki 2022). According to a Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) report, Americans purchased 46.6 million CDs in 2021 (Friedlander & Bass 2022).

Thanks to the rapid expansion of the Internet and social media, the streaming service became a totally new term in the field of music industry. The word streaming simply defines the data transmission in a consistent and constant flow. There are different kinds of media depending on the types of streaming service, such as movies in Netflix, or music in Spotify. (Awati.) Streaming music or audio allows you to listen to songs without actually downloading them. This is the method by which streaming music services provide access to their catalogues across multiple platforms (Harris 2021). There is no room for doubt that the simplicity, speed, and affordable of this medium, which enables you to listen to whatever you want, wherever and whenever you like, contributed to the increasing popularity of streaming services all over the world. Back to the past, in 1999, Napster was the pioneering music streaming platform. More than 20 million people had joined the Napster community by March of 2000. However, the use of file-sharing websites like Napster resulted in the first-ever decline in global record sales because of copyright issues as the new millennium began. With 50 million users, Napster was effectively shut down in 2001. (Yassin 2019.) This marked the beginning of a 15-year decline in the music industry's sales, which had previously experienced significant year-over-year growth. The downward trend of music sales in the U.S. market, one of the largest music markets in the world, is illustrated in figure 3 as a clear example to reflect the negative situation at that time.

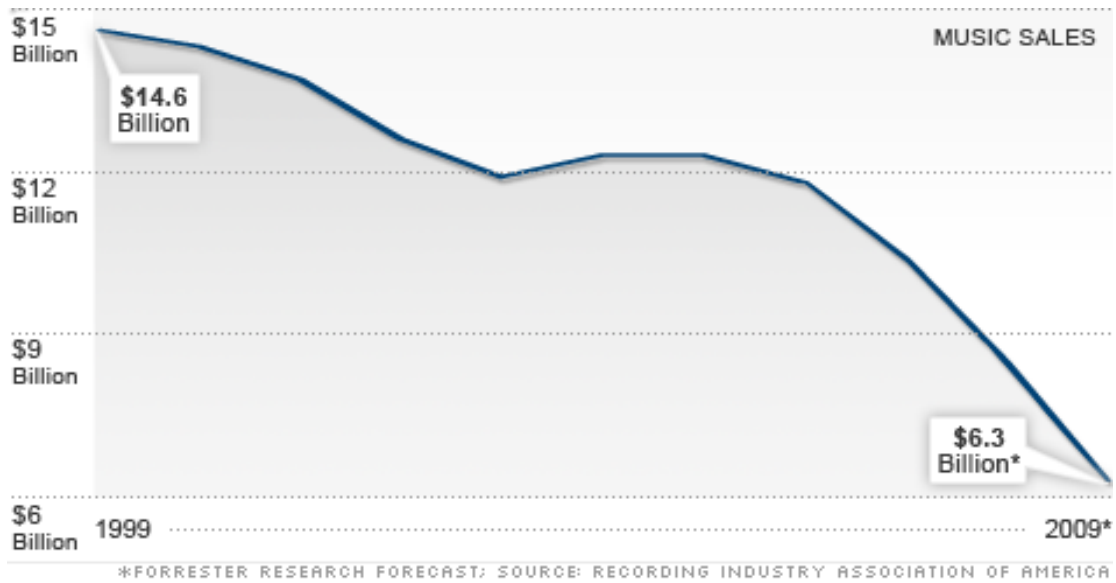


FIGURE 3. Total revenue from U.S. music sales in ten years (1999 – 2009) (Goldman 2010)

Although piracy of musical works has always been a problem, the rise of the internet and its rapid spread are major contributing factors to it. (Competition And Markets Authority 2022.) Before the explosion of the Internet and social media, the music business had been in decline, as evidenced by the steep drop in physical album sales and the implosion of new digital streaming services. It was difficult to oppose the shift in listening habits that Napster ushered in as it paved the way for the digital music era. (Curry 2023.) Accessibility became a new standard in order to develop new methods of music listening and to ensure the legal copyright of songs and artists. In the first decade of the 21st century, more and more streaming services had been launched, for example, iTunes (2001), Spotify (2008) and YouTube (2005). Since consumers can currently legally access digital music through services such as paid song downloads and music streaming, music companies and creators have finally been able to monetize their content on digital services and stop the loss of revenue (Competition and Markets Authority 2022). This fundamentally altered the way people value music. Although these streaming services were met with scepticism from the music industry, their user bases kept expanding. But it was not until the mid-2010s that the industry saw a truly explosive impact.

3.1.2 The Digital Era

The digital and streaming eras did not have a positive or negative impact on the industry; rather, the industry evolved (Wilson 2022). This shift made available to consumers a wider variety of songs, as well as cutting-edge, high-quality new services. Premium users of Spotify, for instance, can compile a

playlist with songs spanning genres and decades, such as a disco tune from the '70s and a new pop dance hit, without having to pay for the full albums of each song individually. From the perspective of the consumer, this could be extremely useful, particularly for those who have a lot of music to listen to on a regular basis. Hence, the music industry has seen a significant shift from a continuous downward trend spanning over a decade as a growing number of people use music streaming services. Some record labels have seen their revenue soar in 2016 to the highest it has been in over a decade thanks to the profits they have made from streaming music. Warner Music, one of the largest labels in the world, reported in 2016 earnings of \$3.25 billion, an all-time highest after an 8 – year period. Streaming accounted for an enormous \$1 billion of that total, easily surpassing downloads and physical sales (Ellis-Petersen 2016). According to data published in IFPI's Global Music Report 2022, industry earnings in 2021 amounted to \$25.9 billion. The total amount of money made from streaming services (both subscription and ad-supported) is US\$16.9 billion, or 65.0% of the total amount made from selling recorded music around the world. (IFPI 2022.)

The two highest streaming apps, Spotify and Apple Music, also reported the total users in 2022 are 433 million unique users and 88 million users for each platform, respectively (Iqbal 2023; Curry 2023.) Statista indicates that by 2022, the number of people using music streaming services increased to 776.2 million, resulting in a market size of \$30.33 billion. Statista's analysts believe that services like Spotify and Apple Music will continue to have a profound impact on the music industry by driving down the prevalence of illegal downloads and breaking down other barriers to provide a better user experience towards digital music. (Fleck 2022.) Frances Moore, Chief Executive of the IFPI, said in the Global Music Report that the current music industry is the most competitive in recent memory, thanks to the unwavering devotion of music fans who are listening to more music than ever before, in more formats than ever before. (IFPI 2022.)

The figure below demonstrates that the global music streaming revenue has witnessed an upward trend from the beginning. It is worthwhile to note that the five-year period from 2018 to 2022 was the time of prolific growth for this industry with a miraculous development annual that made the latest figure in 2022 reach \$43.3 million in compared to \$1.9 million in 2012 (Curry 2023).

Global music streaming annual revenue 2012 to 2021 (\$bn)

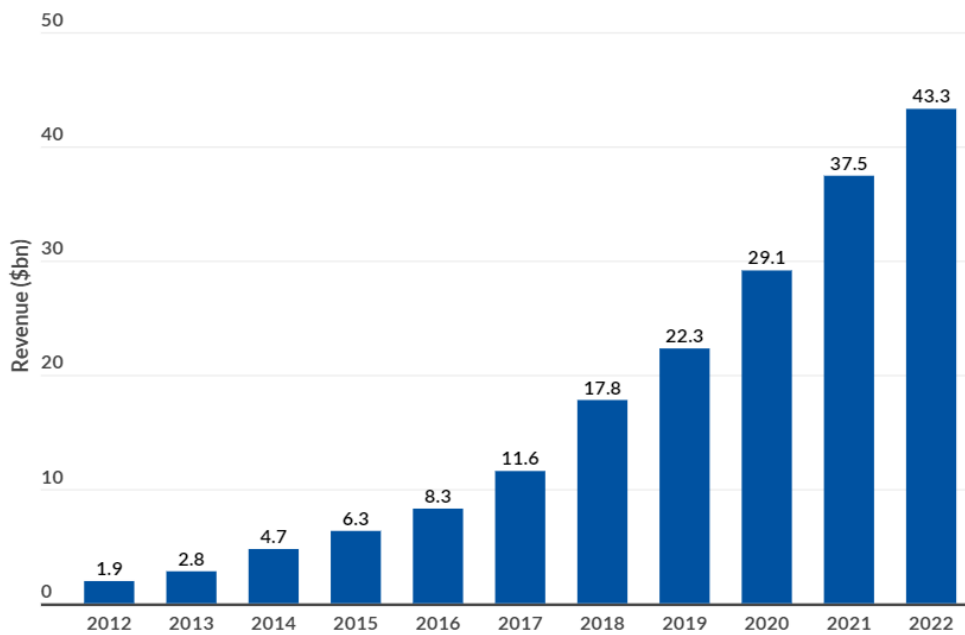


FIGURE 4. The growth of global music streaming 2012-2021 (Curry 2023)

3.2 The beginning of the Korean music industry

Nowadays, the term "K-pop" is not novel at all. It is widely known that the letter K in K-pop means Korean pop, which indicates music composed, written, and sung in Korean and represents the national identity of Korea. It is analogous to other genre designations used to denote regional variations in popular music, such as "J-pop" for Japanese music, "C-pop" for Chinese music, or "V-pop" for Vietnamese music. In addition, "K-pop" may be shorthand for "K-pop culture," also known as the "K-pop idol culture," which is a subculture of Korean popular culture in which young people look up to and take inspiration from their favourite idols. Suk-Young Kim, a professor at UCLA who has written about the K-pop phenomenon, supposed K-pop goes far beyond the realm of music. It is a full-fledged show, including choreography, fashion, and lifestyle. (Pogue 2023.) On the other hand, since the impacts of the K-pop on the development of the music market or even the growth of Korea, K-pop can be considered a Korean brand. From the perspective of traditional culture, there is almost no "Korean" characteristics about K-pop; it is merely a globally competitive product devoid of traditionalism. (Lie 2012, 360.)

The Korean pop music industry is distinct from its counterparts because of its professional training structure and rigorous evaluation criteria. To debut and perform on stage, idols must satisfy numerous requirements, such as visuals, dancing, singing, language, camera interaction. Under the direction of

entertainment companies, idols are groomed into professional singers and performers for the stage. For the latest decade, K-pop has seen significant growth from the success of K-poppers from gen 2 to gen 3 such as Big Bang, Girls Generation, and BTS, so despite the downsides of this industry, being an "idol" still becomes an ideal job for the young. (Oh & Lee 2014.) Because a huge number of the young generation wanted to be the next idols, the standards to choose the best people for the next debut are upgraded as time goes. Thousands of candidates attend in K-pop audition every year, only hundreds of trainees are chosen, but only few of them can take a slot to debut. And not all idols debuted will be successful with their career. Moreover, the "age" of idols does not last forever. The seventh year is widely known for K-pop fans as an important milestone since many idols stopped their careers or changed into another field such as acting due to the increasingly fierce elimination level despite the effulgent aureole of the industry.

At this time, the age level of trainees has decreased but the requirements for talent increased. For example, Niki from Enhypen debuted in 2020 when he was only 15 and Chiquita, who was born in 2009, is going to debut with BABYMONSTER in 2023 at the age of 14. More and more trainees will debut at an even younger age with this speed in the future. Besides, talents are also the primary consideration to evaluate. The current generation of Korean idols is extremely talented when they not only have great stage performance skills but also participate in producing music for their album. For example, Soyeon from (G)I-DLE, she has good rapping skills great singing and dancing skills, and she is also a talented producer and songwriter with a lot of popular songs such as Tomboy and Nxde.

The K-pop phenomenon was started with the debut of the boy band Seo Taiji and Boys in the 1990s. The song "Nan Arayo (I Know)" on South Korea's Munhwa Broadcasting Corporation brought a breath of air into Korean traditional music at that time with the first introduction to American hip-hop New Jack Swing with contemporary pop reach the Korean. (MasterClass 2021.) Almost 1.5 million copies were sold by the band in less than a month after its release (SeoulSpace 2022). What made the youth warmly respond to this new song, albeit hip hop had been already popular before, was the mix between mother tongue and a new music material. Following the success of Seo Taiji and Boys, entertainment companies realized the potentiality of this new artist model towards the listeners, so they increased the number of young talents to meet the growing demand through stringent recruitment and rigorous training. This also marked a new highlight in the Korean history of music, opening the first generation of K-pop, which was the premise for more potential-comings. In this first stage of K-pop, not to mention the appearance of H.O.T (1996), Sech Kies (1997), Shinhwa (1998) as well as other

two girl groups named S.E.S (1997) and Fin.K.L (1998), they brought the very first definition for what K – pop is and framed a role model for the next generation in an entire new realm.

