

The Global Success of K-Pop: Strategies Behind its Worldwide Expansion. An Overview in Malaysia Perspective

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ABSTRACT

This conceptual paper examines the integrated strategies driving global expansion and sustained success of K-pop in the international music market. While existing literature acknowledges the globalization of Korean popular culture (Hallyu), prior studies often provide fragmented perspectives by examining contributing factors in isolation. To address this gap, this paper offers a comprehensive analysis of the synergistic relationship between three independent variables, digital media, marketing strategies, and fandom culture, and their collective influence on global success as the dependent variable. Grounded in Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT), Participatory Culture Theory, and Relationship Marketing Theory, this paper argues that these factors operate as a self-reinforcing digital ecosystem. Digital media functions as the primary driver by eliminating geographical barriers and enhancing global visibility through platforms such as YouTube and TikTok. Integrated marketing strategies, including data-driven personalization and content localization, strengthen global market fit and brand recognition. Meanwhile, fandom culture serves as a powerful expansion mechanism by transforming passive audiences into active digital participants who amplify global reach through streaming campaigns and online mobilization. The paper concludes that K-pop's global dominance is rooted in this strategic digital-first model and suggests that future research should explore the role of emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence and the metaverse in shaping the industry's sustainability.

Keywords; K-Pop, Hallyu, Global Success, Digital Media, Marketing Strategies, Fandom Culture, Participatory Culture

INTRODUCTION

In today's interconnected world, export-oriented cultural products have increasingly transcended national borders, with Hallyu and K-pop emerging as prominent examples. The global success of K-pop groups such as BTS and BLACKPINK demonstrates how strategic marketing and cultural appeal have enabled Korean popular culture to resonate with audiences worldwide (Chen, 2023). This remarkable growth has attracted significant scholarly attention in recent years, leading to a growing body of research that examines the factors contributing to K-pop's international success. Previous studies in cultural and media studies have explored the production and dissemination of music as a cultural product, while others have focused on how technological advancements have transformed the competitive landscape of the music industry. However, despite providing valuable insights, these studies often offer fragmented perspectives and fail to provide a comprehensive, diachronic explanation of how K-pop has achieved and sustained its success in the global music market (SeungHo Kwon, 2022).

Several factors have been identified as contributing to the global success of K-pop. One of the most significant factors is the advancement of digital technology and social media platforms, which have enabled K-pop content to reach international audiences more effectively (Smarnmit, 2020). Platforms such as YouTube, Spotify, and Apple Music provide easy access to music, performances, and entertainment content, allowing fans from different countries to engage with K-pop regardless of geographical boundaries. In addition, entertainment companies actively utilize social media channels to promote artists and maintain communication with global audiences. The strong participation of K-pop fandoms has also played a crucial role in expanding

the influence of Hallyu through fan-driven promotional activities, content creation, and active engagement in supporting their favourite artists (Ranieses, 2024). Furthermore, strategic marketing practices and supportive industry policies have strengthened K-pop's position in the international music market, enabling it to establish itself as a significant global cultural force (Tanudjaja, 2024). Collectively, these elements illustrate how K-pop has evolved into a globally recognized cultural phenomenon.

Problem Statement

The global success of K-pop has been widely recognized as a major cultural phenomenon in the international music industry, driven by the rapid globalization of Korean popular culture. Previous research has shown that the expansion of K-pop is closely linked to the strategic use of social media platforms, particularly YouTube and social networking services, which enable the global distribution of content and reduce geographical barriers to music consumption (Kim, 2020). These platforms have played a central role in increasing the international visibility and accessibility of K-pop content.

In addition, studies have highlighted the importance of transnational fan communities in contributing to the global success of K-pop. Research indicates that fans actively participate in promoting artists through streaming, content sharing, translation, and online engagement, making fandom a key driver of global dissemination (Zhang, 2020). This participatory culture strengthens the relationship between artists and global audiences and enhances the sustainability of K-pop's international popularity.

Furthermore, previous studies emphasize the role of strategic industry practices in supporting K-pop's global competitiveness. The structured idol training system, coordinated content production, and global marketing strategies implemented by entertainment companies have been identified as important mechanisms that enhance K-pop's ability to penetrate international markets (Whal-Sik, 2020). These strategies ensure consistent branding and global appeal across diverse audiences.

