



## **Audience engagement in K-pop concerts**

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Degree Programme in Hospitality, Tourism and Experience Management

Thesis

2023

## Abstract

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<b>Degree</b> Bachelor of Hospitality Management
<b>Report/Thesis Title</b> Audience engagement in K-pop concerts
<b>Number of pages and appendix pages</b> 30
<p>The main point of this thesis is to answer to the question “what makes K-pop concerts so engaging?”. Most of the thesis is written as autoethnography but some research has also been made to backup facts and to build a better overall understanding. K-pop (Korean pop music) has also been introduced more in detail to build an understanding around one of the main topics of the thesis.</p> <p>The concert experiences will be evaluated based on Kylänen and Tarssanen’s (2009) Experience Pyramid. Comparisons between concerts from different music styles will also be made to build an overall understanding of differences. Some comparisons between concerts happening in different countries has also been made to inform of the differences in those.</p> <p>In the end some of the main differences have been selected from different music style concerts and brought together to make comparisons between them. Conclusion has been written with criticality towards the made research, but also with suggestions how to improve or further research the topic.</p>
<b>Key words</b> k-pop, concert experience, audience engagement, experience

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Overview of the Topic

The thesis topic revolves around the audience's engagement in Korean pop (from now on referred as K-pop) concerts. The main point is to answer the question "what makes K-pop concerts so engaging?", or at least shed some light into some of the reasons from one perspective. The idea came from the authors interest in K-pop and her own experiences in concerts. She has attended concerts by artists from several different areas, which has shown that there can be a lot of differences. Especially K-pop concerts have seemed very spectacular and more engaging than many other concerts.

## 1.2 Justification for the Study

K-pop has been getting more popular outside of Asia during the past years, which makes the topic very relevant. Even though K-pop as it is known today has been developing since 1992, in western countries the first steps have been taken only in 2012. Even though it has been 11 years since then, the wider understanding of K-pop and interest towards it among general public has happened mainly within the past few years.

Because of the topic still staying within smaller circles, the research of K-pop and K-pop concerts more specifically is rather scarce. More is coming year by year, but a lot of the information is more from the industry side or just general explanations of differences compared to something more widely known. There surely is a lot, that could benefit the western industry, if some examples were given. What is more important, would be understanding where the audience, so in this case fans, see the biggest differences. Since most research is from industry perspective, it tells very little about how the fans feel about and are affected by the concerts.

## 1.3 Definitions

K-pop is a music genre, that started developing in 1992. There had been pop music in Korean even before that, but that was when the term got taken into use, and the development towards the current point started. K-pop refers to Korean pop music created either by groups, solo artists, or bands. (Song, 2012.)

Audience engagement in this thesis has been looked at from the fans' perspective. One way to define audience engagement is, that it's a state of mind. In this state, a person feels like they are part of something mentally, even though physically they are not. (Brodie, Hollebeek, Jurić, Illić, 2022.) From a fan's perspective this can be seen as wanting to be part and close to a group they love, so

mentally they are there and even physically part of the fandom, but not physically part of the artist itself.

Experiences, which are also a core in this thesis, can be measured in many ways. One way would be Pine and Gilmore's (1998) Experience Realms, and another is Experience Pyramid by Tarsanen and Kylänen (2009). In this thesis the later one has been used as a measurement tool. The pyramid can be seen as a good way to observe both product specific elements and visitor's experience. Furthermore, it is always important to understand, that experiences are personal. That means, that even if the same tool would be later used for a similar kind of research, the results could be different. Like that, two people attending the same concert, can feel very different about it.

#### **1.4 Structure of the Thesis**

The thesis includes a short introduction to K-pop itself, different events related to it as well as some of the concert etiquette. To provide some comparison possibility, a small look has been provided towards western artist's pop and rock concerts. Those two topics have been then compared to build a better overall understanding. Some comparison has been done also just between K-pop concerts taking place in different countries.

The main research method in the thesis was autoethnography, so this thesis is heavily based on the authors own experiences, where the idea also came from like previously mentioned. This is good to keep in mind while reading since this is just one take on everything, that is K-pop and being a fan of said music.

## 2 K-pop

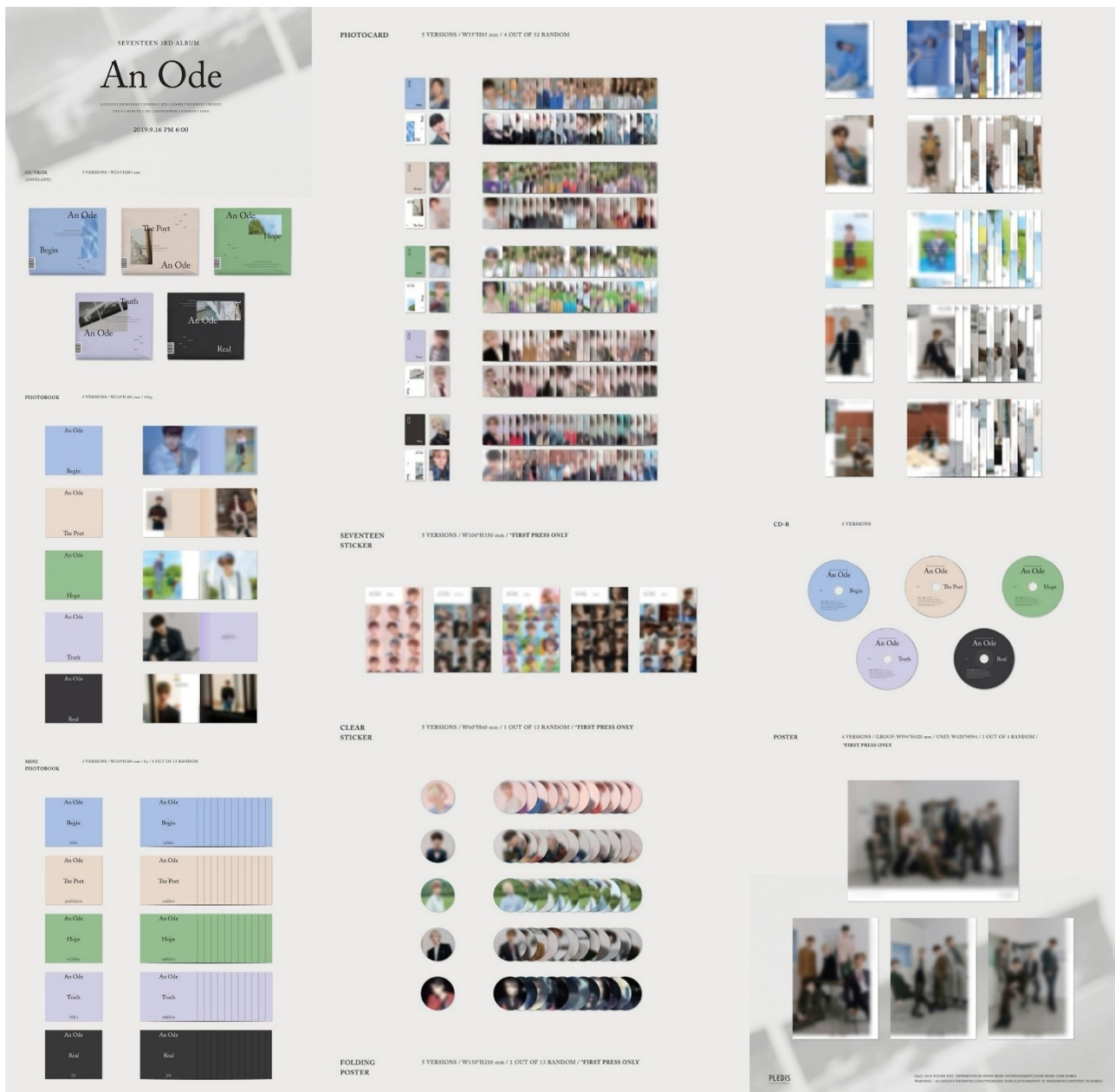
K-pop is a term, that is used, when talking about Korean pop music. The term is an abbreviation from words Korean pop. K-pop musicians can either be groups or solo artists. (Song, 2015.) In this thesis K-pop group or just the term group normally refers to a dance group, when K-pop band refers to an actual band playing instruments. The bands can also be referred to as K-pop groups but just to keep things clearer, in this thesis group will refer to a dance group and band will refer to a band. When talking about an artist it is used as a general term to refer to any type of K-pop musicians.

