

The Politics of Being a K-Pop Fan: Korean Fandom and the “Cancel the Japan Tour” Protest

JENNIFER M. KANG*
Queensland University of Technology, Australia

This article focuses on the online protest by Korean K-pop fans during the 2019 trade dispute between Korea and Japan. Several fandoms demanded that entertainment agencies cancel upcoming concerts in Japan as part of a nationwide boycott of Japanese brands in Korea. An analysis of the tweets under the hashtag #Cancel_Japan_Concert indicates that the Korean fans challenged the dominant discourses surrounding K-pop by (1) evoking the Korean-ness of the entertainment agencies that manage the K-pop groups by arguing that they should cancel the concerts because of the heightened domestic anti-Japanese sentiment, (2) emphasizing their role as moral caregivers by criticizing the agencies for treating K-pop idols as commodities, and (3) pointing to the lack of a “real” world tour in the idols’ concert schedules. These findings reveal that K-pop functions as a space in which Korean fans imagine alternative identities that transcend their popular image as embodying a collective nationalistic attitude toward the genre.

Keywords: K-pop, Korean Wave, fans, nationalism, globalization

South Korean popular music, better known as K-pop, has become a worldwide phenomenon in recent years. For instance, the K-pop band BTS sold out of concerts on the North American leg of its 2018 tour, which included landmark stadiums such as the Rose Bowl. Another band, SuperM, made up of K-pop veterans from the groups SHINee, EXO, NCT, and WayV, debuted at the top of the Billboard 200 in 2019. Continuing the trend, the girl group Blackpink’s (2020) single *How You Like That* was the fastest music video to reach 100 million views in YouTube history. The prominence of these groups makes clear that K-pop is now a fixture of the global media landscape.

In the context of Korea-Japan relations, K-pop is fraught with complications. Japan’s music market is the second largest in the world and is attractive for K-pop because of cultural similarities between the two countries. Since the 2000s, K-pop idol groups have found success in Japan, even setting records on Japan’s Oricon Chart. According to the 2019 Hallyu White Paper, Japan was the largest importer of K-pop, accounting for 62.5% of the total amount of exports, followed by China at 21.4%, Southeast Asia at 12.6%, and Europe at 1.7% (Korean Foundation for International Cultural Exchange, 2020). At the same time, Korea and Japan have a long history of conflict tracing back to the Japanese colonization of Korea from 1910 to 1945. The issues in dispute include sovereignty over Dokdo Island (the Liancourt Rocks), the glorification of Japan’s

Jennifer M. Kang: j5.kang@qut.edu.au

Date submitted: 2021-10-28

Copyright © 2023 (Jennifer M. Kang). Licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution Non-commercial No Derivatives (by-nc-nd). Available at <http://ijoc.org>.

role in World War II in Japanese history textbooks, and the name of the body of water that separates the two countries (i.e., the East Sea or Sea of Japan).

More recently, in 2019, Japan announced plans to remove Korea from a “whitelist” of countries receiving preferential treatment in export trading, causing concern in the latter country regarding access to chemical materials needed for semiconductor manufacturing, one of its major export sectors. Some thought that the Japanese government’s decision was in retaliation to a ruling by the Korean Supreme Court demanding several Japanese companies to compensate the descendants of Koreans who were forced to supply labor during the colonial period. In any case, Koreans, in response, boycotted Japanese products, eventually driving several Japanese companies from the Korean market.

This surge in anti-Japanese sentiment associated with the trade dispute also influenced the K-pop industry at this time, with several K-pop groups receiving criticism when announcing plans for concert tours that included Japan. The fans threatened that performing in Japan at a time of tension with Korea would negatively impact their idols’ careers, and they started hashtag protests against the decision by Korean entertainment agencies to move forward with concerts in Japan. Initiated by fans of the group EXO, this online protest gained traction when fans of Seventeen, TWICE, and Mamamoo, joined in.

This article approaches the controversy by analyzing the hashtag protests against the Japanese concerts of two of these groups, EXO and Seventeen, as a site where Korean fans participated in the clash of global and local politics. In previous research, K-pop has been hailed as exemplary of contra-flow, that is, as a challenge to the one-way flow of culture going from the West to the rest of the world. Some of these studies highlight the success of the K-pop industry in targeting the global market through the hybridization of local and global practices (Lee, 2011; Shim, 2016), and others provide in-depth analyses of the reception of K-pop by global audiences (Khiun, 2013; Siriyuvasak & Shin, 2007). However, in this effort to uncover the dynamics of the global expansion of K-pop, the changing ways in which domestic audiences have experienced it as it has become a global phenomenon have received relatively little attention. In the mainstream media and academic research, the Korean fans in general have been viewed as closed-minded and as hindering the genre’s global success (Berbiguier & Cho, 2017; J. H. Kim, 2019; Min, 2020), thereby precluding an understanding of how individual fans navigate competing political discourses and their fan identities in a global context. This article presents the results of critical discourse analysis of Twitter posts under the hashtag #Cancel_Japan_Concert conducted to examine the ways in which the Korean fans have re-articulated and re-conceptualized national boundaries and identities. The findings demonstrate that regional animosities with Japan, nationalistic expectations regarding K-pop’s global success, and heightened anti-Japanese sentiments at the local level have complicated Korean fans’ identities.