However, despite the growing body of literature, existing studies tend to examine these factors separately, focusing individually on social media, fandom culture, or industry strategies. This has resulted in a fragmented understanding of how these elements interact to produce the sustained global success of K-pop. Therefore, there is a need for a more integrated analysis of the key strategies behind K-pop's worldwide expansion to better understand how these factors collectively contribute to its global success.

Current Problem in Malaysian Context

One of the growing concerns in Malaysia is the increasing influence of Korean popular culture on the lifestyle and identity of Malaysian youth, particularly in terms of fashion and appearance. Studies have shown that Malaysian youth who are highly exposed to K-pop content through digital platforms tend to adopt Korean-inspired fashion styles, hairstyles, and beauty standards due to strong media exposure and idol admiration (Roslan, 2025). This reflects how global entertainment culture can shape local identity and consumption behaviour.

Another issue is the concern that continuous exposure to K-pop fashion and idol styling may influence perceptions of modesty and appropriate dressing among youth. Research indicates that K-pop fandom culture encourages imitation of idol appearance, including clothing and aesthetic presentation, as part of fan identity expression (Pazil, 2022). While this demonstrates active fan engagement, it also raises concerns regarding the balance between global cultural influence and local cultural values.

In addition, social media and peer influence play a significant role in shaping the acceptance and imitation of Korean popular culture among Malaysian students. Studies have found that exposure to K-pop through online platforms significantly affects attitudes, lifestyle preferences, and behavioural tendencies among youth, including fashion consumption and identity formation (Nurul Diyana et. al. 2022). This shows how digital media strengthens cultural influence beyond entertainment purposes.

Furthermore, the accessibility of K-pop content through global streaming platforms has intensified the exposure

of Malaysian youth to idealised beauty standards and lifestyles promoted by Korean celebrities, which may influence self-image, social comparison, and consumer behaviour among young audiences, particularly in urban communities. Overall, these combined influences indicate that K-pop does not only function as a form of entertainment but also plays a significant role in shaping youth identity, cultural values, and lifestyle practices in Malaysia.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This section reviews the existing literature related to the variables proposed in this conceptual paper. The purpose of this literature review is to provide a comprehensive understanding of the relationships between digital media, fandom culture, marketing strategies, and global success. Specifically, digital media, fandom culture, and marketing strategies are proposed as the independent variables, while global success serves as the dependent variable.

Theoretical Foundation

This conceptual paper is grounded in three established theoretical frameworks, namely Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT), Participatory Culture Theory, and Relationship Marketing Theory. These theories remain highly relevant in contemporary digital media, fandom, and marketing research as they explain how individuals engage with digital platforms, how fan communities actively participate in content ecosystems, and how organizations develop long-term relationships with audiences. Collectively, these theories provide a strong foundation for understanding how digital media, fandom culture, and marketing strategies contribute to global success.

Uses and Gratifications Theory (Ugt)

Uses and Gratifications Theory explains that individuals are active media users who deliberately select platforms to fulfil specific needs such as entertainment, information seeking, social interaction, and self-expression. In the digital era, this theory has been widely applied to understand social media usage behaviour.

Recent studies by (Qingqing Hu, 2022) found that Generation Z users engage with social media platforms based on motivations such as entertainment, identity expression, and social interaction. Similarly (Li Gu, 2022) demonstrated that TikTok users are driven by gratifications such as entertainment, escapism, and social engagement. These findings confirm that UGT remains relevant in explaining user behaviour in modern digital environments. In this study, UGT is applied to explain how digital media contributes to global success by enhancing user engagement, facilitating content sharing, and expanding international audience reach (Bateman, 2021)

Participatory Culture Theory

Participatory Culture Theory explains the transformation of audiences from passive consumers into active participants who create, share, and circulate content within digital communities. This theory has been widely used in recent fandom studies to explain collective fan behaviour in online environments.

Recent research by (Zulli, 2021) highlights that digital platforms enable algorithmic amplification of user-generated content, allowing fan contributions to reach wider audiences. In addition, (Lee, 2022) found that K-pop fandom communities actively engage in coordinated digital activities such as streaming campaigns, hashtag movements, and online voting, which significantly influence global popularity. Therefore, this theory is used in this study to explain how fandom culture contributes to global success through collective participation, digital mobilisation, and fan-driven promotional activities (Jin, 2021).