3.3 Internationalization of Korean music industry

The second generation of K-pop stars emerged once the secret to K-pop stardom, for instance, catchy rhythm, attractive performances, immaculate appearances, and complex choreography, was uncovered. At this period, it could be considered as the first step to reach out of the national border and bring K-pop culture to the Asian market. More boy groups, girl groups and soloists debuted during 2000s and became a hit in the Korean music industry. For K-pop fans, this era can be regarded as the Golden Era of K-pop since the popularity of every group was not so different and it was also similar to their songs. In order to indicate the internationalization of the Korean music industry in this period, it started with the success of three popular soloists including BoA, Bi Rain and PSY. BoA was the first female solo artist of SM Entertainment, one of the Big 3 Entertainment Companies at that time. "The Queen of K-pop" debuted with an aim to enter the international market, especially Japan, in order to break barriers in entertainment on the cultural front as the consequences of the end of World War II. (Limited 2020.) And the result was very positive because instead of being promoted as a Korean pop star in Japan, BoA was marketed as a Japanese pop star from the start. Thanks to the localization marketing strategy for BoA, the road to conquer the Japanese market had been shortened, leading to the massive success of Korean boy bands TVXQ and Big Bang in contribution to widespread popularity of K-pop. (Michel 2011.) Regarding Bi Rain, he was one of the most successful artists in Korea since he was a famous pop star in Asia during the 2000s with a series of hit songs such as Rainism or Love Song. (Sherman 2020.) He was also the first idol bringing K-pop into the global market, not to mention his Rain's Coming World Tour comprising 17 concerts in 14 countries was the first world tour made by a Korean artist (Wikipedia). PSY was famous later, but his success resounded all around the world. In September 2012, the smash hit Gangnam Style made its Billboard Hot 100 debut and became the first video on YouTube achieved 1 billion views. Gyu Tag Lee, an associate professor at George Mason University's South Korean campus who specializes in K-pop and Hallyu, claims that "Gangnam Style" is the phenomenon that spreads Korean pop culture beyond East Asia. (Kang & Sit 2022.) Currently, although it is over 10 years since the song was released, no one can forget the simple lyrics and catching rhythm "Oppa Gangnam Style" along with the funny horse-riding dance (Sherman 2020).

Besides, in the capacity of a group, Girls' Generation and Wonder Girls were the most remarkable groups ever throughout Korean music history in this period. If Wonder Girls became popular worldwide with the hit song "Nobody", Girls Generation, with massive support from national fans along with the domination of the Asian market after many hits such as "Gee" or "The Boys", marked the step to reach the U.S. market, the biggest music market in the world. As the first Korean celebrity to appear on three major U.S. network channels and then reach an agreement with a U.S. record label, they laid the foundation for the next generation of K-pop artists hoping to follow in their footsteps and achieve the American dream. (SeoulSpace 2022.)

However, K-pop was regarded to have a remarkable transnational success and became a millionaire industry contributing directly to the development of Korea after the rise of the third generation of K-pop in general, or in more detail, BTS. This generation opened the era where K-pop started to climb and dominate all the charts all over the world. The rise of the internet, digital technologies, and social media, as well as the development of new platforms for facilitating global communication, was a watershed moment for the K-pop genre, providing them more opportunities to interact and build fandom loyalty. Because the United States has historically been more interested in exporting than importing culture, the widespread popularity of third-generation Korean pop music was unexpected. Therefore, the way BTS and other K-pop groups, such as BLACKPINK, appeared on American charts, shows, awards ceremonies, then became a nominee and finally won these honourable prizes were the statements for how far K-pop has gone and caught up with the U.S. market. Taking examples from the two most outstanding groups in the Korean pop industry, BTS and BLACKPINK, until 2023, BTS got five Grammy nominees in two consecutive years and twelve awards at Billboard Music Awards, which broke the 17-year record of Destiny's Child's with eleven awards. (Goggins 2022.) Regarding BLACKPINK, they are the first K-pop representative at Coachella 2019 then came back again as the first K-pop act to headline at Coachella 2023, and their YouTube Music also received the highest subscribers (86 million) as an artist. (Yoo 2023.)

Furthermore, it is no longer a dream to see a collaboration between an Asian and US artist. For music lovers, they all know "My Universe" by Coldplay and BTS, or "Kiss and Make Up" by Dua Lipa and BLACKPINK. With the rise of K-pop on the international market, in the near future, music lovers from all over the world can once think about the hit that mix Korean pop with their mother tongues. At the current time, Korean pop music has used not only the three most common languages in music; comprising English, Chinese and Japanese, but it expands to Spanish ("Me Gustas Tu" by GFriend, "Lo Siento" by Super Junior or "HOME" by BTS), Portuguese ("Havana" by IU), German ("Rewind"

by Jonghyun). The multilingual nature of Korean music brings new listening experience for audience since they can always wait for a new breakthrough over time with collaborations fans may never think about.

Besides, the internationalization of K-pop does not stop only at music. A realm that no one esteems its impact now participates in other realms that no one believes it can do. Starting with fashion and luxury brands, the Korean idol becomes a perfect option with enticing visual, attractive mien and huge support from fans. For example, BLACKPINK is known as the trendy queens because these trendsetters made everything they wear and use popular and sold out, not to mention Jennie's world-famous two-toned hair called "hairband bangs" or Rosé's wearing style dress-over-pants. (Koreaboo 2020.) In the aspect of cultural and politics, there is no lack of conferences and cultural exchange meetings with the engagement of Korean idol performances as a way to promote culture as well as representing the image of Korea towards foreign partners, such as the performance of BTS at Korea-France Friendship Concert in Paris in 2018 for South Korean president Moon Jae-In and other dignitaries in Paris. (Herman 2018.) Moreover, Korean Wave spread to sports when BTS Jung Kook officially made history as the first Korean artist to perform in the 2022 FIFA Qatar World Cup. The official soundtrack "Dreamers" and the World Cup opening ceremony performance received love and support not only from music fans but also football enthusiasts (Edwards 2022). What made the whole world surprised was Jung Kook was personally picked by Ahmed Al Baker, CEO of Katara Studios responsible for the Qatar World Cup 2022 opening ceremony (Chino 2022). This world-class performance was regarded as a hit for the world to see how big that Korean music industry impacts broader aspects rather than just music.

Everything has changed, K-pop no longer stops at their small area and the U.S. market now is no longer the unique market where Asians can never come. The Korean music industry, as a part of the Korean cultural industry, has been recognized by the government to be a great engine to the national development on the realm of economy as well as further international expansion of Korea. Therefore, Korean pop music has been labelled as "South Korea's greatest export" alongside electronics giant Samsung and automaker Hyundai, two of the most important factors in the growth of the Korean economy in years. (Mahr 2012.) These achievements not only confirm the power of the K-pop but also provide more opportunities for Korea, together with all Asian countries, to step closer to the international market, which will not limit to the music industry but expand to all aspects of the economy.

4 CASE STUDY

In the development of Korea as well as the Korean music industry, BTS is an important and unexpected factor. On a global scale, when it comes to the development of a country, there is no room for entertainment, especially in Asia and Korea. Nevertheless, the increasing growth of BTS in Western countries and worldwide make the imaginary scenario come true to see a component belonging to the entertainment field becoming a contributor accounting for the general growth. By using BTS as a case study, it is important to start with an analysis of the success of their marketing strategy to understand their global popularity. Nevertheless, the impact does not stop at the scale of an idol group in the national music industry. Their superior performance has led to positive effects on the Korean development. As a result, the BTS case study will be analysed with an aim to provide a general viewpoint on how they succeed with their global marketing for both scales, in the K-pop industry and for Korea in the global market.

4.1 Introduction to BTS

Record-breaking South Korean boy band BTS (Korean: 방탄소년단), an acronym for Bangtan Sonyeondan and is also translated as Bulletproof Boy Scouts, debuted on June 13, 2013, under Big Hit Entertainment (now is HYBE Corporation.) The Grammy-nominated boyband includes seven members RM (Kim Namjoon), leader and rapper; Jin (Kim Seokjin), lead vocalist; SUGA (Min Yoongi), rapper; j-hope (Jung Hoseok), rapper and dancer; JIMIN (Park Jimin), main vocalist and dancer; V (Kim Taehyung), lead vocalist; and Jung Kook (Jeon Jungkook), main vocalist, rapper, and dancer. The group is originally Korean, with all members being Korean singing in Korean. Behind the success of the biggest boyband in the world is the enthusiastic support from their most enormous fanbase A.R.M.Y, which stands for Adorable Representative Master of Ceremonies for Youth. Starting from a small company that was facing bankruptcy, these boys used their passion and ability to show the world how they transformed from "dirty spoons" into "golden spoons," topping numerous music charts in every country in the world, even with the most challenging markets as the United Kingdom or the United States.

Initially a hip-hop ensemble, they broadened their musical repertoire to more genres. Mental health, the trials of youth, self-love, and the drawbacks of celebrity are all appeared prominently in their songs. The production and composition of all BTS's albums set them apart from the rest of the Korean music business. The tagline "music for healing" encapsulates their unconventional musical philosophy, which they have chosen to express rather than follow the latest musical fads. All songs are written meaningfully, hidden in contemplative lyrics that move listeners because of the musicians' dedication to their craft. Since their debut in 2013 and continuing to the present day, BTS has established a new standard by which music is judged: accurately portraying all facets of life, even the negative aspects. While they play the part of an idol group in their songs, they are not afraid to sing about their imperfections. In an interview with TIME Magazine, Suga expressed their desire to bring untold stories that people "wanted to hear and were ready to hear". It will not be trite and hollow; instead, it will convey raw emotions that could not be said before, including hurt, fear, and worry. This is the objective of BTS, which aims to generate empathy for audiences through music to comfort and alleviate their concealed sufferings. (Bruner 2018).

In their nine years of working, BTS has produced nine full-length albums, seven compilation albums, and six EPs. The School trilogy marked their debut, the The Most Beautiful Moment in Life series (or can be called the HYYH series based on the abbreviation of Hwa Yang Yeon Hwa) brought them widespread attention, and the Love Yourself series propelled them to superstardom in the United States and beyond. Their musical and personal development is mirrored in the music's evolution, which reveals the challenges they have had to conquer. As a result, audiences might recognize themselves in the experiences they sing about. To commemorate their nine-year career up to their sabbatical to do mandatory military duty, they released an anthology in June 2022 named "Proof", which included songs from throughout their discography along with fresh new songs and recordings that had never been heard before. After the ninth anniversary, they announced the group hiatus and focus on solo projects for each member before the military service, along with a promise to reunite in 2025 (Blistein 2022).

What made BTS unique is not only their music but mostly comes from the values they transmit through their music. All the released songs are self-produced, and each member received credit for at least ten tracks, notably the primary production team, which included RM (213 songs), SUGA (147 songs), and j-hope (135 songs). Only songs written by artists themselves can precisely mirror the unique persona of the artist, along with precious values of acceptance, vulnerability, and success

(Bruner 2017). BTS is not content with only being an idol group; instead, they are working hard to develop into genuine musicians who can utilize their music as a platform to speak out. Having found widespread acclaim for their "real" music, they now use their voice to advocate for positive change in the community. During the Love Yourself era, they introduced LOVE MYSELF campaign in partnership with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to combat violence against children and teenagers worldwide. This was their first major global campaign where they played a starring role. (HYBE 2021.) In addition to becoming the first K-pop group to meet with Vice President Joe Biden, they also made history by being the first artists to address the United Nations General Assembly. (Shania 2022; Gupta 2021.) With the positive values spread by BTS, there is no room for doubt that they are regarded as the Korean literal national treasure (Gollayan 2018).