Though Korean pop music has existed already before, K-pop as it now is seen started developing only back in 1992 with Seo Taiji & Boys (Song, 2012). The mentioned group is, who started the development of K-pop choreographies and the fan culture as it is known today.

2000s were when the big three entertainment companies S.M., JYP and YG were created and have been producing K-pop idols ever since. Nowadays there has been debate though should HYBE, the label behind BTS, be counted as one of the big ones based on how much they contribute to the industry. The naming “big three” comes from the companies being able to consistently produce successful groups and songs (Te, 2023).

In K-pop different fandoms have their own names. Instead of being just called for example “fans of BTS”, they are referred as ARMY, which is the fandom name for said fans (Kao & Lee, 2021). The fandom names are released sometime after a group has debuted, but the timing can vary a lot group by group. Some of the names are very close to the group’s name like BOYFRIEND calling their fans BestFriend, but some can be completely different like the fore mentioned ARMY. There is some kind of connection between the group and fandom name always, but sometimes it takes a bit more research and understanding to see the connection. (Song, 2023.)

Even though a lot of the music industry has moved towards digital releases, K-pop is still one industry, which heavily relies on physical releases. Furthermore, this means, that whenever there is a mention about buying albums in this thesis, it refers to physical albums. K-pop albums are a bit different compared to other CD releases and tend to include besides the CD also a photobook, photocards of the members among other items. As an example, PICTURE 1 showcases, what was included in one group’s album and its different versions. Partly because of the photocards fans buy several copies to collect all different ones. For example, SEVENTEEN once had 260 different photocards on their album (Laure, 2019).



Picture 1. SEVENTEEN 'An Ode' album versions and inclusions (Weverse Shop, 2019)

## 2.1 K-pop generations

K-pop has been divided into generations, which each have their unique vibes. In some cases, the generations are not that set in stone, but they can be more about how fans see, where the generation changes. Even though K-pop is a genre with its own unique twists, also each of the generations had their own qualities. Of course, even though an artist would have started during a set generation, it does not mean their development would have ended there but quite a lot have adjusted their style more to nowadays style while keeping their own unique sound in it. (Verma, 2023.)

The generations have been divided with some starting and ending years, but those years are not set in stone. The years mentioned are just one opinion, but some other sources might state them a bit differently. Same goes for groups, that have been active already before the generation changed, but their official debut is set on the side of the next generation. Some might list them as part of the earlier generation in that case and others in the later generation. (Pannkpop, 2022.)

Based on information on kpoping's kpopdatabase, which was used to combine some examples of the generations, the 1<sup>st</sup> Generation is said to have started in 1992 and ended at the end of 2002. It included artists like god, BoA, H.O.T and SHINHWA to name a few. Forementioned Seo Taiji and Boys also falls under the 1<sup>st</sup> Generation.



Picture 2. Seo Taiji and Boys (Kpop Profiles, 2023)

For the next approximately nine years, so until the end of 2011, it was time for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Generation. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Generation is also, when the word about K-pop already started getting more popular outside of Korea. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Generation includes groups like SHINee, Epik High and SUPER JUNIOR, who are all still active today.



Picture 3. SHINee in 2008 (allkpop, 2022)



3<sup>rd</sup> Generation starts after that and is said to last until the end of 2017, so approximately six years. From the 3<sup>rd</sup> Generation groups like EXO, BTS, Seventeen, BLACKPINK and THE BOYZ. During this era, K-pop became more known also to the general public instead of just staying in the smaller circles of K-pop fans.



Picture 4. EXO in 2013 (Fandom, 2023)

4<sup>th</sup> Generation is what the industry currently lives in with groups like Stray Kids, ITZY, TREASURE, and Xdinary Heroes. More groups are getting debuted even several in the same month, but only a small part of them make it big and end up having a long-lasting career.



Picture 5. ITZY in 2019 (Fandom, 2023)

## 2.2 K-pop's worldwide popularity

Most say, that BTS, which undisputedly is the most known K-pop group, is the group that paved the way for K-pop to make it so big even in western countries (Kao & Lee, 2021). They have worked hard and achieved great things while being the first K-pop group to many things like being

nominated for Grammy or one of the members headlining a well-known festival, Lollapalooza (AFP, 2022). Still, the spreading of K-pop to general public's knowledge could be said have been started already with PSY's hit song "Gangnam Style", which was widely played on radios across the globe. BTS themselves have also referred to PSY as the one, who opened the doors, so BTS just continued from what he had started. (PSY & SUGA, 2022)

Even before this time, K-pop concerts have been organized all around the world, but the music was mainly just known by those following it because of their own interest. It was very different time compared to nowadays, when basically everyone has at least heard of K-pop or BTS, so at least some knowledge has been spread. Furthermore, K-pop songs can be heard being played on radio stations more often and there is more variety nowadays instead of it being just one or a couple of songs from a handful of artists. Though, there is still a long way to go for the plays to become more regular. (Romano, 2021.)

Good example could be also the MTV VMAs 2023, which were held on September 13<sup>th</sup>. In said award ceremony, there is a category only for K-pop nowadays. That does not limit the artists from gaining nominations or even winning trophies on other categories also. Like this year TOMORROW X TOGETHER won in 'PUSH Performance of the Year' category while Jung Kook, a member of BTS, took home a trophy for 'Song of Summer'. This is a good example of how widely spread the music is nowadays instead of just being known by the fans. (MTV, 2023.)

### **2.3 Concert etiquette**

Something that is strongly part of the concert etiquette are light sticks. Most groups have some type of light stick of their own design, which can be used during concerts or fan meetings. Light sticks are basically flashlights, which have some kind of shape on them. Nowadays the light sticks tend to be Bluetooth connectable, which makes it possible to control all of them at the same time during a concert. This makes it possible for the organizers to use different colors or flashing modes for certain songs or parts of songs. There are some cheaper versions also, which have only few different flashing modes and the color cannot be changed. It is also extremely rude towards a group to turn the light stick off during a concert, when the members are on stage. Same rule is in effect during big events, where several groups are performing, it is common for fans to keep the light sticks on even though they would not be fans of said group since turning off the light stick would be considered rude. The worst thing to happen to a group is getting a so called "black ocean", where a part of the venue turns of their light stick during their performance. (Anderson, 2019.) An important point is also, that when attending concerts or events, only the artist's, which the fan is going to see, light stick should be used. So, do not for example go see Stray Kids and wave a BTS light stick around. It is just common courtesy and, in that sense, an unwritten rule.