Relationship Marketing Theory

Relationship Marketing Theory emphasizes the importance of trust, commitment, and long-term relationships between organizations and audiences. In the digital context, this theory has been extended by recent scholars

to highlight the importance of engagement-based marketing strategies. For example, (Dessart, 2020) found that digital engagement strengthens emotional connections between consumers and brands. Similarly, (Sashi, 2021) emphasized that social media interaction, influencer marketing, and personalized communication significantly enhance customer loyalty and long-term engagement. In this study, Relationship Marketing Theory is used to explain how marketing strategies contribute to global success by strengthening audience relationships, increasing engagement, and sustaining long-term loyalty (Hossain, 2025)

Global Success

Global success is becoming more competitive. Success is no longer determined only by financial resources or physical assets. Innovation, technological capability, adaptability, human capital and the ability to respond to changing markets are increasingly important. Global success refers to an organization's achievement measured through both financial and non-financial indicators, including growth, profitability, business sustainability, and the accomplishment of organizational objectives that create value of the country. (Rahman, 2020). According to Lim, 2022, Global success is defined as an organization's ability to achieve sustainable business excellence in a rapidly changing global environment through innovation, resilience, and adaptation to international challenges. Global success refers to a firm's capability to leverage global knowledge resources and international business experience to enhance organizational growth and achieve successful strategic outcomes in global markets (Ko, 2023).

Digital Media

Digital media refers to digitized content that can be created, stored, transmitted, and accessed through electronic devices and computer networks, including text, audio, video, and graphics used for communication and information sharing for the public to reach what the main purpose of the media (Mills, 2020). Digital media is a form of communication media that combines computational technologies and semiotic systems, enabling the creation, distribution, and interpretation of digital content across various digital platforms (Bateman, 2021). Digital media encompasses digitized content that can be communicated through the internet or computer networks, including text, audio, video, graphics, websites, social media platforms, and mobile applications (Rahim, 2022).

This study found by Ye, 2025 that digital media exposure plays a significant role in enhancing firm performance in international markets. Digital media increases global visibility, strengthens customer engagement, and improves brand awareness across borders. Firms that actively use digital platforms are more likely to achieve global success due to improved communication efficiency and stronger market signaling effects. Nowadays, all business organizations such as Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) or Multinational Corporation (MNC) will be use it digital media as a main part of promotion and communication tool for product or services that are provided in market especially in global success. According to Panggati, 2026 mentioned digital influencer recommendations have a positive and significant impact on consumers' attitudes toward digital advertising and their purchase intentions. Consumers are more likely to trust and respond positively to advertisements endorsed by influencers, leading to a stronger intention to purchase the promoted products. The study also showed that positive attitudes toward digital advertising help strengthen the relationship between influencer recommendations and purchase intention

Digital media has become an increasingly important component of the Malaysian market due to the country's high level of internet and mobile connectivity. According to the Department of Statistics Malaysia (DOSM, 2026), internet access among Malaysian households increased to 97.1% in 2025, compared with 96.8% in 2024. This indicates that digital connectivity has become almost universal among Malaysian households and provides a strong foundation for the growth of digital media, online businesses, e-commerce and digital advertising.

Social media is also a major component of Malaysia's digital media environment. Based on the information from DataReportal reported approximately 25.1 million social media user identities in Malaysia in January 2025, equivalent to around 70.2% of the country's population. Furthermore, about 71.8% of Malaysia's internet users used at least one social media platform, demonstrating the importance of platforms such as TikTok,

Instagram, Facebook and YouTube for communication, entertainment, information and commercial activities. According to research by Li, F.L, 2026 stated that social media content strategies have a significant positive impact on customer engagement and firm financial performance. By adapting digital communication strategies to different cultural contexts, organizations can enhance the effectiveness of their global marketing efforts and strengthen their competitiveness in international markets. These findings highlight the important role of digital media in supporting global business success.