4.2 Marketing strategy of BTS

The wide spread of BTS is undeniable, but behind that worldwide sphere of influence is much effort into their marketing strategies from the position of an artist and the management company. This chapter will analyse how BTS and their entertainment label has applied different marketing strategies to create their values, marking the difference in a profound competitive market. The result of these strategies is not only proved by the success of BTS but its impact is also shown by the development of every side of Korea due to the BTS effect. To clarify the matter, the 7P's marketing strategy will be the primary methodology to do the BTS analysis; however, from my point of view, depending on different case, it is not accurate to affirm all the elements of the 7P marketing strategy always available in how they promote in a strict sense based on the cross-genre between music and business. It is acceptable to evaluate how they incorporate these elements in their marketing strategy. In addition, the use of glocalization strategy is also reflected throughout the entire marketing campaign, marking its importance to attain success both on a national and international scale.

4.2.1 Products

From the viewpoint of the music industry, it is clear that the "product" element means the values created by the artist. In an academic sense, this value contains the artist brand, meaning used artist name and fame for promotion, and the artist art, meaning what the artist creates, both tangible and intangible.

In this thesis, these are the key products often promoted by entertainment labels under the name of artists: music, albums, and merchandises.

By orienting in the right direction to develop the career path, it can be said that BTS and their personal branding is a very successful marketing campaign. Although the group has already hiatus, the commercial value is still undefeatable with numerous offers and contracts coming from luxury brands as well as important events.

4.2.1.1 Music

The first, and the main, factor contributing to the success of an artist is music. BTS is extremely successful in building their own brand name with the self-produced music bringing distinct values focusing on the youth problems. Because the music market grows at a quick speed annually together with a harsh elimination level, the lifespan of a song is no longer long-lasting as it was. Songs are basically made for commercial. The core of a song is to catch as much love from the audience as possible; therefore, the top goal is to produce trendy songs, even with nonsensical lyrics. Music is a part of art, and every creation of art takes time and effort. Music cannot go along with the "instant" adjective. When the music industry becomes a stunning and profitable area for businesses and idols, it results in the increase of idol groups and the high requirements for performance songs since not many idols can take the role as a producer. Excess of demand over supply impacts on the loss of creativity of the music producer, thus the unique of artwork started to be soluble. Therefore, the uniqueness of an artist becomes a new standard to stand out inside the Korean music market. And BTS, with their ability to produce music, has conquered the audience by artworks that truly contain the enthusiasm as well as the unity, transparency, and authenticity of the series of themes that reflect the current state of the social reality in their music. Therefore, this is regarded as their strongest advantage to solidify their position as a leading factor in rising the Korean music industry. Their image is based on the variety of music kinds and striking originality in lyrics to make their music becoming different.

Regarding music materials, BTS has developed a distinct sound combining hip-hop, R&B, and pop music elements. Instead of being framed in a specific music type, they are always trying different kinds of music to renew themselves and bring their fandom, the leading customer segment in their success, to new and surprising listening experience. With music that defies conventions in terms of style, audience, and meaning, BTS has shattered the mold of a creative production system that has long been

associated with stifling creativity. Given birth as a hip-hop group with underground artists as RM (widely known before as Runch Randa), SUGA, and j-hope, BTS gradually jumped out of the box to get closer to the mainstream so as to bring their music closer to more audience. The primary music type changed into pop, but more accurately, their music genre mainly varied in different kinds of pop. For example, they use Latin pop in “Airplane Pt. 2” and “Filter”; Dance-pop in “Go Go” and “Just Dance”; Disco pop in “Dynamite”; and Ballad pop in “The Truth Untold” and “Jamais Vu”. Expanded to a larger music scale, it is not difficult to find R&B songs such as “Singularity”, “HOME”, or “Paradise”; EDM with “So What”, “DNA”; and cannot be mentioned with hip hop in “UGH!”, “No More Dream”, and “Tear”. By utilizing a variety of genres in their music, BTS is able to readily reach a larger audience. Product diversification has allowed BTS to give the audience a priority to find the proper value relevant to their interests, as opposed to the "potboilers" groups developed to follow a predetermined concept. From a business standpoint, a company that can provide a wide variety of options are more likely to become an appealing option than those who can only provide a single, specialized option. This strategy also worked for a music business. Different clients have different musical preferences. This means that the more the variety of available music, the greater the consumers' enthusiasm for it. To have a detailed guideline about the discography, their fan ARMY has made some instructions in the below figure based on many specific music kinds so that newcomer can pick a suitable song based on the preference to start a music journey with BTS.

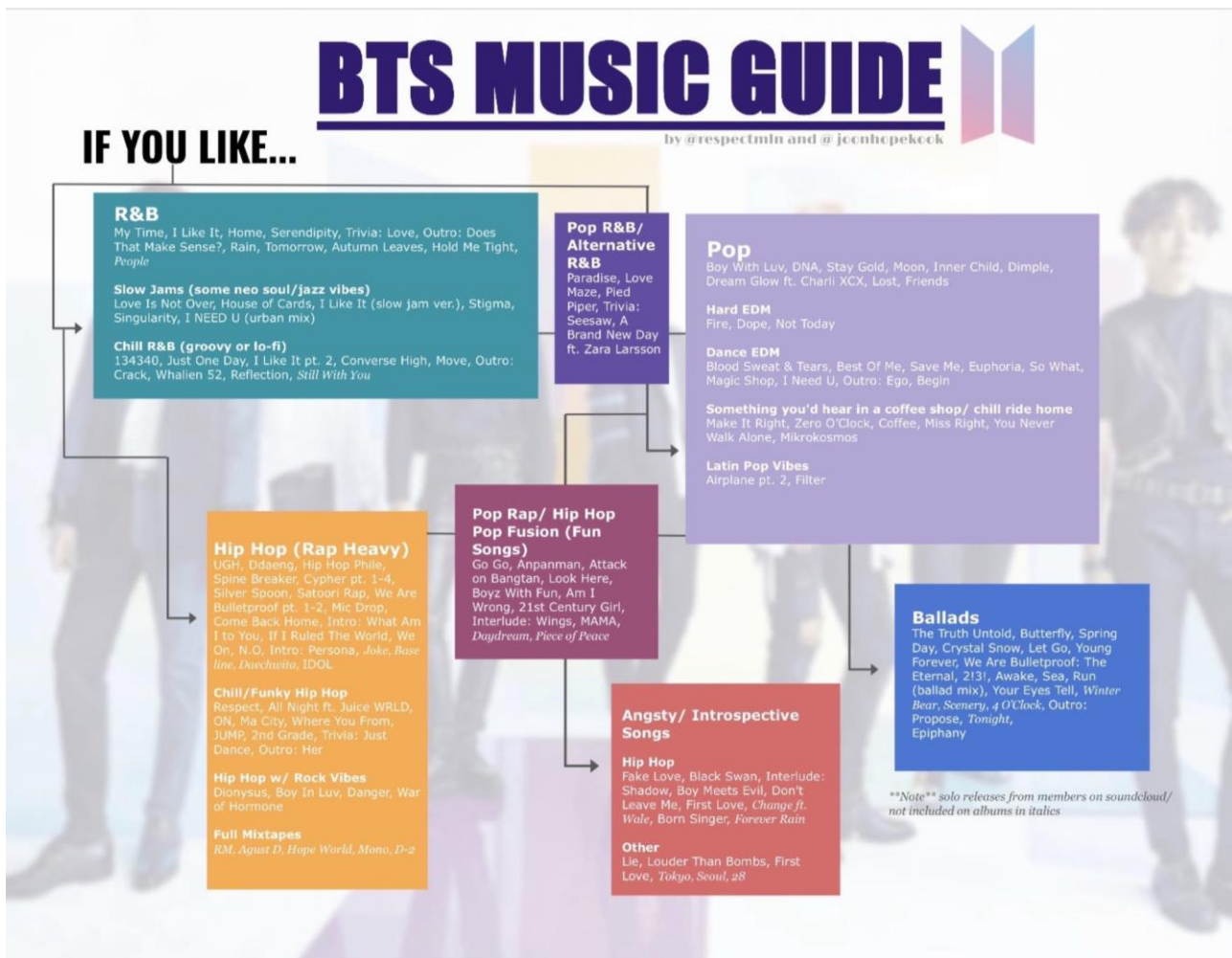


FIGURE 5. Guideline to BTS music genres (Sarah 2022)

However, their most significant achievement in producing music is mixing traditional materials into the modern music genre. This method is applied in the glocalization strategy when keeping the traditional materials tailored for the national market but still doing promotion in the international market to expand the customer scale. By adding the sound of traditional musical instruments into their music, they gain more attention from national and international listeners to the excitement of traditional musical instruments in “IDOL” and “Daechwita”. In “IDOL”, the rhythm comes from “pansori”, a traditional storytelling style on background music using the drums, mixing the sounds from the kkwaenggwari (a brass gong), gaggung (a horn bow), and janggu (a traditional Korean drum). (Soompi 2019.) Alternatively, in “Daechwita”, a solo of Agust D, which is the solo stage name of SUGA, it is recognized with the mixture between wind instruments such as nagak (seashell horn) and nabal (brass horn), as well as percussion instruments such as jing (large gong), jabara (small cymbals), taepyeongso (shawm), and yonggo (drum). (KBS World 2020.) These tracks were considered genuine artworks promoting traditional cultural values to a broader audience worldwide. In light of the fact that the young

generation is more interested in assimilating into global cultures and trying to be more foreign, it is crucial to spread the traditional culture to preserve the traditions through time. Nevertheless, instead of keeping the old and outdated version, nothing is better than renewing and giving it a rebirth.

After feeling the beat, it is the lyrics, more than anything else, that goes to the heart of listeners to determine how good a song is. When it comes to the words and sentiments conveyed via songs in the Korean music business, BTS is one of the most influential groups. It can be said that the majority of their songs is characterized by lively melodies inspiring exciting dance moves, but the lyrics are potent. What they sing about is full of real-world references that let them relate to listeners on a more personal level due to the honesty of what they convey through the song. According to an interview in 2017 with BTS about the influence of how they write and sing, the leader RM supposed that their big inspiration came from the fandom ARMY and their sharing. (Bruner 2017.) As their first orientation, they would prefer to speak about real-life problems of real young people, how they perceive the world, and how they face the world. Hence, their musical evolution is built on their life growth, and what they write down is their true feelings and thoughts toward the world. They built a story in each musical development era, unlike releasing random songs on random topics. Trying in numerous genres and incorporating social and cultural messages by expressing what Korean pop music avoids mentioning, such as mental health, self-love, and social justice.

For example, regarding social matters, they criticized the harsh education system aiming to manufacture "studying machines" in "N.O"; they satirized the generational gap between the poor and the rich in "Baepsae"; they excoriated the cold-hearted young people who always asked for trendy and expensive things from their parents even after seeing the parents' hardship in "Spine Breaker"; and their most political-related song "Am I Wrong?", layered with different political matters, criticized the political apathy of the young. These songs go beyond mere rebellion by pushing their listeners to reflect on and make sense of their surroundings, to speak up when necessary, and to take action when they see injustice. Besides, mental health is also their favourite topic since they found the importance of self-love in a world where more and more young people face mental health problems. They talked directly about depression and struggles with anxiety and trauma in "The Last" (by Agust D) and "Blue & Grey"; about an attempt to get loose from the alienation of being different in "Whalien 52"; or about the longing for someone and anguish of losing beloved friends in "Spring Day". Nevertheless, above all else, the most profound letter is to show listeners how to overcome these negatives and then learn how to love and be loved. "I'm Fine", "Zero O'clock", "Magic Shop", or "Answer: Love Myself" are all songs

transmitting healing and comfort for people, lighting hope inside every heart and helping them understand how precious they are. The high level of social consciousness in their music plays a crucial role in bolstering their reputation as trustworthy artists. Artists use art to mirror the world, while audiences use art to question their place in the world. Therefore, including a social factor in the design of a product is a brilliant marketing move that can help establish the company as a responsible brand toward social life.