Even though light sticks mainly are used to cheer for an artist at a concert, some fans also collect them just because of the designs being either very pretty or very interesting.



Picture 6. Red Velvet, NCT and Twice light sticks (Berry, 2020)

Besides light sticks, some artist's release also slogans or handheld fans, which can be held up during the concert as a sign for one's favorite member. Slogans regularly are made of fabric and have a member's name on it when fans have a picture of a member. There are also fan made slogans, which are often bought through online orders and then either picked up from nearby the venue or mailed to the buyer. Fan made slogans are also made of fabric, but regularly have a member's name on the other side and a photo on the other side. The fan made slogans, or any fan made merch is considered illegal, so when fans are selling those to others nearby the venues, they must be careful so that they do not get in trouble with the organizers.

Besides handheld fans and slogans, sometimes fans like to craft their own banners to hold up during a concert. The banners can be simple with a member's name on them with some decorations around it, but sometimes they could also include a message or request to the artist, if they happen to notice the banner. The requests are normally something like "please wink" or "make a heart", so just something small and simple, which would be easy for the artist to do. There are also banner events for which the banners are either distributed by fans or the organizers. In these cases, a banner with a message to the artist has been printed and everyone is supposed to raise it up during a certain song.

Similarly, to light sticks, since each artist has their own merch, it is frowned upon, if one goes to a concert with another artist's merch. Small keychains hanging on a bag might be fine since they are hard to notice, but wearing some other artist's t-shirt for example is out of the question. Though,

even in this it can be seen as some level acceptable among for example fans in Europe, but in Korea one would get a lot of judging looks, if doing this. Same goes to the lightstick topic.

As a final part fanchants could be mentioned. Fanchants, which can nowadays also be called as singalong guides, are instructions for fans, so that they know what to shout during a song. Fanchants are released by the agency behind the artist and distributed through their official social media channels or other relevant platforms. The fanchants are released sometime after a song gets released, but not all songs have them. Mainly songs, that have been used in promotions as in performed on TV channels get fanchant instructions. The point of the instructions is to make cheering the artist more collected, and to avoid any unnecessary screaming. For example, in picture 7, the yellow parts are which are supposed to be shouted by the fans along or after the members' parts.



Picture 7. Xdinary Heroes – Freakin' Bad singalong guide (Xdinary Heroes, 2023)

## 2.4 Different event types

Even though this thesis is mainly centred around concerts, it is important to understand other K-pop event types also, which fall under K-pop. Some of the other event types might as well be briefly mentioned or referred to in other parts of the thesis.

Concerts are events, where fans of a certain artist go enjoy the performances and music of said artist. Concerts can be seen also as fans wanting to be surrounded by other people with similar interests while enjoying something they are highly interested in (Brown & Knox, 2017). K-pop concerts can be just one or few day events with the same setup and similar setlist, or they can be part of a bigger tour, which then in most cases also extends overseas. By now K-pop concerts have been organized all around the world.

When it comes to K-pop concerts, there can also be different booths, which are open before the concert nearby the venue. This depends on the group, their popularity and in some cases also which entertainment company they are under. Furthermore, because of COVID-19 and the popularity of online sales, some concerts opt not to sell merchandise during the event itself. Instead in some cases there might be a possibility to pick up the online bought merchandise though. (Weverse, 2023.) Besides merchandise booths there can be booths, where the fans are able to play a rhythm game to win photo cards or show they have completed certain tasks in the said game on their own phone to get photo cards (SuperStarJYPNATION, 2023). If the group has a fanclub, there might also be a booth, where the fanclub members can receive a special photo card as a present by showing their concert ticket and fanclub membership card (Weverse, 2023).

#### **2.4.1 Fan meetings**

Fan meetings are something, that could be seen as like a concert. The main difference is that when concerts are centred around music, the fan meetings are more about spoken parts. In fan meetings the artists do perform some of their songs, in some cases even songs, that normally are not part of the setlist of a regular concert. Besides the minor part of performances, there can be corners like them answering fans questions, acting out certain kind of scenes, members playing games together etc. In most cases at least half of the event's time is spent in those different activities instead of performing stages, but it can depend artist by artist.

Another point, that can define things related to a fan meeting is the popularity of the artist. Bigger artists tend to have their fan meetings in concert venues, but the tickets are in most cases cheaper than regular concert tickets, and there can also be a discount given to fan club members, and those not belonging to a fanclub then need to pay a higher price, if they want to attend. Smaller artists on the other hand might have their fan meetings even in movie theatres and only take in 20-30 people compared to concert venues varying from some hundreds to maybe a few thousand. For smaller artists it might also be, that they do not sell tickets, but the fans need to buy albums and then a certain number of participants will be chosen through lottery to attend the event. (JeonAe, 2020.)

#### **2.4.2 Fan sign and video-call events**

Like explained in an article by Helen Bosch (2022), fan sign, like the name suggests, is an event, where the fans get to personally talk with the members or a member of a group and get their signatures in the process. The signing events normally last something between one and three hours, depending on the amount of fans admitted to enter. Before COVID the number used to be 100 for most signings, but after COVID-19 the numbers went down and have been now mostly between 30

and 50 participants. Each participant has approximately 1 minute time to talk with each member, so the remainder of the event the fan will just sit at the audience to observe the event and take photos or film the members. An exception to the given time is, if the signing is only with one member of a group, then in most cases the time is longer than 1 minute.

Regularly fan signs are organized as part of CD release promotions, especially in Korea and Japan, but outside of Korea they can also be an inclusion of VIP concert ticket. When it's part of a ticket, mostly the participant amount is also much more limited and there's also other interactions with the artist like taking a photo together, but this varies by artist. When organized as part of promotions, there are certain stores, where album needs to be bought within a set period. Most of the sales happen online nowadays, but before COVID-19, the sales were done at physical stores mostly. When buying albums, the fan will automatically attend a lottery and then the winners will be getting into the fan sign. Winners are normally either announced at the store's website and via email to the winners, or only as an email to the winners.

Video-call event is basically the same as a fan sign, but in a digitalized format. The organizer of the event will let the participant know an approximate time, when they will be starting the call, and the participant needs then to be on stand-by. The calls are made using messaging apps like KakaoTalk and LINE, which are like WhatsApp, but more widely used in Korea and Japan (Inquix, 2022). During the call, if it includes all members of a group, a phone gets passed on from one member to another, so it is just like having a video call with them.

### **2.4.3 Unofficial events**

One type of unofficial events are birthday cafés, which fans organize in commemoration of a group's member's birthday or a group's debut anniversary. Normally the cafes have been rented/are partnering with the fan to get more sales and are just decorated with photos of the said member or group, and when ordering a drink or a set of a drink and something to eat, the visitor will get a small present. The present always includes either a paper cup or a cup sleeve with a design made by the organizer, but the other parts of the present vary. There can be stickers, photo cards, post cards, posters, cups with member's/group's photos in it, keyholders, you name it, so in most cases something rather small and easy and cheap to produce. Since the cafes are organized by fans, the bigger the fandom, the more cafes there normally are organized. These types of cafés have been a thing in Korea already for a long time, and then have been adopted from there to other countries also. (Valenton, 2023.) In Finland there is also one organizer for these kinds of events (Kpop Café Events Suomi, 2023).

### **3 Audience engagement**

First part of this chapter is focused on different ways of defining customer engagement. Included is also examples of what can play a part in a customer feeling engaged.