Globalization and K-Pop Audiences

Though a fairly recent phenomenon, K-pop has become a popular topic in global media studies. Scholars have examined the genre using various approaches, including analyses of business strategies (Lee, 2011), hybrid textual forms (Jin & Ryoo, 2014), and audience reception (Khiun, 2013; Swan, 2018). A common theme running through these studies is the contextualization of K-pop within the framework of

cultural globalization in the terms described above as a significant flow of transnational popular culture running counter to Western-centric globalization and homogenization.

Many studies of K-pop have focused on identifying the factors responsible for its global popularity (e.g., Howard, 2017; Messerlin & Shin, 2013; Oh & Lee, 2013). Research in this area has tended to take a broad perspective and explore the strategic decisions of entertainment agencies and creative personnel, and it has pointed to the significance of the agencies' strategies of intensive in-house training programs to cultivate all-around entertainers and recruitment of foreigners into K-pop groups (Y. Kim, 2008; Lee, 2011). The agencies carefully manage the entire process of creating an exportable idol star—the vocal training, choreography, production, management, and marketing—to ensure the success of a group. The hybridized textual form of K-pop songs, which involves blending various music genres and collaborating with foreign producers, is another element of the genre's global success (Jin & Ryoo, 2014; Shim, 2006). K-pop songs often blend English and Korean lyrics to make music accessible to non-Korean-speaking audiences, and music videos that highlight visual performances with cross-cultural appeal are distributed through YouTube to reach a worldwide audience.

Other researchers have examined the reception of K-pop to understand its appeal to transnational audiences (e.g., S.-Y. Kim, 2018; Noh, 2011; Sung, 2014; Yoon, 2018). One of the central issues that this line of research addresses is the experiences of individual fans in interpreting K-pop. Fandom is often associated with cultural forms that are denigrated by mainstream value systems and with individuals who are marginalized by any combination of race, age, gender, and class (Fiske, 1992). Overlooking the differences that exist among fans not only flattens the diverse qualities but also ends up silencing marginalized voices and obscuring alternative perspectives within the fandom. Thus, the fan studies literature in general shows a move toward the specificity of fans within fandoms and consideration of the process by which "communities of affect and belonging are constituted" (Morimoto & Chin, 2017, p. 347).

In line with this approach to fandom, K-pop fan studies have focused on the ways in which fans develop their connections to the genre. Pop culture forms generally can provide audiences with the cultural resources to negotiate conflicting identities and social problems (Y. Kim, 2013; Lee, 2018; Yoon, 2018), and K-pop fan communities operate as "multiple, transnational sites of engagement" that can "contest racial, national or other important markers of identity that matter to them deeply" (Y. Kim, 2013, p. 14). For example, Yoon, Min, and Jin (2020) found that fans in Spain used K-pop to imagine a space that was neither Eastern nor Western in which they could explore their desires. For Asian American youth, Korean media have served as a connection to a pan-ethnic identity within the East Asian community (Ju & Lee, 2015), and Canadian fans have imagined alternatives to Western-centric globalization through an interest in K-pop as a cosmopolitan, participatory, and cute culture (Yoon, 2018). Such studies have revealed the influence of the political, cultural, and socioeconomic realities of K-pop audiences on their interpretations of K-pop as a form of global pop culture.

On the other hand, very little English language research has been done on the understanding of K-pop by Korean fans as a global phenomenon. When mentioned at all, the domestic fans are usually discussed in the context of being perceived by non-Korean fans as nationalistic and possessive of their idols (e.g., Yoon, 2018). In Korean literature, there has been research conducted on domestic fans, including female

fans' perception of boy bands' masculinities and the changing relationship between fans and entertainment agencies (Jung & Lee, 2009; S. A. Kim, 2011). However, such research was done mostly before K-pop's rise as a global popular culture. This neglect of the Korean fans represents a gap in the literature on the globalization of K-pop regarding the sociohistorical contexts in which people consume texts and the cultural politics that influence their consumption practices (Iwabuchi, 2010). Choi and Maliangkay (2014) point out that K-pop fandom is polycentric and that the local specificity plays a strong role in fans' expectations regarding K-pop, describing culture as space where political and economic objectives play out, and K-pop "has become a unique channel through which heterogeneous interests of global fans are negotiated" (p. 7). Globalization is an uneven and highly contextual process experienced in various ways across various spaces. The dynamics of communication and culture become unsettled in the protracted process of globalization, so the identities and places usually labeled as dominant or marginal cannot be essentialized. Amid this unpredictability, it is crucial in identity politics to consider how difference, marginality, and disempowerment "are evoked, how they are produced, where they are produced, and how they are reconstituted, through differential logics in globalization" (Shome & Hegde, 2002, p. 176). The globalization experience of Korean fans is not the same as that of other audiences, and their experiences, as part of this global landscape, are worthy of academic attention. This study, then, helps to fill this gap in the literature by initiating a scholarly conversation that adds the experiences of Korean fans to K-pop reception studies.