The high penetration of digital media has also changed how businesses communicate with consumers. Companies increasingly use social media, search engines, video platforms, influencers and targeted online advertising to reach specific consumer segments. Digital advertising is particularly important because it allows businesses to target consumers according to demographic characteristics, interests, online behaviour and purchasing patterns. The Malaysia Competition Commission (MyCC, 2026) identified digital advertising as a significant subsector of the digital economy and examined advertising across search, social media and other online channels in its 2026 market review.

Another important development is the increasing influence of short-form video and influencer-based marketing. Younger consumers, particularly Gen Z and Millennials, are highly exposed to content delivered through mobile and social media platforms. Consequently, businesses are increasingly shifting from conventional advertising towards interactive content, influencer marketing, livestreaming, user-generated content and social-commerce strategies. This creates opportunities for businesses to engage consumers more directly and influence purchasing decisions.

Fandom Culture

Fandom culture refers to the social, cultural, and participatory activities developed by people who share a strong interest in a particular media text, celebrity, sports team, musician, fictional character, game, or other cultural object. It goes beyond simply being a consumer or admirer because fans often interact with one another, create content, share interpretations, and develop communities around their common interests. According to Smutradontri, 2020, Fandom culture refers to a social and cultural phenomenon in which individuals who share a strong interest in a particular celebrity, media product, or cultural object actively engage in fan activities, create fan-generated content, and form collective identities within fan communities. It's also supported by the research by Dan, 2023 that mentioned Fandom culture can be defined as an organized community of fans who develop social relationships, shared norms, and collective practices centered around a common object of admiration, such as celebrities, entertainment content, or cultural products. Nowadays, fandom culture is a part of form of participatory culture where fans actively interact with one another, create content, share knowledge, and contribute to the development and maintenance of fan communities through both online and offline engagement (Li E. C., 2024).

Fandom culture refers to a participatory social and cultural phenomenon in which individuals who share strong interests in particular media, celebrities, entertainment, sports, or other cultural objects engage in collective activities such as content creation, discussion, interpretation, sharing, and community building. Rather than being passive consumers, fans actively participate in producing and circulating cultural meanings (Jenkins, 1992; Jenkins, 2018).

The expansion of K-pop culture in globally nowadays from perspective of fandom culture plays an important role in the global circulation of media content through digital platforms. Fans actively engage in sharing, promoting, and discussing entertainment content online, helping to increase its international visibility and popularity. This participatory culture contributes to the commercial success of entertainment products by expanding their reach to audiences across different countries and cultures, supporting global success (Stanfill, 2020). This contributed to a new component in global commercial that contributed significantly to the international success of entertainment companies. Through digital activities such as streaming music, sharing content on social media, and participating in online voting, fans help increase artists' global visibility, chart rankings, and brand value. These findings demonstrate that fandom culture serves as a powerful force in driving global success within digital entertainment (Jin, 2021).

Currently, fandom culture digital fandom participation has a significant positive impact on global success indicators, including brand equity, international sales, and online popularity rankings. Through continuous engagement, content sharing, and promotional activities, fandom communities help expand the global reach of entertainment brands and strengthen their presence in international markets (Park, 2025). It shows that fandom culture is a strategic component in digital ecosystems that creates a platform to support global entertainment support especially in commercial purposes (Park, 2025).

Marketing Strategies

Marketing strategy is defined as an organization's integrated pattern of decisions and activities that aims to create, communicate, and deliver value to customers while achieving the firm's objectives through effective allocation of resources and market engagement (Li F. L., 2021). According to Muhammadin, 2020 marketing strategy refers to the planned actions and approaches implemented by an organization to enhance organizational performance, achieve competitive advantage, and respond to changing market conditions. Marketing strategy is a dynamic capability that involves coordinating marketing planning, resource reconfiguration, and strategic implementation to continuously improve market fit and achieve organizational objectives in changing environments (Theoharakis, 2024).

Marketing strategies significantly improve customer targeting accuracy, allowing businesses to better understand consumer needs and preferences. By using marketing analytics, companies can increase customer engagement, improve marketing effectiveness, and enhance overall business performance in global markets. These advantages help organizations gain a stronger competitive position and contribute to global success (Kumar, 2020). integrated digital marketing strategies, including SEO, social media marketing, content marketing, and email marketing, significantly enhance brand visibility, customer loyalty, and international market expansion. By combining multiple digital channels, businesses can improve customer engagement and strengthen their global market presence. These factors contribute directly to achieving global business success (Chaffey, 2021). Artificial intelligence (AI) and digital transformation significantly improve marketing effectiveness by enabling better customer segmentation, predictive analytics, and personalized marketing strategies. These capabilities help businesses to better understand consumer behavior, enhance customer experiences, and improve decision-making. As a result, organizations can strengthen their global competitiveness and achieve greater business success in digital markets (Dwivedi, 2022).