After that Experience Pyramid, which is the measuring tool used in this thesis, shall be introduced. There are several other ways like Pine and Gilmore's Experience Realms (1998), but for this thesis Experience Pyramid was the most fitting one.

Lastly some examples of concert engagement in western pop and rock concerts are given. Some of the experiences are based on authors own experiences, but to broaden the scope, research was also done around the topic.

#### **3.1 Definition of customer engagement**

Customer engagement can be seen as a psychological state. An engaged customer feels like they are part of something psychologically, even though they might not be part of it physically. (Brodie, Hollebeek, Jurić, Illić, 2022.) As a fan it shows in being part of a fandom of certain artist instead of being part of the actual artist group.

Furthermore, nowadays people are looking for transforming experiences, and one point in pushing it forward are social engagements, which easily happen at concerts, when engaging with other concert goers (Celuch, Egger, Neuhofer & Yu, 2021). So, even though engagement with the concert itself is important, engaging with other fans can be seen as important.

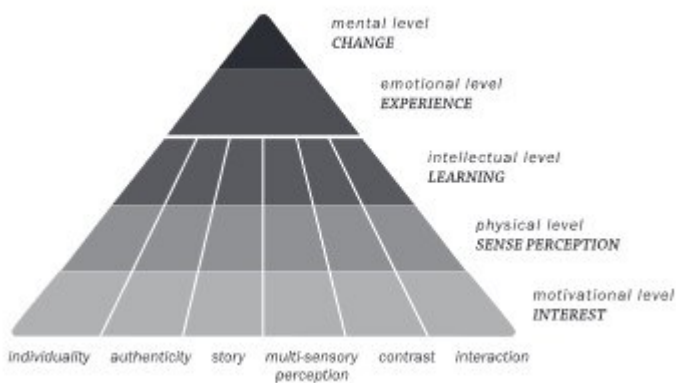
#### **3.2 Experience Pyramid**

It is important to understand what is meant by customer engagement and how it can be measured. Concerts can be counted as experiences, which makes them possible to be observed while using The Experience Pyramid by Tarssanen and Kylänen (2009). The pyramid will help in examining the experience based both on product specific elements and visitor's experience. In the picture 8, horizontal level is used for examining the visitor's experience and the vertical to examine the product. Though, whenever when talking about experiences, it is important to keep in mind, that even though two people would be experiencing the same kind of event, the experience and how they evaluate it can still be different.

Like Tarssanen and Kylänen describe in their handbook for experience stagers (2009), the Experience Pyramid's horizontal levels can shortly be described followingly; individuality refers to how unique the experience is, whereas authenticity refers how has authenticity been taken into consideration e.g., on cultural things. Story is purely about telling a story during the experience,

and multi-sensory perception refers to with how many senses can the guest enjoy the experience. Contrast means the difference between everyday life and the experience, and interaction in case of concerts refers to the interaction between the artist, staff, and fans.

The vertical levels are more about what the guest gains from the experience. On motivational level they gain interest for example through marketing photos or videos. Physical level is about sense perception which includes things like temperature of the venue or location, safety and any other physically felt things related to the experience. Intellectual level is all about learning, so gaining new knowledge during the experience, either knowingly or unknowingly. On emotional level the feelings of the guest will be considered, do they feel joy, excitement, happiness or relaxation for example. The highest level, mental level, does not always get fulfilled. The level is about a change happening no matter how big or small. If the experience for example gets the guest to start a new hobby or feel like they grew as a human, then the highest level has been met.



Picture 8. The Experience Pyramid (Tarssanen & Kylänen, 2009, 11)

### 3.3 Audience engagement in other music genres

Parts of this are based on the authors own experiences, but some research has also been made to broaden the perspective. Even though festivals could also be seen as concerts, those have been left out of the scope of this thesis since the audience engagement can be some parts very different compared to regular concerts.

Focusing on the concert experience, it has been divided into three parts: before, during and after. This is just to make it clearer and easier to understand, what happens in each part of the concert experience. Each individual part has been written in the order, which things normally take place, when it comes to attending concerts.



### 3.3.1 Before concert

From a fan's perspective, at least when it comes to pop and rock concerts, the phases can be divided as concert announcement, planning, ticketing, finalizing plans and keeping an eye out for any possible content from previous concerts. For tours the concert announcement normally is a picture, which includes all the dates and locations. Of course, at first there might be only part of the dates, and more is added later, but even at that point the same photo is commonly used. More detailed information can be found from the organizer's website and/or the ticketing platform. The artist's own platform is mainly used only for announcing the dates and any additions later, but their channels are not always used for spreading more detailed information. For local concerts meaning concerts organized in the performer's home country, the case can be a bit different sometimes, but still in most cases a lot of the information is provided by the organizer. The concert announcements can be made even a year ahead of a concert, like Coldplay did for their concert in Helsinki (Helsinki Times, 2023).

Once the ticket information is out, the planning phase can start. This includes deciding on which ticket type to aim for, checking if any friend is going, and if the concert is located outside of one's own hometown, checking transportation options and prices, and looking for accommodation possibilities. It is also important to keep an eye out for any possible presale possibilities. Sometimes there can even be several presale methods like one from the organizer, and another from some big partner like Samsung as an example (Samsung, 2023).

Both ticketing and any possible presale ticketing takes place on the same site announced by the organizer. There can be several options from ticketing sites operating only locally all the way to Ticketmaster and Eventim, which both have presence in several countries. On more well-known pages the ticketing can be both nerve wracking but also more stress free than on many other smaller platforms. Both platforms have a built-in queue system, which gets activated for bigger artists, but several smaller platforms are lacking these types of functions. The point of the queue system is to ensure, that the page does not crash because of the heavy traffic, which can make the experience less stressful for fans also.

After the ticket(s) have been secured, it is time to finalize the plans, which were made during the planning phase. After everything is finalized, all that there is left is to wait for the concert. During tours some artists post small video clips or photos to their social media about the concerts, so this can work as a teaser for the fans, who are still waiting for the tour to reach location closer to them.

### 3.3.2 During concert day

For fans the concert day might start early with queuing and hyping up already early in the morning with friends, who are attending the same concert. Though, plenty of fans might arrive just before or after the doors have already opened depending on their ticket type and desired area at the concert. The merchandise is normally sold inside the venue or for outdoor concerts inside the gated concert area, so it is accessible only for those, who have a ticket for the event. (Stanislav, 2011.)

Once the fan has either arrived at their seat or found a good standing spot, there is not much before the concert. Some artists might have opening acts to hype up the crowd before they themselves take over the stage. This is very common especially for bigger artists like Ed Sheeran or Coldplay for example. In most cases there is just one opening act, but it is not unheard of someone having two opening acts instead. It fills nicely the time between doors opening and concert starting with some live music, but if the fan does not know the performer beforehand, it might be exactly just that. Though, it can also be a way to check out some new music for the fans since the opening acts tend to be somewhat like the main act. That meaning, that if the main act is from pop category, the opening acts are from the same category instead of being something completely different like hard rock. (Pierce, 2018.)

During the concert itself it is common for fans to scream and sing along. Waving hands in the air to the beat of music is also one way to show support and excitement. From the artist's side besides encouraging fans to sing or keep waving their hands in the air, water mist can also be used as an element of engagement (John, 2009). Furthermore, in rock or heavy concerts moshing and head-banging can also be seen happening. For some this might draw the line between a fan and a casual listener since fans tend to get more excited when casual listeners are there more for the atmosphere and live music. Instead of being the most active in the audience, they mainly clap to show appreciation, some might also be enjoying beverages during the show. (Stanislav, 2011.)

