

Understanding the importance of the idol training process in the popularity of global K-Pop

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Working paper in preparation for submission to *Korea Observer* (ISSN 0023-3919)

Abstract

South Korea is emerging as a global powerhouse and center of innovation culture, media, and lifestyle. Recent global phenomena including K-pop, the Academy Award winning movie 'Parasite', BTS, and the Netflix Series 'Squid Game' have demonstrated the growing appeal for South Korean cultural innovation and lifestyle around the world. Further propelled by technology giants like LG, Samsung, and others, South Korean culture is becoming a global sensation. This paper asks why this recent sensation has taken place, and what are the drivers that have enabled one component of this sensation: K-pop. These questions are investigated through statistical analysis of survey responses from both the United States and South Korea along with structured interviews with prominent K-pop industry stakeholders. Findings show that the combination of new technology platforms and deeply rooted Korean collectivism, when incorporated within rigorous training processes, have created a global cultural powerhouse that is difficult replicate. However, these findings also point to the potential for exporting other attributes of Korean lifestyle globally, such as the smart city systems which leverage the same combination of new technology platforms and deeply rooted Korean societal norms.

Key Words: K-pop, Technology, Culture, Korea