In addition, one of the reasons BTS song lyrics became the next level is the clever wordplay created mainly by RM. First of all, wordplay adds a layer of complexity and depth to their lyrics. It is similar to literature; the art of the metaphor creates a multifaceted approach to their work, allowing revelers to get rid of the literal interpretation and reach more thoughts as their imagination. This approach works in their favour since sociopolitics is always a taboo for discussion; wordplay draws a perfect sheath outside for the deep message inside. In another aspect, wordplay expresses the clever and witty use of words, creating a unique lyrical style in songs and engaging the interest of listeners. In BTS's lyrics, wordplay is provided in different forms, and more interestingly, wordplay is even mixed between English and Korean. When it comes to malapropism, an approach when using the misspelling of a word to display another meaning, many sentences use this wordplay technique. For example, Namjoon raps in "Telepathy," "Oh can I be your Bibilly Hills, like you did the same to me." He plays on the name "Beverly Hills" to make a pun. In Korean, something you may rely on is called a "bibil." So it is comparable to stating he would like to become the emotional prop for the fan. Or in "Heartbeat", there is a part, "I been calling your name in this whole universe (Now I need no space) I got youniverse". The wordplay transforms "universe" into "youniverse" because u is slang for you, and it reflects you (meaning his fandom ARMY) are the love he found, making he does not want any "space" with "you" in "universe". Another wordplay technique often used in their lyrics is the double entendre, such as the metaphor of "fish" in "selfish" in "Am I Wrong?" means selfishness is part of "self". Onomatopoeia is also an exciting wordplay adding more sounds into the lyrics; for instance, the use of "ddaeng" in "Ddaeng", which is comparable to "ding" in English, represents a wrong answer. Besides, one of the most popular wordplays in all artworks, slang, is also a highlight in BTS's lyrics. The use of slang is often Korean, especially in the local language. "PalDoGangSan", usually called Satoori Rap by the fan, is a good song for this wordplay technique. As Satoori means dialect in Korean, the song is about Korean dialects represented as a rap battle using three dialects, including Gyeongsang, Jeolla, and Standard Seoul dialects. (Holdt 2021.)

All BTS members appreciate the sincerity in music, so the way they use personal stories as sources of inspiration for music and "naturally touch upon various topics" made them stand out in the area. (Ton 2021.) As an idol group, they accept being taken as the example for the young, but they say "no" to being innocent and indolent. They choose to face hurt, suffering, and criticism. They open to music, open to see the wickedness and the rawness of emotions to write what people always avoid and sing about what people always hide. This made BTS and their name. Thanks to the training approach allowing individual identities and personal expression from Big Hit Entertainment (now changed into BigHit Music label), BTS has room to let the world see how they are different and dedicated to art (Khatib 2022). Overall, the freedom in BTS music has demonstrated a successful study case in building and promoting a brand name by identifying and expressing personal identity. This is only a part of the entire marketing campaign for affirming the name BTS into the worldwide market.

To sum up, it is clear that a music product made by BTS comprises numerous efforts inside. The core elements of BTS's product strategy in music include innovation, originality, and a dedication to giving its fans a special and meaningful musical experience. From an artist perspective, what they create is not called a product; it is art. Therefore, the effort to make it perfect before releasing it to the listeners is considered their responsibility and necessity. Music is the core value of BTS, and it is also the primary product attracting customers to the brand name "BTS". As the owner of the brand name, BTS is primarily responsible for promoting their product by making it different and outstanding compared to other competitors in the market. That is the reason why BTS music is characterized by a high degree of creativity that enables it to offer an exciting and engaging listening and reading experience consistently. As a result, BTS's lovers are always eager to wait for the latest product despite more and more Korean idols debut every year.

4.2.1.2 Albums

If music is intangible, album sale is the tangible element to indicate the stature of a K-pop group. Albums play a crucial role in the K-pop industry, serving as a mean for fans to establish a connection with their preferred performers. From an economic viewpoint, albums are the main mean of marketing and the dominant source of revenue for K – pop. In the year 2022, a noteworthy quantity of thirteen albums were sold, with each album exceeding one million copies sold (Ha 2022). This is a significant observation, as it indicates that a substantial number of devoted music enthusiasts are investing in

physical copies of music. The record-breaking group BTS is the dominant force in South Korea, always taking the top spot in physical album sales. BTS contributed 12.4% to the total number of albums sold according to the most recent data from 2022, despite only releasing one compilation album (Statista 2023). For seven consecutive years, they topped the list of artists with the best-selling albums in Korea. In the latest figure in 2022, although BTS only released one discography album “Proof” with one version, they are still on the top of the highest physical album sales in South Korea as figure 6 illustrated. (Statista 2022.) The Million Seller not only created numerous new and unexpected milestones, but they also surpassed and broke previous marks. With almost 5 million copies sold, the "Map of the soul: 7" album is the best-selling album of all time in South Korea out of their eleven million records that have been sold (Ha 2022). There is no room for doubt that only impactful artists can influence to be able to overpower the standards of the music markets in current times due to the continual changes in music consumption and the rise of streaming era. That is what BTS have done.

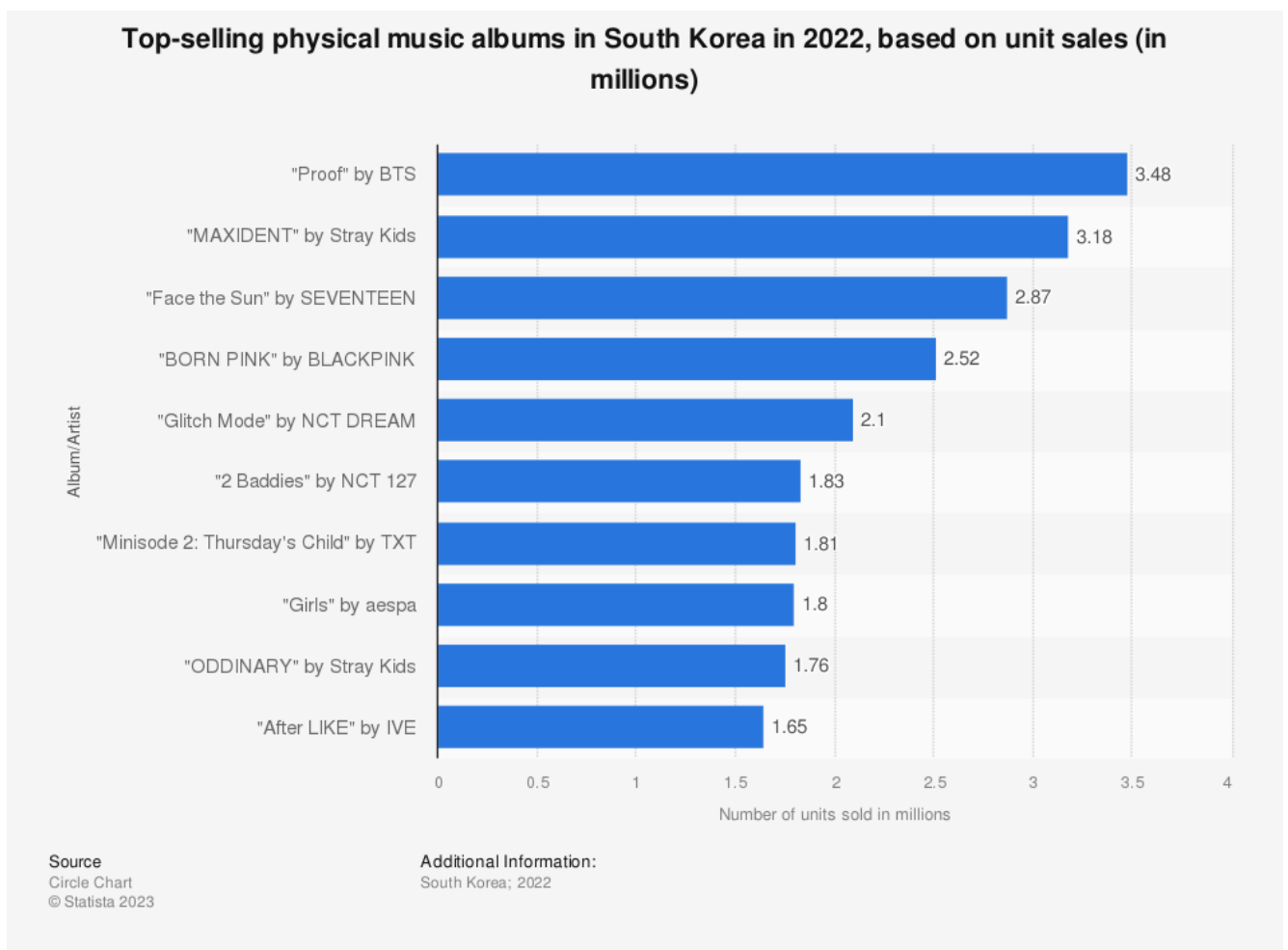


FIGURE 6. The total album sales in Korea 2022 (Statista 2022)

In K-pop culture, albums are not only a CD with a full list of songs. In order to make it more attractive, the K-pop industry has transformed albums to be a visual book containing songs. A basic album will contain a CD of songs, a photobook with specific concept based on the theme of the album, photocard, and poster. In addition, an album may contain different versions, which is a way to impulse the purchasing habit from fans since they can choose to buy the most favourite version or collect all. Currently, albums are increasingly conceptually constructed around a specific narrative or theme, and they frequently come with deluxe packaging that elevate the listening experience.

One of the most significant characteristics of the Korean music industry is the spending culture. Basically, it is not a new term for a fan in all genres. Spending money is a way to achieve what they like. For example, sneakerheads are passionate about collecting, wearing, and trading sneakers, whilst numismatists are fond of collecting coins, and philatelists are in love with stamps. However, in the Hallyu culture, money equals real dedication. Buying albums and other official merchandise is a way to express love and support for their idols, as well as feel a sense of being a part of the fandom. This emotional bond is the primary factor to build a loyal fanbase, which will decide how much fans can devote for idols to push their future activities. Besides, when it comes to the K-pop industry, it is either all or nothing. Unless artists succeed with good selling figures, they do not receive anything from the entertainment companies. As mentioned before, the cost of creating an idol group is not a small number; hence K-pop acts must work until the money they get can pay all the debts. As a result, spending money on idols is not just for entertainment; it is also related to their survival. Thanks to this spending culture, K-pop contributed to the rise of CDs in recent years after a long period of facing struggles with the enlargement of streaming platforms.

Another reason contributing to the development of money-oriented Korean music industry is the enthusiasm for collecting. The easiest way to attract fans, especially collectors, to purchase albums is the appearance of limited versions. Firstly, fans can get limited gifts, usually cards, postcards, and posters, when purchasing the pre-order albums. Other limited gifts are also attached when buying a full set of albums (meaning buying all versions) or buying at different distributors. Besides the official versions, many groups also release limited versions. For example, BTS has released a limited version of BE named BE (Essential Edition) as a thank you to fans and a celebration of the No. 1 Billboard Hot 100 of "Dynamite" and "Life Goes On", along with the 63rd Grammy Awards nomination. (Monteil 2021.) In addition, each album often has a special card, which is randomly put inside. So, in order to get that special lucky card, buying more albums is a popular way. Moreover, fans are willing to buy as many albums as possible due to the lucky tickets for attending the fan sign, a unique event allowing fans to

get the idols' signatures and communicate with them. It can be seen that Korean albums are different in what it has and what fans get. By making it seem special and beneficial, fans are always willing to dedicate all their money to the idols, or more specially, entertainment companies.

4.2.1.3 Merchandise

Merchandise is a new factor in the music industry. K-pop is famous for the best consumer experience to meet all the demands and bring an ideal feeling to satisfy what fans wish. Therefore, besides the investment in music, as in tangible and intangible forms analysed before, the birth of official merchandise is regarded as an effective marketing tool not only to promote the leading resource of the idol (music) but also to make money on the idol image. Merchandise comprises two main types, which are concerts and official merchandise. The concert is to sell the music, and the merchandise is to sell the image.