The concerts are centred around what happens on the stage. For bigger concerts there can be screens also utilized to guarantee some view of the performer for everyone at the venue. The setlist tends to stay pretty much the same throughout the tour, but of course the performances are never completely same. Furthermore, some stories related to songs might be shared and those are similar each concert. Other speaking parts can vary and differ from each other concert by concert. Though for some concerts there is not that much speaking involved, depends on the artist. Speaking and asking questions or asking the audience to for example wave their hands in same beat is a way to interact with the audience. Of course, for some this can also bring the feeling of being part of something bigger instead of just alone enjoying the concert.

### 3.3.3 After concert

Some artists might post clips or pictures of their concerts to social media already the same evening right after the concert. These can work as a nice reminder for the fans, who attended, but also give a chance for the artist to briefly share feelings after the concert. During many rock and pop concerts it is allowed for the audience to take photos and videos. Some fans might share those clips also to social media to share the experience with friends with short texts, but also to be able to go back to those feelings later. The same content of course stays in said person's possession making it possible to glance back to it just by accessing it from wherever it is stored.

In most cases there is not much other post-event marketing, so the only things reminding the fans are the self-taken photos or videos, and any possible merchandise they bought from the concert. Some magazines or websites might also write about the concert, so those can remind of the fans the happy moments at said concert.

The Experience Pyramid, which was introduced in this part, shall later be used for measuring K-pop concert experience. Furthermore, some parts of the concert experience introduced, will be compared to the K-pop concert experience to find differences but also to point out some similarities.

## 4 Research methods

In this thesis autoethnography was used as the method. Reason behind it being the author's own experience, which is explained more in detail in the next part. Even though own experiences bring only one perspective to things, it can still be very valuable in shedding light to things. The topic of this thesis has not yet been researched as much as it should, so any information can be seen valuable for the industry.

### 4.1 Autoethnography

Autoethnography is a way of researching and observing cultural aspects by being part of it (Kukkurainen, 2019). In this thesis' case we are talking about being part of K-pop culture and music fandoms. The author has over 10 years of experience of attending different K-pop events. If attending other music events are calculated, then the time will be closer to 20 years. Besides attending events, the author has been actively following K-pop scene for the past 15 years. When it comes to autoethnography, it is very important to find common threads in the research, identify main themes but also use the information, that has been gathered. That has been then combined with the authors own experiences to create the final piece.

Notes about the attended events have been combined from the author's public blog, private diary entries, public and private Twitter entries as well as private chats. The notes have been collected ever since 2012. A list of all attended events has also been created to support the claims and experiences acquired.

Since a lot of the experience parts of this thesis are based on the authors private writings, they might not be accessible for everyone. Experiences are also very personal, so this is just one viewpoint to an experience.

Even though autoethnography can be seen as one good way of research, it has its own down points also. As some of the cons the first-hand experience of the topic can be listed, as well as sharing information, which might not otherwise be shared because of it being personal. Some of the cons could be the possibility of some opinions or experiences being biased, even though observation can be tried to do from different perspective. Furthermore, since the experiences have been gathered from such a long time and different artists, comparing them might not always be as easy. Memory can also try to trick in writing something in a more negative or positive light, even though diaries and other similar entries can be used as a base of refreshing memory.

## **5 Engagement in K-pop concerts**

In this part the focus will solely be on the author's engagement during different K-pop concerts. Since there is a lot of experience, the focus has been tried to be kept mainly around certain concerts while taking information and notes from others also. By this part being from the author's own experiences, it is important to note this is just one view, so it is possible someone might disagree with what has been written.

This chapter has been broken into parts with first some basic knowledge and information before having divided the concert experience in before, during and after parts like in the previous chapter focusing on concert experience. Each part of the concert experience has been then observed by using the Experience Pyramid as a measuring tool to choose different elements.

### **5.1 Background**

The authors first ever K-pop event attendance was already back in summer 2012 in Japan. Though that was a release event, that is where everything started from. The first concert experience took place on February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2013, in Munich followed by the next concert experience taking place on May 21<sup>st</sup> of the same year in Tokyo. Both concerts were by a group called Teen Top. This already shows that the experiences have been collected from several countries. By the time of this thesis' completion, the author has attended K-pop concerts in 9 different countries, concerts of over 40 different artists, and some festival type of events with several artists.

### **5.2 Concert experience**

Concerts like any other type of experiences are always personal. Because of that, the experience will never be completely similar for two people. They might have gone to the exact same concert, but the experiences might be vastly different. Some things that can play a big part in how a person perceives something are background and feelings. What kind of history does the attendee have with the performer? What kind of feelings do their songs evoke in said attendee? What kind of day did the attendee have before the concert? These are just some of the questions, which can divide attendees into several categories based on how their experience was.

#### **5.2.1 Before concert**

When looking at things from a fan's perspective, the before concert phase can be roughly divided into following parts: concert announcement, planning, ticketing, finalizing plans and enjoying teaser materials. All the forementioned can be referred as part of the motivational level, so showing interest towards the concert. Furthermore, the planning and finalizing plans parts can sometimes be

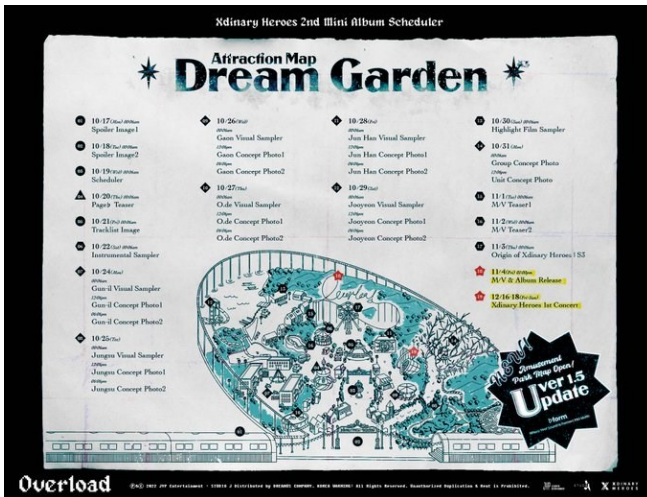
together instead of finalizing plans following ticketing. Things that affect said parts are the popularity of the artist and the location of the concert. If we are talking about a group like BTS, getting tickets can be very hard. In that kind of case, it might be needed to plan how far are you willing to travel for their concert, but finalizing plans cannot be done before the concert tickets are secured. Then comparing that to a small band like Xdinary Heroes, whose tickets are rather easy to get, it is possible to make all plans already before getting the concert tickets, if needed.

The concert announcements, same goes for tour announcements, can come in several forms. In most cases, the announcement comes as a teaser photo but there have been some videos also. As an example, for their 2017 BTS LIVE TRILOGY EPISODE III THE WINGS TOUR the mentioned group released a video trailer on November 18th, 2016, just before following up with the first tour dates announcement five minutes afterwards (refer to picture 9).



Picture 9. THE WINGS TOUR in Seoul poster (BIGHIT MUSIC, 2016)

Another good example of a bit different concert announcement was Xdinary Heroes in 2022. At first, the concert dates were included into their 'Overload' album scheduler instead of being a separate announcement (refer to picture 10). The release scheduler was published on October 17<sup>th</sup>, 2022, but other information about the concert followed only on November 17<sup>th</sup>, 2022, so a month after. This left the fans a bit on the edge for a month. Even though it caused confusion, it also surely built the excitement and thirst for information. The concerts were held approximately a month later in December (Xdinary Heroes, 2022).