PROPOSED THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

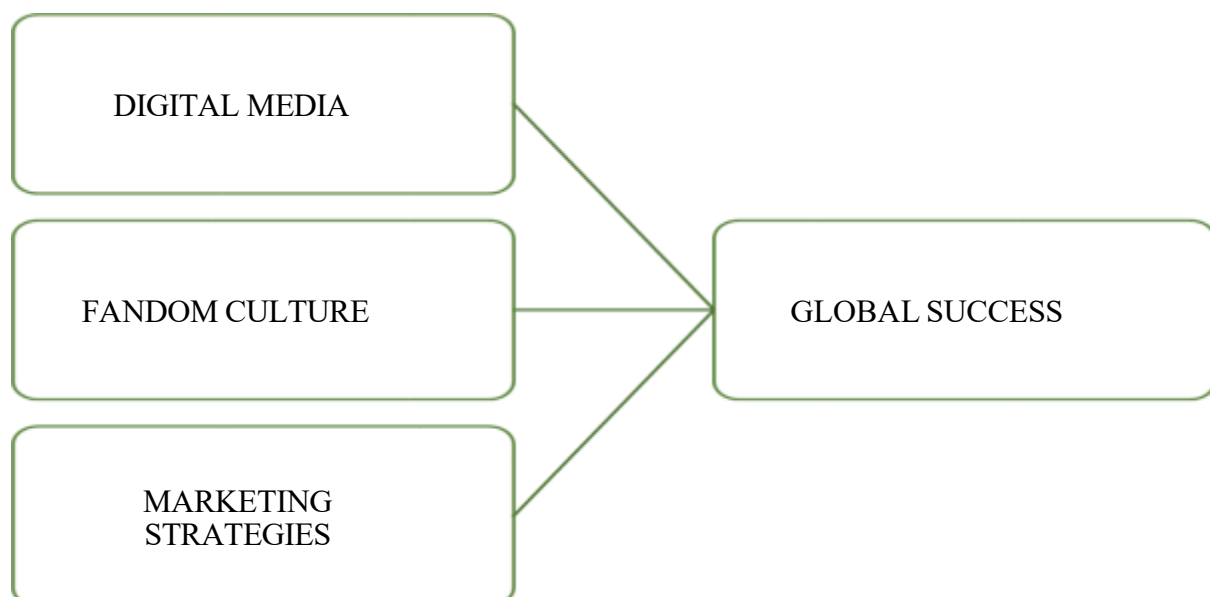


Figure 1: Proposed Theoretical Framework of Global Success

Hypothesis of this proposed study as follows:

- There will be a significant relationship between digital media and global success of K-pop industry.
- There will be a significant relationship between fandom culture and global success of K-pop industry
- There will be a significant relationship between marketing strategies and global success of K- pop industry.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopts an empirical research methodology to examine the strategies behind the global success and expansion of K-Pop from a Malaysian perspective. Empirical research is appropriate for this study because it relies on data collected from real-world participants and observable evidence rather than relying solely on theories or existing literature. The methodology enables the researcher to investigate how Malaysian audiences perceive K-Pop and which factors contribute to its popularity and global appeal.

The study will employ a quantitative research approach using a survey research design. A quantitative approach is appropriate because it enables researchers to collect numerical and measurable data from a relatively large number of respondents and statistically examine patterns, trends, and relationships among variables (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Saunders et al., 2019).

Survey research is particularly suitable for collecting standardized information from a sample of a population and examining relationships among variables (Creswell & Hirose, 2019). The study will focus on factors such as social media exposure, music quality, artist branding, fan engagement, Korean cultural influence, digital platforms, and international collaborations.