There are many ways to enjoy music, but as a music lover, nothing is better than the direct experience. A live music show can satisfy listeners with a different emotional effect. The effect of being synchronized with the surroundings brings a feeling of belonging to a community where everyone has a similar passion for an artist or a music genre. In addition, a live concert is always well-organized with elaborate visual effects, lighting, and staging, as well as professional stage performances resulting in a unique and exciting listening experience that cannot be replicated online. From a K-pop perspective, live concerts become even more special since it is not easy to have an opportunity to meet and connect with idols closer. Because idols are associated with an ideal image that everyone always dreams of, seeing them in real life and hearing them singing and performing are considered a dream come true for fans, especially for international fans. Therefore, doing a tour, or world tour, is an effective way to interact closer with fans, enhancing fan loyalty with the fan-service satisfaction. In addition, the tour is a great source of revenue for idols and companies. The case study BTS is a perfect example of their vast profits in touring. In the top 40 tours as ranked by Billboard Boxscores, BTS came in at number 27 with only 11 concerts, making over \$75 million and attracting 458,144 people (Hicap 2022). Back in the past, the "Love Yourself" world tour and its extension version, "Love Yourself: Speak Yourself" shattered records at each venue at a breakneck pace for selling tickets. Total gross revenue for the extended tour was \$116.6 million with 976,283 tickets, estimated that 48,814 tickets were sold for each concert (Frankenberg 2019). This concert series made BTS the top-grossing touring group in 2019 as

well as conquer all the large stadiums around the world, such as Wembley Stadium (London), Met Life Stadium (New Jersey), Rose Bowl Stadium (Los Angeles), and Stade de France (Paris). (Rolli 2019.)

In terms of official merchandise, what makes K-pop different is the continuous release of goods. K-pop has a never-ending content wheel, as opposed to other pop bands where merchandise is not a central focus in the marketing strategy. This aspect is divided into two kinds, including the merchandise released by the company and by collaborations with partner brands. Both groups have various products that can satisfy all the demands from entertainment to daily life. Basically, fans can create and live in their colourful K-pop utopia as long as the financial condition is enough. From the case study, BTS has released numerous types of merchandise. They have fixed contents in different seasons, such as Summer Package in summer, Winter Package in winter, Seasons Greetings in spring, and Memories in the annual anniversary. Every year there will be an official membership release along with the enclosed merchandise package. Regarding the concerts, there will be official collection for particular sectors, for instance, the U.S. and Asia. Moreover, they will release a DVD version and a blue-ray version for some significant stages and areas. In important holidays such as New Year, Christmas, and Mid-Autumn Festival, a new merch collection will also be released as a special celebration. Recently, every comeback will be marked with a special merchandise collection for fans based on the theme of the album. The dizzy release speed of merchandise drives fans crazy with questions about whether the fan culture is worth the raw numbers of how much they spend on idols. From a business perspective, this is a great marketing strategy to increase the brand recognition. The case study subject has a variety of products for its customers to choose from, with each product owning its name, logo, or theme related to the subject. Therefore, the more customers buy, the higher the commercial value is.

However, it does not stop at this. The purpose of the promotion of idols is to increase commercial value and get more endorsement deals. These collaborations lead to more promotion on partner brands, meaning more special collections or products will come. The recognition is increased when the artist's name appears more in other aspects besides music. These collaborations can be regarded as a win-win relationship when both parties reach a new customer segment that has already gotten along with the partner brands. As a result, K-pop idols are no longer just Korean performers; they are more than that, such as representatives. In recent years, BTS has acted as an ambassador for numerous companies, including Samsung, Louis Vuitton, Puma, McDonald's, Coca-Cola, FILA, and Hyundai. (Mubarak 2023.) Although their target is on music, the sheer influence of the K-pop supergroup ensures that they attract the most lucrative deals from some of the biggest brands. The name BTS appeared in all aspects

of life, from fashion, cars, and clothes to food, drinks, and cosmetics, showing how far the K-pop industry has gone.

4.2.2 Price

From the business point of view, the pricing strategy of the K-pop industry is clever since it increases the value of a typical product due to the artist value inside the product. As mentioned before, the artist value is the key component for the industry, so setting a higher pricing rate compared to the market price is important to sell the brand name. It is similar to luxury brands, such as Chanel, who position their product as exclusive in the market to affirm the level of the brand. This premium pricing strategy relies on the spending culture of fans that are always willing to pay more as long as the products are related to the artists. Based on that perception, companies step up the merch production to maximize the profit earned from the artist brand they build. Therefore, instead of only releasing merchandise in the field of music, a wide range of products are sold, from stationery to household appliances, including the artist's name or logo, and at a higher, or even very much higher price, than the market price. For example, a glass cup set with a flames pattern for the D-Day album merchandise collection is sold at 32 euros, although the market price is only around 10 euros.

However, the consumerism of fans is generous because fan culture runs more profound than the raw numbers of how much is spent. Nevertheless, what companies target is exclusive to the brand. Hence, there are some collections that are only sold in a limited quantity, usually the tour or comeback merchandise. This strategy is called scarcity pricing, which creates a sense of scarcity to urge fans to make purchase decisions as soon as possible before sold out. Yet, the purchase decisions are often made even before the collection is on sale since the purchase speed is counted as a minute. The BTS artist-made collection is an example of when they sold out in less than a minute. Even though they were put on sale at the Busan concert last year, fans camped 26 hours at the stadium before the concert to be the first people in the queue to buy the merchandise. For a classic Boston bag designed by V and a mood lamp designed by Jung Kook, only three products were put on sale despite thousands of people queuing. There was an extremely high demand to buy artist goods, but companies limit the quantity that made the values higher and higher than ever.

If the pricing strategy is compared between Korean entertainment companies, there are not many differences between the product prices. The entire K-pop market follows market-based pricing in order to

build a fair and healthy market between companies. In addition, this strategy creates a sense of obviousness inside the premium pricing strategy of the Korean music industry, which "upgrades" the market value fast and unexpectedly in the short term.

In the case of BTS, in the Hybe Q1 2023 Investor Conference Call and Earnings Report, they are confirmed for using the dynamic pricing for the concert ticket of SUGA in the US on April 27, 28, and 30. (HYBE 2023.) This means the price will fluctuate on the demand of customers. With the power of BTS, there is no room for doubt about the ability to have a sold-out concert, and it is demonstrated by all eleven concerts in the D-Day Tour in the US of SUGA are sold out. As a result, the high demand of fans attending concerts will bring a larger profit for companies, as well as proof of the power of the artists. However, this strategy is raising a negative impact on the supporters since this money-oriented strategy causes the injustice and inequality to approach the culture and the arts.

4.2.3 Place

Regarding the "place" element, it refers mainly to the promoting activities on social media when it comes to the Korean music industry. As the world is going global, social media is vital in helping K-pop break into the global market with easy access and fast spread. As information is disseminated faster than ever, boundaries are only now a geographic concept. As a result, the use of social media explodes, and internet platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Tiktok and YouTube become increasingly dominant, unlocking the door to international success for BTS and the Korean pop music business in general. These five online platforms are also the primary sites where the band promotes their music and interacts with their fans and community, along with two other online platforms designed for artists, fancafe and Weverse. To clarify the "place" factor in BTS's marketing strategy, this thesis will analyse how BTS optimize their activities on these social media to strengthen the connection between artist and supporters as well as affirm their presence in the competitive market. The figure below is the list of their social media accounts used for promotional and interactive activities. It does not include VLive app since this app was unified with Weverse from January 2023, so there is lack of accurate information on this app.

TABLE 1. BTS social media accounts

Social media	Account name	Followers
YouTube	<u>@BANGTANTV</u>	74.6 million
	<u>@HYBELABELS</u>	70.5 million
Instagram	<u>@bts.bighitofficial</u>	73 million
	<u>@rkive</u>	43.6 million
	<u>@jin</u>	45.1 million
	<u>@agustd</u>	44.8 million
	<u>@uarmyhope</u>	45.8 million
	<u>@j.m</u>	49.3 million
	<u>@thv</u>	58.4 million
	<u>@jungkook.97 (deleted)</u>	52 million (before deleted)
Twitter	<u>@BTS_twt</u>	48.3 million
	<u>@bts_bighit</u>	42.9 million
	<u>@BTS_jp_official</u>	13.7 million
Facebook	<u>BTS (방탄소년단)</u>	21 million
Tiktok	<u>@bts_official_bighit</u>	59.3 million
Weverse	<u>BTS</u>	22.1 million
Fancafe	<u>방탄소년단</u>	1.2 million
Website	<u>https://ibighit.com/bts/eng/</u>	

From the debut, BTS members used only the group account for promotional activities on all social media platforms. This strategy was aimed to underline the group activities, encouraging fans to focus on the group support and avoiding partiality between "hot members" and other members. Although BTS was present on many social media, only two accounts were used by BTS members, including the Twitter account (@BTS_twt) and fancafe, while the company managed the other accounts. In addition, BTS also used the VLive app alongside with company to make live broadcasts. The online group activities were prioritized until the end of 2021, when BTS members opened individual Instagram accounts (Cavender 2021). It is assumed that this action marked the first step for the solo promotion of each member after eight years of doing group promotion, which was announced officially at the BTS

dinner party on the 9th anniversary. However, after one year, the youngest member of BTS, Jungkook, deleted his Instagram account (Kim 2023).

In the first years, Twitter (@BTS_twt) and fancafe are the primary online sites for BTS members to interact with followers. Fancafe is a unique site designed for Korean idols to connect with fans. It is not a public website for everyone to visit. Since it is a close place for fans and idols to become a group member on fancafe, there is a test related to the group activities to check the degrees of interest in the group. Therefore, members who joined this site were considered "real fans", and the benefits for members were extremely "expensive" due to the high security of the fancafe. This website was popular with K-pop fans in the 2010s and opened a new term about how idols can interact closer to fans. In recent years, specialized platforms for idol and fan contact have developed, such as Weverse by Hybe and Lysn by SM Entertainment, to meet the demands of expanding fanbases.

Before debuting in 2013, Big Hit Entertainment, the former name of the management company of BTS, recognized the value of social networks in promotion, especially connecting to fans to build fan loyalty. Thus, BTS began to build a strong image on social networks. Every BTS member was highly active on social media by posting selfies, photos, blogs, or just some simple greetings, questions, and reminders to fans. Twitter is the place where BTS dominates. At the beginning of the 2010s, Twitter was not a popular tool for social media. However, Twitter was outstanding on a worldwide scale, especially in Western countries. With a different and risky orientation to build a strong presence on Twitter, BTS quickly made this social media site become their play. They conquered the first rank for most followers on Twitter for a music group after breaking the One Direction's record in 2022, together with numerous unexpected records as a Korean boy band in the international market. (Pilastro 2022.) The popularity of BTS on the blue bird app is unbeatable when every post has massive engagements from supporters, even a short and funny video of a member cutting hair or a ridiculous picture of a random funny moment. The average like for a member's post is mostly no less than one million, while the average retweet is around 400,000. However, Twitter is not the only social media BTS dominates. Their influence spans also reflected on Instagram and TikTok, although they have just joined recently. On TikTok, BTS is the most followed group, with nearly 60 million followers. This success can be predicted since they set a new record for receiving one million followers fastest (in 3 hours 31 minutes) on the first day open the account (Molenaar 2022). On Instagram, the serial record-holders, BTS did the same as other social media platforms to smash all the records as a group alongside as individuals. Consequently, BTS and their ARMY demonstrated that they are a formidable force on social media, with a solid number of engagements on every site they appear on.

4.2.4 Promotion

In the music industry, promotion is one of the most significant components to determine success because this is a game in which winners get everything, and losers earn nothing. One of the keys contributing to the success of BTS on the global scale is how they communicate values through the promotion aspect. To define the nature of their marketing, it can be evaluated in terms of conventional marketing and digital marketing. They mix the use of two strategies so as to optimize the marketing performances and enhance the visibility on different marketing channels, which accounts for the increase in the commercial values of their product, including music and the brand BTS.

4.2.4.1 Digital marketing

As the world goes digital, it will be a big mistake if ignoring the power of online platforms. Due in large part to the role social media played in the global expansion of K-pop, digital marketing has become a strategic part of advertising the product. According to the BTS case, their online presence is expressed through promotional activities on digital channels comprising social media and online streaming platforms. Regarding online streaming services such as Spotify, Apple Music, and YouTube, K-pop is widely known for its high reliance on these platforms to distribute music to global audiences. Spotify and Apple are the two most popular music streaming services; therefore, the most effective way to publicize the music is to be present and create buzz on these platforms. Recently, it has been common to see K-pop songs recommended on top global playlists on Spotify as Today's Top Hits or on the top of the iTunes Chart in many countries. To prove the power of the group, all BTS members have no.1 on iTunes in more than 100 countries along with their group, as well as the album has no.1 in most countries in history, and the fastest song and solo song reached no.1 in all countries available for iTunes all credited to BTS. (Asher 2022.) This step contributes significantly to the global spread of Korean pop music.