Picture 10. Xdinary Heroes <Overload> Scheduler (Xdinary Heroes, 2022)

From both previous examples, it can be seen, that the concert announcements can come with only few months, or even just a month's notice time. This is very normal for K-pop concerts, and it is very rare, that the concerts would be announced earlier than that. Even though, one good example of that is IVE announcing some concerts over half a year ahead (IVE OFFICIAL, 2023).

The planning phase normally means selecting the location or locations, if talking about a tour, or days of concerts, that tickets want to be purchased for. Besides the closeness of the location, sometimes where friends are going can affect the final decision. There are always preferences for the desired day or location, but at times the decision can also be more about let's go wherever tickets can be bought.

Ticket prices and the sales website are announced at the same time. At times this information is available right after the concert dates are published, but sometimes it can take up to a month or even a bit more to get this information. For less known artists the ticketing can be very easy and less stressful situation, where the tickets can be bought in few minutes. For the most popular artists the ticketing can sometimes be over in few minutes, but sometimes it can be a several hour-long fight, when others reserve tickets without paying or decide to cancel because of someone else getting a better ticket for them, so then the tickets get released back to sale. The author for example has managed to sometimes buy tickets in few minutes, but the longest tickets fight for her has taken even up to 2 hours.

Another way of ticketing, that is used mainly in Japan and to some extent in Korea is lottery. When the said way is used, it means there is a certain time limit within which the fans need to fill in a form to take part into a lottery. When lottery is being used, it normally is for fanclub members only. The results will be announced via email to the participants and visible on the site, where the form was

filled. Sometimes there is only one round of lottery but sometimes there can be up to three rounds, when more tickets become available.

Finalizing plans includes checking if any other friends are going to the same concert and with what kind of seats, if the concert is seated. Mostly K-pop concerts in Japan and Korea at least are fully seated, even the area, which normally in other countries is meant for standing. During the finalizing part the fans also reserve any needed transportation and accommodation to lessen the stress closer to concert. Then there is only left the waiting and enjoying teaser materials.

The teaser materials vary artist by artist. Some have more, some less. The location of a concert can also play part in the teaser materials amount. For overseas concerts, except Japan, the artists might not release separate materials. The tour visuals tend to stay the same, the only thing that might change is merchandise. The amount of merchandise is way less during overseas tours and might have completely been made by the tour organizer. When the concerts take place in Japan or Korea, the artist's management company takes care of organizing everything and planning and ordering the merchandise.



Picture 11. Combined photo of Xdinary Heroes tour merchandise in Korea (JYP SHOP, 2023)





Picture 12. Xdinary Heroes Europe tour merchandise (Xdinary Heroes, 2023)

The reason for mentioning Japan separately is that many artists tend to create completely different merchandise line up and visuals for the concerts taking place there, even though the concerts would be part of a bigger tour. The color scheme of the visuals might be the same in some cases, not always, but the photos and artist's styling will be different. The reason for this is that overseas fans are used to following what happens in Korea and consuming that content. Japanese fans do that of course too, but still Japan is a big market for K-pop and vastly different compared to Korea. This causes the artists to plan different visuals for concerts in there to more match the local taste.



Picture 13. Stray Kids merchandise visuals for Korea (upper) and Japan (lower) concert (author's own photo)

### 5.2.2 During concert day

The actions of a concert day are what mostly affects to all different levels of the Experience Pyramid. The organizer and performer have been working on their parts of course before the event already, but this is where things become reality and materialize to attendees.

From attendee's point of view, the rise to the peak of excitement for the concert normally starts the day before already. That is when all the final plans are made with friends while checking other important information. The information normally includes possible merchandise selling times, time for picking up tickets, time for doors to open and the time for the live to start.

Mostly in Japan and Korea, the merchandise sale happens outside of the venue before the concert, if any onsite sale is taking place, when in Europe it happens inside the venue. Picking up tickets is mainly a thing, that needs to be taken into consideration in Korea. In Japan tickets are either delivered via mail or printed out at convenience stores, when in Korea for people not residing in the country, the only possibility often is to pick up the ticket at the venue's ticket booth before the doors open. Home delivery option is only available for residents, if ticket has been purchased early enough, otherwise it needs to be also picked up from the ticket booth. When it comes to Europe, USA and at least some other locations in Asia, mostly electronic tickets are preferred nowadays. It's easier, when you get the ticket directly to your email and then just need to show it from your mobile device or print it before hand at home.

Whenever a physical ticket is needed, it can be counted both in the multi-sensory perception and physical level. It will make everything feel even more real. Something else, that can be counted on these levels are of course the merchandise, which also includes for many K-pop artists a light stick. Light stick is something, that the fan needs to own, when it comes to K-pop. It's a physical sign of being a fan and way of showing respect towards the artist. A light stick, as the name suggests, is a carefully designed stick with a light in it and in K-pop each artist has their own design. But when it comes to showing respect, a term "black ocean" needs to be explained. With black ocean is meant, when a part or everyone in the audience turn off their light sticks for a certain performer. There can be many reasons behind it, but in short, the point is to show displeasure towards them. This should not be confused with the cases, when light sticks have sold out, so not everyone can have them at the concert. Furthermore, nowadays many of the light sticks have a Bluetooth built in them, which makes it possible for the organizers to set certain colors or blinking patterns to them for certain songs during the concert.

Another thing are slogans. Those can either be made of fabric, when they're called slogans, or paper making them be called banners. The fabric ones are mainly fan made for a certain member,

even though groups can have some officially made for the whole group too. The paper ones are something, that the organizers distribute before the concert. Normally they are either given, when entering the venue, or they have been already placed at the seats. The fabric ones can be kept up whenever wished, but for the paper ones normally a certain song or a similar queue has been set, when the fans are supposed to all lift the banners up at the same time. This all can be counted as part of multi-sensory perception because of feeling things, and furthermore as part of interaction. Since in the end both the banner events and having a lightstick do bring fans together as one.



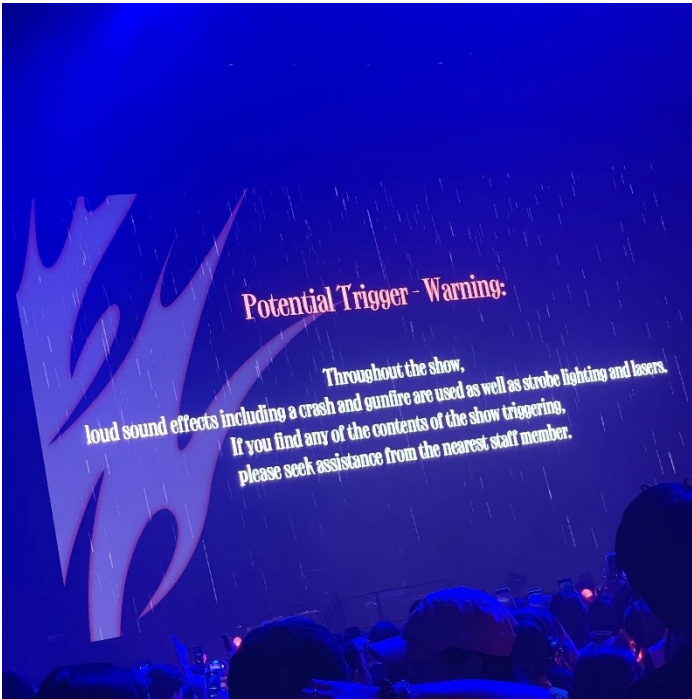
Picture 14. Examples of slogans/banners: fan made (purchased from another fan), official slogan and banner made by the organizer (Author's own photo, 2023)

When entering the venue, the discussion about physical level, multi-sensory perception and interaction can be raised. Some have been mentioned already before, but physical level also includes how the seat is, or what kind of standing spot you have. Temperature also plays a part in this and can affect how the concert is being remembered afterwards. If it was too cold, it can be easy to put more clothes on, but it might be annoying to do that. On the other hand, if it is too hot, it can also get dangerous. Especially on the standing area sometimes the pressure can be too much, which makes it a safety issue. Sadly, there is nothing much for the organizers to do, except dividing the area in to rows somehow, since no matter what is said the fans will keep on pushing and trying to get closer to the stage. This of course does not happen every time and not everywhere. These also count towards the multi-sensory perception since then you are feeling things.