The target population of this study consists of Malaysian audiences who listen to or have an interest in K-Pop. Respondents may include individuals from different age groups, educational backgrounds, and geographical locations in Malaysia. A suitable sampling method, such as purposive or convenience sampling, may be used to recruit respondents who have experience consuming K-Pop content. The sample size should be determined based on the objectives and scope of the study. Respondents will be informed about the purpose of the research before participating, and their participation will be voluntary.

The primary research instrument will be a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire will consist of several sections. The first section will collect demographic information, such as age, gender, educational background, and frequency of K-Pop consumption. The second section will examine respondents' exposure to K-Pop through platforms such as YouTube, TikTok, Instagram, and music-streaming services.

The subsequent sections will measure respondents' perceptions of factors contributing to K-Pop's success. These factors may include the quality of music and performances, attractiveness of artists, social media marketing, fan communities, Korean culture, entertainment company strategies, international collaborations, and accessibility through digital platforms. A Likert scale, for example ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree,” can be used to measure respondents' level of agreement with each statement.

Data will be collected through an online questionnaire distributed to Malaysian K-Pop audiences. Online data collection is appropriate because K-Pop audiences are highly active on digital and social media platforms. The researcher will provide respondents with information about the purpose of the study and ensure that participation is voluntary. Respondents will also be informed that the information collected will be used strictly for academic research purposes.

The data collected will be analyzed using appropriate statistical techniques. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, will be used to summarize the characteristics of the respondents and describe the distribution of the study variables and the factors associated with K-Pop's popularity (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016; Saunders et al., 2015).

Where appropriate, inferential statistical techniques such as correlation and regression analysis may also be conducted to examine relationships between factors such as social media exposure, fan engagement, cultural appeal, and respondents' perception of K-Pop's popularity. Previous research has demonstrated the usefulness of regression analysis in examining factors associated with K-pop artists' popularity and fan engagement (Kim et al., 2021). The findings will be presented using tables and figures to make the results easier to interpret.

To ensure the quality of the research instrument, the questionnaire should be evaluated for reliability and validity. A pilot study can be conducted with a small group of respondents before the main data collection. The reliability of questionnaire items may be assessed using Cronbach's alpha. Content and construct validity should also be considered to ensure that the questionnaire measures the concepts relevant to the research objectives.

Ethical considerations are an important part of the research process. Respondents will be informed about the purpose of the study and their right to participate voluntarily. They may withdraw from the study at any time without negative consequences. The researcher will maintain the confidentiality and anonymity of respondents, and personal information will not be disclosed. The collected data will be used only for the stated academic research purposes.

Overall, the empirical methodology provides a systematic approach for examining the global success of K-Pop from the Malaysian perspective. By collecting primary data from Malaysian K-Pop audiences, the study can provide evidence-based findings about the strategies that contribute to K-Pop's popularity and international expansion. The quantitative survey approach is particularly useful for identifying patterns in audience perceptions and determining which strategies, such as digital media, fan engagement, branding, cultural appeal, and international collaboration, have the greatest influence on the success of K-Pop in Malaysia.

DISCUSSION

The global success of K-pop can be explained through the interaction of key strategic factors, particularly digital media, marketing strategies, and fandom culture, which collectively contribute to international expansion. In the modern digital economy, K-pop is not only a music genre but also a global cultural product that has successfully penetrated diverse international markets. Its success is driven by coordinated digital strategies that enhance visibility, engagement, and consumer loyalty worldwide.

Digital Media as a Core Driver Of Global Success

Digital media plays a crucial role in the global expansion of K-pop by enabling entertainment companies to distribute content worldwide through platforms such as YouTube, TikTok, Instagram, and Twitter (Ye, 2025). Studies have shown that digital media increases brand visibility, audience engagement, and international market performance, helping K-pop reach audiences beyond national boundaries (Wang, 2026).

Furthermore, digital platforms allow artists to interact directly with fans through live streaming, social media updates, and online communities, creating stronger emotional connections and fan loyalty (Jin, 2021). This continuous interaction encourages content sharing and promotes global awareness of K-pop across different countries and cultures. As a result, digital media contributes significantly to global success through increased streaming numbers, album sales, international chart performance, and overall brand value of K-pop artists and entertainment companies (Wang, 2026).