The use of digital marketing of BTS and K-pop is also present on social media. They appeared on all social media and actively engaged with followers. To enrich the content, there are different types of content to be updated on social media. The daily content and individuality expression can be found on BTS's individual Instagram accounts, while Weverse is a place for close sharing and live streams between fans and idols. Alternatively, Twitter is now mostly used for promotion or archived memorable group moments. Since followers are always willing to engage with any move, the way BTS diversified

the content and utilized social media has increased social engagement maintaining strong visibility on online platforms.

Another type of digital marketing that is also included in the strategy is influencer marketing. Influencer marketing is not a new term, especially for a growing business such as K-pop. In this aspect, there are three object groups to be the influential factors towards the BTS. First is the collaboration between artists such as Halsey, Lauv, Steve Aoki, and Nicki Minaj. Promoting the mutual product can be a part of marketing the brand BTS and music to a broad reach to new audiences. Second, is the brand partners, such as Valentino, Calvin Klein, Samsung, and Hyundai. Based on the scale of advertisement campaigns, the brand awareness for BTS can be increased to reach a different customer segment out of the music-lover circle. The last one is the media agency. Many entertainment companies will cooperate with these agencies to release more special interviews or news about idols to leverage for marketing campaigns.

Furthermore, the last element in the digital marketing strategy is using digital channels, including websites and mobile apps. There are many websites designed specifically for different purposes and campaigns for BTS, such as the main company website and the website for the LOVE MYSELF campaign. Regarding mobile app, Weverse is the most frequently used, as it is developed by the management company. This app works as the official forum for BTS, with different sections to update various content and official announcements from the company. For example, inside the BTS community group, there are four sections, including a Feed for fan messages where idols can read and reply, Artist for idol posts and stories, Media for interviews and video content such as music videos, behind-the-scenes shows, and LIVE for all live streams.

4.2.4.2 Conventional marketing

In addition to digital marketing, conventional or traditional marketing is still a good method for promotional activities. Based on the definition, three types of traditional marketing mostly apply to BTS in particular and to the entire Korean music industry: broadcasting, billboards, and print advertisements. In the national market, the power of broadcasting is undeniable since the weekly music shows are met with warm reception. Their great impact is provided in the effort to compete for the trophy for the favourite song of the week. The trophy can be considered as proof of the song as well as the group popularity in the Korean market, so participation in these music shows is crucial to enhance the group

awareness towards the national market. Besides, broadcasting also means television appearances, which comprise participation in TV shows and interviews. For BTS, their recent comeback promotions have been promoted at both national and international levels. Hence, the number of music shows, and TV shows they participated in was higher, not to mention *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon*, *The Late Late Show with James Corden*, and many Korean shows such as *You Quiz On The Block*.

Regarding billboard advertising, there are two sources that promote billboard advertising for idols, brand partners, and from fans. In order to launch a new campaign with ambassadors, brands often run advertisements on billboards to capture the attention of passers-by. For example, one of many times on the billboard at Time Square was to celebrate the fifth anniversary sponsored by Line, or the recent mega-size billboard in New York, as well as most Calvin Klein stores around the world sponsored by Calvin Klein for Jung Kook to welcome him as the newest global brand ambassador. (Herman 2018; Mane 2023.) On the other hand, billboard advertisements from fan projects are numerous and can be found everywhere, domestically and overseas. For instance, a fan project to get a celebratory birthday billboard at New York's World Trade Center transportation hub was prepared to celebrate V's birthday, making him the first celebrity to get this type of promotion. (Mane 2022.)

The appearance on print ads is divided into two types: in newspapers and in magazines. The content, alongside the appearance in the newspaper, is usually a professional interview sharing about BTS's new album or achievement or a detailed analysis of professors related to them. Some famous examples of BTS in newspapers widely known are *New York Times* with an album review for "Love Yourself: Her" or the most recent interview with RM about an art patron. (Caramanica 2018; Russeth 2022.) In terms of magazines, there are many examples in different realms instead of music. Most idols appearing in magazines are related to fashion brand partnerships or a collection collaborating with the magazine to promote the image. In this aspect, the promotion mainly focuses on the images and rarely includes interviews as in newspapers. Therefore, the biggest benefit is to increase recognition and also an excellent chance to command the attention of fashion brands for future collaborations. As a brand ambassador for Valentino, SUGA was recently featured on three covers of the May 2023 issue of *Marie Claire Korea* (Dani-Dee 2023). Through this collaboration with *Marie Claire*, SUGA and his new album *D-Day* also received co-promotion from the magazine with the advertisement on the release of the edition.

4.2.5 People

The "people" component of the 7P marketing mix refers, in a nutshell, to all human aspects that influence marketing efforts. From the music industry perspective, there are two objects affecting this factor: first, the direct object is the artist and management company, who produce the product (music), advertise, and deliver it directly to the end consumers. The other is the fans and supporters, who consume the product and also contribute to the promoting campaign of the first object. When the consumer also acts as a product marketer, this is one of the biggest distinctions between the music industry and the others.

In the BTS case, the human factor inside their strategy is their group image. As celebrities, the image, behaviour, and words have a significant impact on framing the brand and reputation. The seven-member band's talent, attitude, and dignity to relate to their audiences make up the "people" component. Before having a chance to stand on the stage, all Korean trainees had to take part in a harsh training program in many aspects to ensure they had enough skills to be an idol. Singing, or rapping, and dancing are the most important conditions, together with soft skills such as stage presence, interview, languages, and camera interaction. Therefore, the ones becoming idols can be evaluated as the most talented among talented people. BTS is famous for their music production ability and energetic stage presence. In the beginning, due to the difficult situation of the small label, BTS focuses on performance superiority, which is about the music and the group image. This focus until now is still maintained as the motto, which always puts the customer experience first.

Looking at how BTS developed the group image, it is clear that they targeted to be a socially-conscious group using music to transfer positive values to the community. BTS launched their LOVE MYSELF campaign, aiming to make the world a better place after partnering with the Korean Committee for UNICEF to sponsor the #ENDviolence campaign, whose goal is to ensure that kids and adolescents can grow up free from fear of violence. In addition, the powerful speech about the self-love of RM, the leader of BTS, has encouraged and motivated the young generation to be generous, selfless, loving, accepting, and considerate towards themselves. To prove their words, the charity work of each member is the most evident. Throughout nine-years of working as artists, the charity work of BTS is extensive since they are in the habit of doing charity annually. The most recent donation is from BTS Jung Kook to the Seoul National University Children's Hospital with one billion won (roughly \$750,000) to support the Integrated Care Centre project and the medical care of children from low-income families, and from BTS SUGA to relief funds for the earthquake in Turkey and Syria with one

million won. (Han-soo 2023; Agarwal 2023.) These positive impacts from BTS are the role model and inspiration for their fans to do good things. Furthermore, one of the most remarkable charity works is the donation to Black Lives Matter, with over two million dollars raised from BTS and ARMY (Velez 2020). As a result, BTS themselves successfully strengthened the people factor in the marketing strategy to attain their aim of disseminating positive messages and advocating social concerns through their songs and deeds.

On the other hand, the "people" element of BTS also reflects their close relationship with their fans. According to Mark Mulligan, a music-industry analyst, the rise of streaming leads to a loose emotional bond between artists and consumers since there is no real connection through the online services (Kwaak 2021). What distinguishes BTS from other artists in the industry is the emphasis on fostering a close relationship between artists and supporters, as well as the mutual support between both parties. Jung Kook believed music would bring them closer together, with ARMY inspiring BTS to create music and BTS's music serving as psychiatric therapy for the ARMY. (Ton 2021.) Moreover, as stated previously, the frequent online interactions with the ARMY through posts, stories, and live streams on social media play a crucial role in assisting them in establishing a strong presence and connection with their followers. By the sincerity, genuineness, and sympathy from BTS that fans can feel, they strive to give back as much as they can for BTS, and that is the co-promotion of their music. No other group of fans can be the main marketers their idols as ARMY can. Within the most devoted fandom is an unrivalled organization with specific groups concentrating on specific tasks with the same goal in mind, which is to bring BTS all successes. They are active on all social media platforms but predominantly on Twitter. There are data-oriented accounts specializing in data analysis and strategy planning who are responsible for monitoring and guiding fandoms in developing promotional plans. (Moon 2020.) For many ARMYs, their self-assumed responsibilities include the daily broadcast to keep songs uppermost on the charts, purchasing albums if possible, pushing top-trendings on Twitter, and anything else they can think of if it will benefit BTS. In addition to bringing the greatest advantages to BTS, the ARMY fandom believes that its mission is to shield BTS from any harmful words or deceitful actions by rivals or hostile forces. These are the characteristics that comprise the culture of fandom. It resembles a religion in that there is an absolute mental reliance on what one sees, even if only the positive aspects are revealed. (Seo & Hollingsworth 2019.) What the ARMY is willing to sacrifice for BTS demonstrates that the group has successfully captured the psychology of its fans in order to decipher their thoughts and priorities and establish a solid monarchy of dedicated supporters. This is the foundation for the success of a company when it has a loyal customer base that is always willing to support future initiatives, as well as being an effective tool to promote and expand the customer base.

4.2.6 Process

Adding to the marketing strategy of BTS is the appearance of the "process" factor. This aspect will be analyzed based on the entire promotional process of a Korean idol, which is a meticulous program from scratch with endless activities on pre-release, release, and post-release days. One of the variables that make K-pop compelling is the surprise. The Korean pop music industry has risen to prominence around the world thanks to its high production values and innovative marketing techniques that lead to improvements in entertainment quality, ascending to global recognition. The multibillion-dollar industry has comprehended the significance of content creation and social media marketing in order to reach larger audiences with greater marketing efficiency by maximizing the inherent dynamism of social media. Another exciting aspect of this industry is the continuity of content production, which means that all parties associated with artists always strive to maintain a strong presence on the market, regardless of whether it is their comeback time. It can be said that K-pop never falls short of content (Belinky 2019).

Pre-release, release, and post-release are the three primary phases of a flawless Korean idol promotional plan. Teaser photos or videos announcing the debut or comeback are the first steps. This can go on up to a month before publication, giving fans ample time to gather clues and formulate theories about what will happen next. On the release day, the first 24 hours is the time for fans to set new records for idols in every aspect, such as YouTube views and likes, album sales, or digital streaming amount. The final phase consists of promotional activities from idols on weekly music programs, entertainment shows, or foreign television shows if their marketing campaign is geared toward the international market. The first two phases are designed to introduce the product, in this case, music, to the market, while the final phase ensures that the marketability of the product stays stable.

Nowadays, companies often post a detailed promotional schedule to announce the upcoming release with an aim to gain more attraction from fans as well as better fan-made supportive plans accompanied with companies throughout the comeback. Although the basic framework is still the same as with other groups, BTS adds two primary keys: more surprising elements and fan discussions. The superb method to prevent content material from being created over and over again is to generate unanticipated interest. BTS and their supporter always make the world admire how BTS creates intrigue around the release and how the supporters create complete domination on digital platforms to get promotional support for BTS. For instance, a premiered video of a slab of melting butter with accompanying sizzling sounds and a countdown timer set for one hour garnered over 12.8 million views (Kooser 2021). This

was an incredible impact from a video with no complex audio-visual connection. Still, it was a successful strategic marketing move to announce the upcoming comeback of BTS in 2021 when creating a mass social media discussion about it.

The post-release promotional campaign is not as surprising as the first phase. It mainly includes normal performances on stages and shows to popularize the songs. Since K-pop has gained a significant number of listeners on a global scale, especially in the Western markets, more foreign promotional activities are intensified. There are weekly music shows at the national market where K-pop idols can perform and promote their songs with attractive visuals, professional choreography, and a strong stage presence. In addition, more interactive activities to strengthen the fan connections, such as fan-sign (a lucky event to have the signature and short communication with idols), fan-call (a lucky event to have a short video call with idols), and handshake (a lucky event to get a handshake with idols, mostly in Japanese promotions.) In addition, TV shows are also an effective way of helping idols increase national image recognition, mainly focusing on the elderly who are less likely to surf social media. It has the same method for the global market with song performances on stages and TV shows for better recognition. From the Billboard Music Awards 2018 (performing "Fake Love") to Grand Central Station (performing "ON") to The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon (performing "IDOL", "Black Swan", "Butter", etc.), BTS had a broad variety of spectacular comeback stages at a global seize. The more they performed, the more impact they could get throughout the promotional campaign. Therefore, entertainment companies are trying to reinforce promotional activities to popularize their beloved idol groups.