The interaction part can be both between the staff and the fans. These of course also can be different event by event and how much assistance is needed. A staff can for example help in finding the right seat or provide some other crucial information about the concert. The staff are the first touch-point whenever problems arise. They also are crucial in ensuring safety both for the fans and artists. Whenever a fan is not behaving well, it is the staff's task to get the escorted out to ensure others safety. Same as, if the artist decides to come down from stage and run around the venue to greet the fans on a more personal level, the staff needs to ensure that fans stay on their places and there are no obstacles causing harm.

Interactions between fans can easily happen before concert too. Especially in Korea and Japan, where concerts are mostly seated, even the area, which in other countries is normally considered as standing, has been transformed into seating area. Sometimes the fan next to you, if they are on their own might just want to chat a bit, except sometimes language barrier can cause it not to be possible. Another thing, that is to some extent common in Korea is exchanging or giving gifts to the fans seated next to you. Some fans prepare small gifts, which can include local snacks or self-printed photocards, which they then distribute to the people near them. It is nice, if there is something to give back, but it is never expected, so those giving gifts just do it without expecting anything in return. This can create a nicer environment for the fans to exist together in compared to just ignoring each other, which is the common way to go.

Something else that can be counted to the multi-sensory perception are of course the stage and different videos shown, the music and speaks the artists have as well as for example scents (Kim, 2023) or heat from possible fireworks or similar elements. Many K-pop artists have at least a simple video introducing the members at the beginning of the live, but not everyone. For some the story telling part already starts with the first video. In those cases, the video does show each of the members but will not show their names to not disturb the visuality of the video and everyone's concentration on the story. The story in the video can be either continuation to for example their previous comeback materials or just a story of what has happened so far for the group. Some concerts have only one video shown at the beginning, but others can have several to continue the story and, in a way, to break the concert in pieces. The videos also give the artist time to calm down slightly and change stage outfit to provide more surprises to the fans.



Picture 15. The screens can also be used to provide information before the concert (Author's own photo, 2023)

When it comes to intellectual level, a lot of new information can be gained during the concert. During their speeches, the members are besides greeting the audience and asking the basic “Are you having fun?” to bring some interaction, telling stories. The stories can be about hard times or something that happened before the concert. It can make the fans feel closer to the artist when they share their hardships and are more open about their feelings. Furthermore, hearing just simple things like how important fans are to them, can affect a lot on emotional level.

The emotional level can include a lot of different emotions depending on the person and the artist. Mostly for concerts the top emotions are joy and excitement, but sometimes there can also come emotions like relief, relaxation, or in some cases also sadness or even fear. Mainly the last one happens only, if something is wrong with safety or too much pressure appears during the concert because of others standing around pushing too much.

Joy and excitement are easily visible as smiling faces, loud screams of excitement and jumping or otherwise being active during songs. But, when talking about sadness or relief, some songs have the power to cause that kind of feelings in a person. Sadness might not always be completely negative, but it might also help in making way for more positive feelings and processing underlying negative feelings.

In short for concerts the contrast comes from it being a special thing. Fans normally do not attend concerts every day, only for a short amount of time or even just once. A lot depends on are the concerts part of a tour or other type of bigger collection, or are the concerts organized more individually as maximum of three days of concerts.

### **5.2.3 After concert**

Right after the concert normally feelings are still very positive and there is the hype, what was left afterwards. Normally it is also time to finally share the experiences with friends either face to face, via messages or in social media. Some sadness can be mixed to it though when everything is kind of over. There is the term of “post-concert depression”, which refers to the sadness and emptiness, which follows a concert. It does not always happen, but it can happen, and depends person to person when does it kick in.

The intellectual level can also still deepen during post-concert actions like releasing behind the scenes material, which shows the artist preparing for the concert. Furthermore, there can be released a photo, which the artist took together with the audience at some point of the concert, so it can be a nice memory to fans too to see it. It is also nice to go back to any possible videos or photos taken by yourself during the concert to reminiscence something, that happened during the concert. Though, sometimes filming is not allowed at all, so then only memories are what remains. Some bigger concerts have fabric flags or standees nearby the venue though, so those can make nice picture memories. In case of standees, it is even possible to just take a picture with the standee to make it more personal.

Change on mental level is normally something, that happens properly only after the concert. It does not happen for everyone, and it might be something that has been on the way already, but the concert just pushed the idea further. As an example, BTS has included a lot about self-love and appreciation to their lyrics, so seeing them live sing about these things or hearing them speak about it during the speeches might trigger a change in the fan also. Concerts can also be a way to escape from the world at times, which makes them extra special. A space with no worries about future, just the moment and enjoyment of that.

Besides the forementioned, sometimes DVDs/Blu-rays or documentaries can be released of concerts. Especially any bigger concerts in Korea or Japan easily can be released as DVDs/Blu-rays, which will give the fans a chance to live through again the special moments from the concert. Concerts in other parts of the world might be included or mentioned on any possible tour documentary or just as behind the scenes material on YouTube, but normally the main weight is in the concerts in Korea and Japan.

### **5.3 Differences between artists**

One big difference comes already in budget. Depending on how popular the group is or under which entertainment company they are plays a big role in their budget. The concerts can be from small club or theatre spaces with only few tens of attendees all the way to big stadium concerts with tens of thousands of attendees. The smaller the venue and artist, the less there are any visuals. Clothing might be very simplistic, and visuals are only a video or two during the concert. For the biggest concerts there can be several high-quality videos utilized during the concert, big stage instalments and fireworks.

Though, what smaller artists might lack in budget, they bring in for example as interaction with fans. A small concert with up to 30 attendees makes it easier for the artist to speak with the fans more personally and communicate with them, when with an audience of hundreds or thousands of people it is not as easy to make it as personal. Though, there has been some examples of as surprise artist waiting at the lobby behind a table separating them from the fans, waiting to greet each fan. Before COVID-19 it has in some cases been just a quick high-touch and after COVID-19 happened just the artist waving and thanking the fans for coming.

In some cases, when the concerts are held with smaller audience, there can also be chances for the artist to for example play rock-paper-scissors with the attendees and the winner from audience will get a small present. The presents normally are something like tickets to take a picture with the artist in the event following the concert or some merchandise, but they can also be something very special like the fan being taken to the stage and the artist singing to the fan.