Fandom Culture as a Global Expansion Mechanism

Fandom culture is one of the strongest forces driving K-pop's global success. Unlike traditional audiences, K-pop fans actively participate in streaming, online voting, content sharing, and promotional activities that help increase artists' visibility and performance in global markets. According to (Jin, 2021), digital fandom communities play a crucial role in expanding the international reach of K-pop by encouraging continuous engagement and participation across various online platforms. Through these activities, fans contribute

significantly to increasing streaming numbers, social media engagement, and global chart rankings.

According to Park, 2025 further highlight that fandom communities function as “digital marketing agents” by voluntarily promoting artists and distributing content to wider audiences. Digital fandom culture transforms passive consumers into active participants who contribute directly to the success of artists through coordinated global efforts.

This participatory behavior strengthens emotional connections between fans and artists, fosters fan loyalty, and creates sustainable fan ecosystems. As a result, fandom culture not only enhances global visibility and brand value but also supports the long-term global expansion and success of the K-pop industry (Park, 2025).

Marketing Strategies Supporting Global Expansion

Marketing strategies are another crucial factor behind K-pop’s global success. Integrated digital marketing approaches, such as social media campaigns, influencer marketing, content localization, and personalized content, help K-pop agencies effectively promote their artists in international markets (Chaffey, 2021). These strategies enable entertainment companies to communicate with global audiences more efficiently while strengthening brand recognition and market presence. According to (Kumar, 2020), modern marketing strategies improve customer engagement, increase brand loyalty, and enhance international visibility, which are essential for achieving long-term success in competitive global markets.

In the K-pop industry, entertainment agencies strategically release multilingual content, collaborate with international brands, and utilize data analytics to understand consumer preferences across different regions (Hossain, 2025). Social media platforms also allow agencies to deliver targeted promotional campaigns and interact directly with fans worldwide, creating stronger relationships between artists and audiences. These marketing efforts not only attract new fans but also maintain the loyalty of existing fan communities. As a result, effective marketing strategies help K-pop remain competitive, expand its global fan base, and strengthen its position as a leading force in international entertainment (Chaffey, 2021).

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the global success of K-pop can be clearly understood as the result of a well-integrated system involving digital media, marketing strategies, and fandom culture, which together form a powerful ecosystem for international expansion. Rather than relying solely on traditional music promotion methods, K-pop agencies have successfully adapted to the digital era by leveraging online platforms, data-driven marketing approaches, and highly engaged global fan communities.

Firstly, digital media has fundamentally transformed how K-pop content is distributed and consumed worldwide. Platforms such as YouTube, TikTok, Instagram, and X (Twitter) remove geographical barriers and allow instant global access to music, performances, and artist-related content. This continuous digital exposure increases visibility and enables rapid dissemination of K-pop content across different countries and cultures, contributing significantly to global recognition and commercial performance.

Secondly, modern marketing strategies strengthen this global reach by ensuring that content is not only accessible but also strategically positioned for different international markets. Through integrated marketing communications, influencer collaborations, multilingual content, and data analytics, K-pop companies can understand global audience preferences and tailor their strategies accordingly. This targeted approach enhances brand loyalty, improves audience engagement, and ensures sustained competitiveness in the global entertainment industry.

Thirdly, fandom culture plays a crucial reinforcing role in sustaining global success. K-pop fans are not passive consumers; instead, they actively participate in promotional activities such as streaming, voting, sharing content, and organizing fan-driven campaigns. This participatory culture transforms fandom communities into powerful digital networks that function as unofficial marketers, significantly amplifying global reach and influence. These coordinated activities maintain global visibility and strengthen continuous engagement

across social media platforms. As a result, fandom culture reinforces long-term international success and brand loyalty for K-pop artists.

Overall, the interaction between these three elements creates a self-reinforcing cycle where digital media enables exposure, marketing strategies guide engagement, and fandom culture sustains long-term support. This synergy explains why K-pop has achieved such strong and continuous global expansion compared to many other music industries. It also highlights that K-pop is not only a cultural phenomenon but also a highly strategic global business model shaped by digital transformation. Finally, future research should explore how emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, virtual reality concerts, and metaverse platforms may further enhance or reshape the global success of K-pop. Understanding these developments will be important in evaluating the sustainability of K-pop's dominance in an increasingly competitive global entertainment landscape.

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