4.3 Impacts on Korea

It can be said that the way BTS did marketing was not only for themselves. Their global marketing strategy has turned into the global marketing strategy for Korea, which changed their position not only as an artist but also as a Korean representative in the global market. As one of the leading K-pop groups, BTS helped spread awareness of Korean music and culture, leading to the increase of Korean exports not only in terms of culture but also in economy, particularly in the areas of fashion, beauty, and technology that are showing progress in recent years. This theoretical point will be evaluated on two main aspects, including economy and culture, to give a more complete understanding of the thesis topic.

4.3.1 Korean economy

Using a business viewpoint to evaluate the effects of K-pop on the general development of Korea, despite the fact it cannot be compared to Korea's pillars, including Samsung, Hyundai, SK Group, LG, and Lotte, it is still a significant factor. After fifteen years, from a \$1.87 billion contribution to the Korean GDP in 2004, Hallyu has grown tremendously to account for an estimated \$12.3 billion contributed to the Korean economy in 2019. (Guo, Wang & Zhang.) According to Professor Kim Seiwan from Ewha Womans University, the estimated number contributed by K-pop annually to Korea is approximately \$10 billion. (Guo et al.) And this number continues to grow higher and higher year by year. Counting BTS only, in a report by the Hyundai Research Institute (HRI) in 2018, approximately \$3.54 billion was contributed to the South Korean GDP by BTS, which is equivalent to 26 mid-sized companies. (AFP 2018.) As a result, K-pop affirms its position as a crucial part contributing to the development of Korea. The figure 7 below describes the growth in value of the Korean music industry during the period 2005-2021 to clarify the impressive upward trend (Statista 2023).

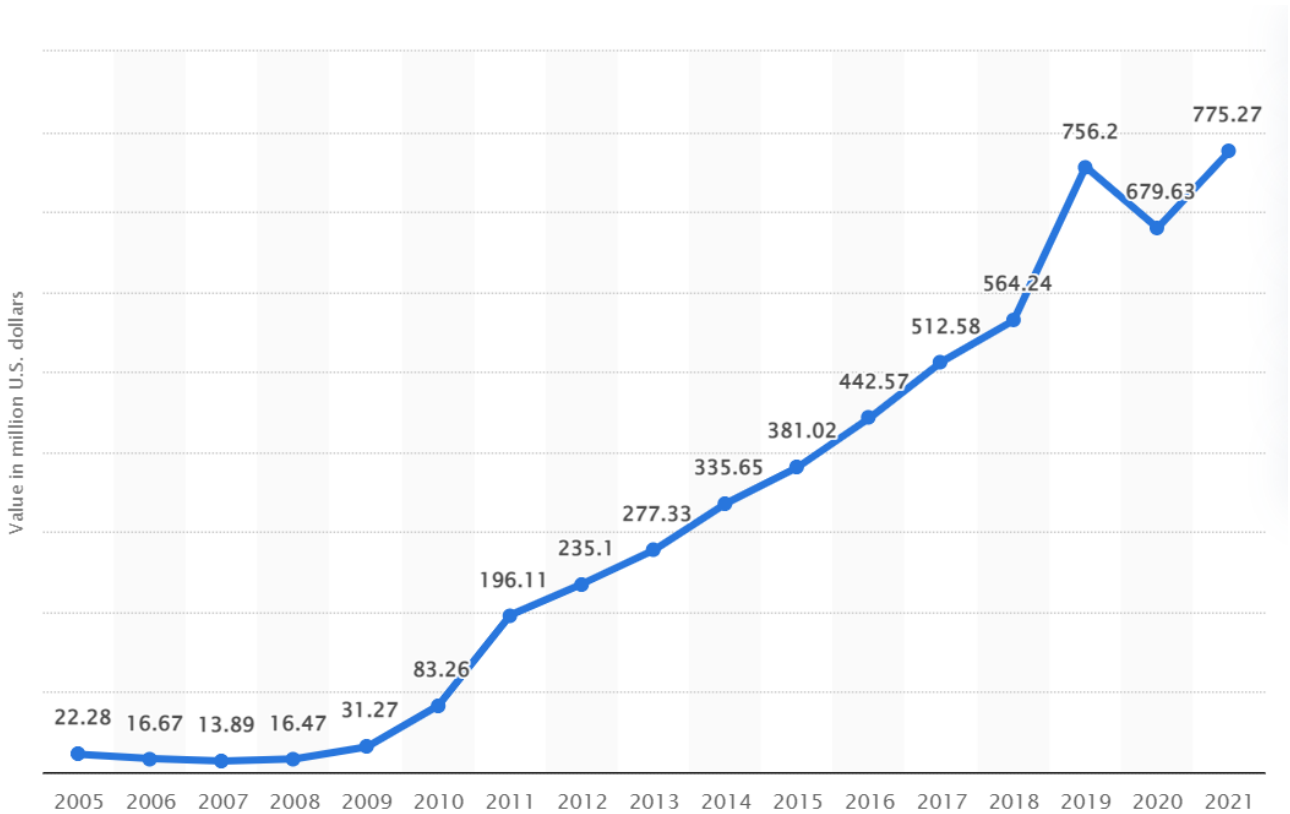


FIGURE 7. Value of music industry exports from South Korea 2005-2021 (Adapted from Statista 2023)

The proliferation of K-pop has contributed to the internationalization of Korea. Idols in South Korea are referred to as artists in their home country, but when they go abroad, they act as ambassadors for Korean culture and tourism. It is clear that artists sell their music, but with K-pop idols, music has expanded to be a promotional tool for other sectors such as beauty, fashion, and food products. Hallyu Wave may be broken down into its parts: \$100 million in exports of Korean content leads to \$180 million in exports of consumer products (Young-ryeol 2023). Therefore, the connection between music and the Korean economy will be discussed.

4.3.1.1 Exports

First, the success of the Korean music industry has boosted the Korean economy by increasing exports. In order to increase the influence of their brands and products, Korean corporations like Samsung and Hyundai frequently use Korean celebrities as brand ambassadors. Celebrities have the power to convert music lovers into active Korean product supporters, which helps Korean corporations like Samsung and Hyundai grow their market share. The purpose of a brand ambassador is to bring the identity, message, and value of the brand to the attention of potential customers. The credibility, allure, and appropriateness of the brand ambassador are all taken into account in light of the brand's aspirations before a final decision is made. Promoting a product with a famous face is meant to boost interest and sales by increasing the public's perception of the product's quality and trustworthiness. Korean superstars like BTS have a massive fanbase, so employing them as brand ambassadors is a shrewd move. Celebrities are aware of the power to persuade fans to purchase the same products they used as a "cheap moment". Therefore, becoming an ambassador is also not out of the interest of the community towards the idols. This is an impact coming from the spending culture of the K-pop community that they are always willing to buy everything related to idols, whether they are in need or not. Therefore, Korean brands took advantage of this occasion to promote their brand and product.

For example, BTS has partnered with Korean brands in different sectors, such as Samsung, Hyundai, Kookmin Bank, VT Cosmetics, and Lotte Duty Free. The seven-piece band has generated massive success for the brands they endorse and even those they use without intentional action. In an effort to compete with the growing number of Apple fans throughout the world, the Korean electronics giant Samsung collaborated with the popular boy band BTS. The release of the limited BTS version of the

Samsung Galaxy S20+ and Galaxy Bud+ was striking when all preorders closed after one hour opening in Korea in 2020. Alternatively, the collaboration with the Korean home appliances Coway also made this national brand reach a peak in the global market. By having BTS as the spokesperson for the brand, Coway witnessed a growth in building brand awareness and a global consumer base not only in physical sales but also on social media. The YouTube channel of Coway recorded millions of views for the commercial video featuring BTS, which was a surprising number for advertisements. In addition, Coway joined the "Trillion Dollar Club" in international sales, with Malaysia being one of their biggest markets outside of Korea. (Jun-hee 2021).

However, the rise of TEAZEN and the popularity of lemon-flavored Kombucha is the best illustration of the sold-out kings' sway over popular culture. From a small sharing by Jung Kook on livestream about his recent interest in this product, it prompted a rash of panic buying, leading to significant scarcity for the company. The broadcast sparked a 500% rise in sales, and in only three days, all of the stock for the next month was gone. In addition, compared to last month, exports of this commodity increased by more than 800%; Japan, China, and the United States were among the major importers. The incredible impact of BTS Jung Kook led to the rise of a small-sized company like TEAZEN, leading them to become the "2021 Brand of the Year" and making the Korean kombucha tea market more competitive than ever. (allkpop 2021).

4.3.1.2 Tourism

The global success of Korean pop music has had far-reaching effects, the most obvious of which is an increase in tourism to Korea. All participants in fan culture have a common fantasy about the idols they adore and the country of Korea, with the ultimate goal of meeting their favourite stars in person at least once. Therefore, the presence of idols makes Korea one of the best tourist destinations. With the rapid dominance of K-pop on the international market, there is no room for doubt to witness a large number of people visiting Korea every year. One in every thirteen foreign visitors to South Korea in 2017 was drawn there by BTS, and more than 800,000 foreigners travelled to the country in 2018 because of the group. (AFP 2018.) As a fan, there are numerous reasons to urge them to come to Korea. The first is that this is where the majority of concerts are held. It is not easy to launch a world tour, but making a concert in Korea is popular among all idols. Concerts held in Korea are always more emotional and meaningful for the idols and their fans because Korea is the beginning and ending destination of every tour. For followers of Korean pop music, traveling to Korea is like unlocking a magical

kingdom full of K-pop events and festivals. Therefore, true K-pop fans will always keep a trip to Korea on their bucket list.

From an economic standpoint, a concert is more than just a music party when it generates more incredible financial benefits for the country in charge. Throughout the four-day BTS Permission To Dance On Stage 2021 Las Vegas tour, revenue from concerts and other promotional activities came to a total of 131.5 billion won (Young-ryeol 2023). Due to the BTS concerts, Las Vegas has become a paradise for ARMY, complete with BTS-themed decorations on the streets and in hotel rooms, BTS favourite menu dishes, afterparties for each concert, and a dancing fountain set to the music of BTS's songs. (Bandwagon 2022.) Based on the case of Las Vegas, the Korea Culture and Tourism Institute estimates that each BTS concert held in Korea might generate up to 1 trillion won in economic value (Young-ryeol 2023).

This makes the cost of the after-concert activities worth considering. The government has given close attention to making Korea appealing to K-pop fans so they will have a positive experience visiting the country. Fans' primary motivation in visiting Korea is to see their beloved idols perform, so naturally, they will be all over anything and anywhere that has anything to do with idols. K-pop music videos and TV dramas help promote tourism in Korea by showcasing historical sites, beautiful scenery, and other landmarks to an international audience. This means that every location frequented by celebrities is now a tourist hotspot. According to a survey conducted by the Korea Tourism Organization about the most must-go locations in Korea, the top five spots are related to BTS (Shadow 2019). Therefore, K-pop culture helps market South Korea as a tourist destination worldwide. Social media activity related to concerts or venues in Korea has helped spread positive word of mouth about the country worldwide.