The forementioned make the experience even more unique to the fan. Even though similar things are not possible for more popular artists, they make the uniqueness in other ways. Mostly, when talking of the big names, for a fan it is already a unique experience to even get to attend the concert since getting tickets can be very hard. In those cases, the concert experience itself makes up for everything else and is special enough since it can be seen as more of a once in a lifetime type of thing.

### **5.4 Differences between concert locations**

If comparing a concert either in Korea or Japan to a concert in Europe, there can be some differences easily spotted. One being the marketing since for Europe concerts there normally are no separate marketing materials created, so mainly it is just one group photo, which is used for all marketing related to the concert. In Japan and Korea then again, there can be multiple images and videos, which are being used, but this varies artist by artist.

Another that could be pointed out is the language. During overseas concerts there are normally translators translating from Korean to the local language or English everything that the artist is saying on stage. In Korea this obviously does not happen since there is no need for one. This can cause it to be necessary to learn a foreign language if the fan wishes to understand everything. Sometimes, even within Europe, getting service in English can also be a bit tricky, which can diminish the concert experience.

Furthermore, especially when it comes to K-pop concerts, it is more common to have all standing concerts outside of Korea. In Korea most of the concerts have been fully seated, even though after the pandemic partly standing concerts have slowly started to gain popularity. By partly standing concerts is meant, that the arena area is standing, but any built-in seating areas for example on the second floor remain as they are like how things are overseas. For years there has been lots of debate going around about this, and how especially for people from overseas it can feel a bit weird even, when the whole venue might be seated.



## 6 Findings and analysis Discussion

When thinking about some of the main points or main differences, a few could be highlighted. The first one being the light sticks. There are times during concerts, when the fans do not know what to do with their hands or the best way to show support. Even though lifting hands up in the air can look nice also from up stage, lights can work much better. Having light sticks, which change light according to settings for the song, or just bring more light to the black venue, look very pretty both for the performer and fans also. It can also make fans really feel part of something bigger, one small light among all those hundreds or thousands, but still brightly shining for the artist. Also, for fans on the seats/spots further from the stage, the view can be absolutely breath taking and makes the moment feel almost magical instead of just watching the show, where all the light only comes from the lights installed for the stage (refer to picture 16).



Picture 16. SUGA's D-Day Tour in Singapore, 2023. (Author's own photo.)

In western concerts for slower songs it sometimes is requested, that everyone takes their phone out and puts the flashlight on to make a similar kind of light sea. Both options can have perks but also downsides. One obviously being money. Light sticks in Korea normally cost something between 19,000 (Everline, 2023) and 46,000 Korean won (Sound Wave, 2023), so approximately 13-32 euros. Sadly, when importing said light sticks to for example Europe, the costs go up to 30-80 euros depending on the light stick. Not everyone has that amount of money to just throw into something, that they might use only ones, especially since K-pop artists are known to release a new version of the light stick every 2-4 years. But then again, everyone does have a phone to use the flashlight function, so that will not cause the need to get anything extra for the concert, if not wanted. In Europe it is more common for fans to attend the concert without a lightstick, but in

Korea it can be seen as very disrespectful. Only case, when it can be understood, is when the lightstick sells out, so there might not even be possibility to buy one.

Second point could be fan chants, which at least currently seem to be a thing only in K-pop. For other musicians, it is normal during concerts that the members' names get called, the audience is screaming, shouting, or singing along. Some artists might have certain parts of the song, that the audience is supposed to sing, but mostly that required some research or experience from fans. To be able to know those parts, one needs to have attended concert of the artist before or watched some live videos from said artist. In K-pop the fan chants are released on social media or other artist specific information platforms by the company managing the artist. This gives the fans a possibility to check the fan chants before a concert and learn them on their own. Some artists also release videos, where the artist themselves does the fan chant to make the learning process easier. This can be very helpful especially in a situation when live footage is not available.

Even though the idea of fan chants is very beautiful, and when correctly done, sounds very beautiful and can work as a nice support for the artist, it can also be stressful. If comparing a situation of attending a concert in Korea and then a concert in Europe, in most cases you will hear the fan chants in Korea, but in Europe not as much or maybe just small parts of it. One reason could be the lack of language knowledge since quite many of the songs are mostly in Korean, which makes the fan chants to be the same since most of it is anyways just repetitions of certain parts or singing along with the artist. This can result into people just screaming randomly or even singing through the whole song, which can also be okay in some situations. The fore mentioned is also something, that seems to happen a lot more in Western artists' concerts, when there are no set rules about when to scream and when not, or when to sing and when not. Both ways can work, but they can also divide fans a bit, when some part prefers the more western way and others prefer the Korean way of enjoying a concert.

Third point is storytelling, which can be seen as an effective way of immersing the audience. For example, many of the pop concerts in Western countries do have a carefully curated setlist for each show, or for the whole tour, but it might not tell a story. Old and new songs are mixed to build a well working show, and during the talking parts the artist might tell stories about the songs, but the whole show is not built as a story. In many K-pop concerts the storytelling is in an important part. The setlist has been curated carefully and old and new songs can be mixed, even though the weight is normally put towards the newer songs. The storytelling then comes to play a part through videos shown during the concert, costume changes and stage settings.

Good example of storytelling could be SUGA's D-Day Tour in 2023. The story has been started already in 2016 with his first solo mixtape release. Through the three mixtapes released in 2016,

2020, and the latest one in 2023 just before the tour, he tells his own story. All these mixtapes led him to 2023 and his own tour which finalized the era, story about his past. The ending can be seen both in the video shown before the last songs, but also on the stage, when he just walked off the stage after performing a song called "The Last". This is just one example and there are several more, but videos are heavily used to bring the story into a visual format, so it is easier to understand.

As a downside, for more casual or newer fans, who have not had the time to take in all what has happened throughout the years, the story might be hard to understand. Sometimes there is more meaning behind than what reaches the eye, if you do not know what has happened in the past. Though, this does not apply to all concerts since some do have kind of a separate story for the concert with not that much relation to earlier happenings, maybe just small not that significant parts for the older fans to notice. Furthermore, another downside could be, if one cannot attend a concert, so they might miss some parts of a bigger story, if they do not later have a possibility to watch recording of the concert.

These are just the main points, but there might be even more differences, if a look on a deeper level would be taken. For example, differences in how concerts are organized and planned, so on the organizers side. On a fans perspective there can also be differences, and some might see these points or some of them as more irrelevant. Same as what has been overall written, since it is heavily based on one person's experiences and perspectives, it does not tell the whole truth. Like mentioned before in the thesis, experiences are always personal, so if the same question would be asked from some other K-pop fan, they might list different things or point out something completely new.

## 7 Conclusions and Implications

Based on the fore mentioned, one way to further develop or for getting a broader understanding, creating a survey, or interviewing multiple fans could help. Furthermore, age and how long one has been part of K-pop fandoms can affect into their experience, same as do they have experience from other type of concerts to compare to can cause differences. That meaning, that for further development it would be important to take enough viewpoints into consideration, include people of different age and background, who have been interested in K-pop for different amounts of time.

Furthermore, even though there are differences in concerts organized in different genres, the basics are similar. When it comes to making concerts, there is no right or wrong, so also the fans and their expectations need to be taken into consideration. It is a fact, that some fans expect more than others and not everyone can be pleased.

Besides fans expectations, budgets do play a big part in concert and event creation also. So, even though different concerts from artists in the same industry and same country can be compared, it might not always look fair, if the budgets are not matching. It is completely different for a well-known artist and an artist, who just started their career for example. But hopefully this thesis can still help in giving ideas and sharing information about different concerts.

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