In addition, marketing campaigns for Korean tourism are promoted globally with the support of Korean pop superstars. From 2017 until 2022, BTS served as Seoul Tourism Ambassador, vigorously promoting how Seoul suits numerous tourist demands through global advertisements showing BTS showcasing the various tourism contents for what can experience in Seoul (Seoul Metropolitan Government 2018). To promote Busan's bid for the World Expo 2030, one of the largest international festivals compared with the World Cup and the Olympics, they also act as ambassadors of the Busan 2030 World Expo. The South Korean government estimates holding a World Expo will boost GDP by 61 trillion won (\$46.4 billion) (Ji-won 2022). Therefore, in competition to other competitors comprising Rome (Italy), Odesa (Ukraine) and Riyadh (Saudi Arabia), strengthening the image by expressing

the cultural attraction supported by strong economic potential is a strategic move. Korea owns the power of the Hallyu Wave, so there is no room for doubt to utilize this advantage to improve the national benefits. As part of their ambassadorial marketing, BTS played a free concert in Busan's Busan Asiad Stadium in October to an audience of 50,000 people and millions more who watched the show online. Ten thousand individuals reportedly watched the live broadcast at the Busan Port, over two thousand people saw the Live Play in Haeundae, and 49 million people viewed the broadcast on the Weverse platform. Over 6,000 non-Koreans attended the "2022 BTS EXHIBITION: Proof" in Seoul and Busan. Compared to the previous year, the number of mentions of "BTS in BUSAN" and "THE CITY" on social media increased by 45 times to 9.3 million and 200,000 respectively, while the number of mentions of "World Expo 2030 Busan" increased by more than 200,000. (Hicap 2022.) This is a prime illustration of the importance of BTS and the Korean music industry as a whole to the growth of the Korean tourist sector as well as the enhancement of the Korean image and its position at the global scale.

In summary, from the economic aspect, the internationalization of K-pop plays a strategic move in the globalization process to bring Korea closer to international integration based on the global marketing strategies of Korean pop music. As a result, the Western market penetration strategies of the K-pop idols not only opened the gate for the future spread of Korean music in the global market, as we can see at this time but also laid a solid foundation to expand the Korean influence with a hope to rise to the rank of one of the world's superpowers.

4.3.2 Korean culture

In recent years, the influence of soft power has become a new strategic weapon based on cultural attraction, political value systems, and foreign policy to attract foreign countries to establish diplomatic relations. In terms of Korea, the Hallyu Wave is an excellent example of an effective soft power tool for national development, promoting investment in the cultural community to strengthen diplomatic targets. Therefore, as a part of the Hallyu Wave, K-pop is also a significant element contributing to the spread of Korean soft power.

Besides the vast and unique worldwide economic potential in Korean history, the K-pop industry also develops traditional cultural values to actively promote the Korean image for the foreign market. The spread of Korean culture in parallel with Korean pop music promotion is expressed by the increasing

foreign enthusiasm for Korean traditions in food, clothes, music, and language through K-pop idols. In the national context, this growing impact has set the first step in solidifying the connection between Korea and other countries in the world, expanding to further diplomatic relations between Korea and these countries for exchanging cultural values and cementing the relationship.

BTS is among the most significant international artists who have had a significant positive impact on society. They are the model of the positive effect the Korean music business has had on Korean cultural growth. BTS's influence is widespread, and they are beloved by fans all around the world. Their success is extended to the global scale, and it led to the globalization of Korea on the global market. However, a level of internationalism can lose the identity and become indistinguishable, but a high level of nationalism limited the ability of product. With BTS, despite their growing international notoriety, they continue to emphasize the cultural norms that have made them who they are. They are capitalizing on their growing fame by adding cultural characteristics inside their product in order to spread awareness of and appreciation for traditional Korean values. In other words, the global sensation BTS combines the globalization factor in their marketing strategy to do the localization for their products, creating the glocalization strategy to highlight their difference in the market.

4.3.2.1 The cultural characteristic in music product

The cultural characteristic is expressed through music, lyrics, and performance in BTS music. As presented before, the traditional material is one of the inspirations for the producer team in making music. In terms of songs using beats with traditional sounds and instruments, there are "IDOL", "Daechwita", and "Haegeum". Combining the traditional element to create a song that can appeal to the young generation to listen to is a complicated matter. Nevertheless, the current K-pop producers have found a way to make it come true. The sound from traditional instruments has been a new inspiration to add a mesmerizing beat to a modern song. Regarding the lyrics, most BTS songs are in Korean. The lyrics extensively use terminology, phrases, and wordplays unique to Korea and require a solid grounding in Korean culture and history to grasp fully. "Satoori Rap" or "Ddaeng" are excellent examples of the heavy use of the local Korean language in lyrics that can confuse foreigners when first listening. Besides the two factors above, performance is crucial in appealing to music consumers. There are many ways to add traditional and cultural components into a performance, for example, by clothes, choreography, or live musical instruments. All these elements were used in one BTS performance at Melon

Music Awards 2018 for the song "IDOL", which was considered to be one of the most noteworthy performances in Korean music history in terms of creative ideas and professional preparation. It was a fusion of modernity and classical Korean performances with the live playing of Korean traditional instruments, the use of traditional clothes-hanbok, wearing by the seven boys, and the combination of three traditional dances including drum dance (Samgomu), fan dance (Buchaechum) and mask dance (Talchum). (JeonAe 2018.) As a result, it is clear to see the efforts from BTS to spread the Korean traditional culture despite rumours that they are "westernizing" after big success in the global market. Although the presence of a heavy Korean context in music can result in the erection of cultural barriers, making it difficult for outsiders to gain access to music, BTS has demonstrated that they have not only piqued the interest of domestic listeners but also piqued the curiosity of an international audience in Korean history and culture.

4.3.2.2 The spread of Korean language

When it comes to the global phenomenon of pop music, such as The Beatles or Michael Jackson, they all sing in English. Language plays a vital role in determining the level of success for a song because what makes a hit is its popularity and the way people enjoy it. So, it seems impossible for a song sung in Korean, a language only used in North and South Korea, to be a global hit. But BTS did it. They successfully got Korean music to the top of the Billboard Hot100 chart, with "Life Goes On" becoming the first song performed in Korean and the first non-English song of any language to debut at the top of the chart in the 62-year history of the Hot100 (Rolli 2020). Since their initial success in their music career, BTS has affirmed themselves as music artists that main music language is Korean. They are doing as the messenger to transmit the beauty of this language and culture. RM once shared his thought about the reason why BTS still prioritize the mother tongue despite the global growth of the group: BTS does not want to change the identity or authenticity to be the number one. Their signature is associated with Korean, so without it, they are not who they are (Bruner 2019). As a result, BTS has made the right decision by sticking to their K-pop roots rather than trying to become an English-speaking boyband. The active spread of the Korean language is not only expressed in their songs but also their lives. The tours, livestreams, or interviews are mostly Korean, but millions of fans still listen to them, even though almost two-thirds cannot understand. BTS successfully engages fans from all continents to voluntarily follow and support their music without being Westernized. It is such a cultural miracle that music can break all borders.

Based on curiosity when listening to Korean songs containing heavy cultural context as well as the love for the Korean idols and music, the interest in the Korean language has increased in recent years around the world, especially in Asia. In 2022, Korean overtook Chinese, the second most spoken language in the world, as the seventh most studied language on the language learning app Duolingo (Yeung 2023). In addition, Korean also became one of the languages for foreign language education programs in many countries, such as Vietnam, France, Thailand, Canada, and the United States (Ribeiro 2021). In Vietnam, the Korean language is one of the hottest university departments, with a high entrance score. Besides, in France, between 2018 and 2022, the French Ministry of Education reported that the number of Korean language programs offered in French elementary, middle, and high schools increased by 3.5 times while the number of students attending these classes increased over three times. (Sun-hwa 2023.)

With the increasing demand for learning Korean, BTS and the management company HYBE has launched an educational program named "Learn Korean With BTS" on the Weverse app (Ribeiro 2021). Fans can join the app and learn Korean through videos and music with simple examples from BTS's daily conversations or their lyrics. This move promotes BTS and the Korean language at the same time, bringing positive effects for both objects. From what BTS contributed to the development of the Korean language in the global context, they are called "the best Korean language keepers" while the world is pursuing the globalization process to be more "foreign" and forget the traditional root inside each person. (Soompi 2018.)

4.3.2.3 The enhancement of diplomatic relations

Music will always be BTS's first love, and the group writes songs with the intention of providing therapeutic solace to its fans and spreading positive energy around the world. BTS has astonished the world, including the United Nations, with the values espoused through their music. An early step in confirming that their worldview and musical philosophy are congruent was the critical and commercial success of the Love Yourself album series and the Love Myself campaign coordinated with UNICEF. Having a musical mind and the appropriate direction are less crucial than being able to sell the product in a market full of uncaring individuals who only run for profit. BTS stands apart because to their dedication to social issues. Consequently, without any political positions, they still became a speaker before the United Nations General Assembly three times. With such popularity and notability, BTS is believed to bring the Korea's charm introducing to the world, which is the vision of the public diplomatic

strategy of Korea. Therefore, former South Korean President Moon Jae-In has appointed BTS as the special envoy for public diplomacy with a hope BTS can continue their efforts in spreading the beauty of Korea but as a Korean representative instead of a normal idol (Rahmah 2021). Therefore, as Korea is utilizing the Hallyu Wave, including K-pop, to strengthen the public diplomatic strategy, the recognition for BTS is worthy for what they have done as well as will do in the future to complete the national goal to promote and support the Korean growth domestic and foreign. From the performance at Korea-France Friendship Concert in Paris to the free concert for the Busan World Expo 2030, it is clear that K-pop acts as a powerful tool to support Korea in the diplomatic activities. Hence, there is no room for doubt to admit the massive influence of BTS and the Korean music industry to strengthen Korea's position through boosting the national brand and its potential at the global level.

5 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this thesis has evaluated the success in building the marketing strategy of the Korean music industry, which is the first step to promote Korea at a global scale. As presented throughout the research, the rise of K-pop is not coincidence, but it requires numerous efforts to orientate and develop. In comparison to other old-history music cultures in the world, Korean pop music is young and still at the time of prosperity, but what it made has made the world admit a redoubtable player in this entertainment game. Contributing to this noticeable success is the marketing strategy designed for specific characteristics of the industry in order to maximize all the available tools and resources to attain the best achievements in their ability.

The research has pointed out the recipe of the global long-term promotional campaign of the K-pop industry as well as the case study object, BTS. By applying and modifying the framework of the 7Ps marketing mix to meet the context and characteristics of a music group, BTS successfully dominated the national music market and marked their name as a global sensation capable of reaching unbelievable records as an Asian act. The highlight of their marketing strategy is to utilize the power of social media and digitalization in marketing to reach and get close to a broader customer base. The dominance of media plays a strategic role in spreading the global impact, affirming their position as one of the most potent idol groups and the most influential Korean acts.

The research is based on fundamental principles of marketing that include the primary 4Ps of marketing with additional elements upgraded from the 7Ps of marketing. Moreover, BTS and the management label BigHit took advantage of the widespread social media to connect to customers and build a loyal supporter base. From their achievement, it is expanded to be a national impact, which is no longer confined to the Korean music industry. With their global influence, how they market music turns into how they market Korea when traditional and cultural factors are included in every music product and other promotional activities. By localizing the products and globalizing the promotional campaign, they have reached the target of bringing Korean culture to an international market which results in the general development of the Korean economy. Art is also a front where artists are the soldiers; hence, the Korean music industry has utilized the soft power to conquer the world step by step, marking its name international with incredible achievements.

The internationalization of the Korean music industry has been demonstrated as a ground-breaking tactic to promote cultural values and strengthen the status of the nation through the case study of the K-pop group BTS. The more people listen to Korean music, the more people become curious about Korea. The greatest success of K-pop is in creating a favourable perception of Korea in order to increase demand for Korean goods and services, which is crucial for boosting the Korean economy and soft power.

Overall, the thesis brings a successful case study to understand the importance of appropriate marketing strategies in building a brand that stays in customers' minds to achieve customer loyalty. The impacts on Korean development are the evidence to demonstrate for the analysis of BTS's marketing. However, there is no role framework for all cases, especially in marketing that prioritizes creativity and suitability the most. Therefore, the BTS's case should be mentioned only as a lesson for other companies to refer to and learn so that they can create different formulas to promote idols instead of trying to make the second BTS. Other entertainment companies can refer to and learn from them so that they can build their formula for promoting idols. Because of the lasting impact that BTS's success has had on Korea and the rest of the world, the Korean music industry has gained increased government support as well as appreciation from fans around the globe. To be able to stand out and be more successful in exporting Korean culture on the global stage, it is worth looking forward to seeing the future of K-pop performances not only as a part of the entertainment industry but also in the overall rise of Korea.

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