Nationalistic Identities and Clashes

The Korean Wave, a term that refers to the global popularity of Korean popular culture, has been interpreted as an example of neoliberal nationalism within Korea and celebrated for the economic benefits of cultural exports for the country (Fedorenko, 2017; Lee, 2008). This mainstream discourse highlights increases in tourism, sales of related products, and the exports of Korean brands that ultimately contribute to the country's national image (Lee, 2013). In general, the export success of the Korean Wave, including that of K-pop, has been adduced as evidence of the superiority of Korean culture. From this perspective, culture is instrumentalized as a commercial export, and, at the same time, it serves as a source of national pride. Thus, K-pop singers are not just successful celebrities but cultural ambassadors representing Korea on the international stage (Choi & Maliangkay, 2014; Fuhr, 2015). For instance, EXO performed at the closing ceremony of the PyeongChang Winter Olympics, and members of BTS delivered a speech at the 76th U.N. General Assembly in the capacity of special presidential envoys. Kyong Yoon (2017) argued that the postcolonial national identity of Korea is heavily intertwined with this understanding of K-pop, in that its popularity serves symbolically to "affirm its collective national identity and nationalism" (p. 113).

However, this nationalistic interpretation of the Korean Wave overlooks the ruptures that exist in the midst of the global popularity of K-pop. Contrary to the romantic vision of it as fostering a seamless, virtual fan community of affect that spans across time and geographical distance, the genre "evokes counterforces and re-emphasizes and re-articulates national boundaries" (Fuhr, 2015, pp. 127–128). This dimension of K-pop is especially pertinent to its spread across Asia as its purveyors navigate the national rivalries, political disputes, and patriotism that underpin inter-Asian exchanges (Fedorenko, 2017). Previous researchers have identified specific cultural contexts that continue to constrain the online and offline realities of fans in the age of globalization (Iwabuchi, 2010; Swan, 2018). Ahn and Lin (2019), for example, examined how Tzuyu of the group TWICE was caught between Chinese and Taiwanese nationalism when she waved a

Taiwanese flag on a Korean reality show, which Chinese netizens interpreted as incompatible with the One China Policy, and then was forced to apologize for her actions, which Taiwanese netizens interpreted as a threat to the Taiwanese identity. Similarly, Koreans heavily criticized Tiffany of Girl's Generation for posting a Snapchat photo using a filter that was reminiscent of the Japanese rising sun flag (Epstein, 2021), which for Koreans symbolizes Japanese imperialism and atrocities during World War II. She posted several public apologies to the public but, nevertheless, was dismissed as a regular host of a television show as a result of the controversy. These cases demonstrate that, while digital platforms have certainly aided the transnational exchange of ideas and culture, they have also fostered hate and hostility.

Another shortcoming of the mainstream discourse about the Korean Wave is the underlying assumption of a collective nationalistic response by the Korean public. From this perspective, Koreans are expected to celebrate K-pop's increasing popularity because it enhances their country's political and economic status (Lee, 2013). However, nationalism is not purely a state-driven ideology; rather, it operates in tandem with the bottom-up interpretations of a nation's citizens. Thus, Cho (2020) referred to Korean Major League Baseball fan communities and "individualized nationalism" in fans' perceptions of nationalistic sentiments and found that, for fans, "the national" is "reinterpreted and perceived as a set of individual preferences in which the structures of the national are articulated by personal choices, consumer rights, and market principles" (p. 187). Lyan (2019) likewise cautioned against the essentialization of fan nationalism, pointing out that it does not always coincide with national citizenship. Because fans constantly appropriate, contest, and redefine the notion of nationalism in diverse ways, it is necessary to look beneath the surface level of celebrating the nation to ask "crucial questions about the cross-border circulation and consumption of media culture under uneven processes of globalization" (Iwabuchi, 2010, p. 89).

This article presents an analysis of the 2019 social media protest that Korean fans staged to stop the Japanese concert tours. In the context of this protest, K-pop served as a space where popular culture intersected with national, political, and capitalist desires (Ahn & Lin, 2019). When a dramatic political incident like the 2019 Korea-Japan trade dispute occurs, fans are forced to negotiate between their fan loyalties and the prevailing political and nationalistic discourses (Tsai, 2008). On the one hand, K-pop fans are among the most passionate in popular culture and are deeply involved in making and breaking the careers of their idols (S.-Y. Kim, 2018). They support both the local and global activities of their favorite groups by following them on foreign tours, buying multiple physical albums to boost their rankings on world music charts, and traveling overseas to participate in promotional events. On the other hand, Korean K-pop fans are situated in the mainstream response to the trade dispute, which involves boycotting Japanese brands in a show of patriotism. Under these circumstances of heightened anti-Japanese sentiment, such typical fan activities as buying their idols' Japanese albums and traveling to see them perform in Japan suddenly become taboo. Thus, the manner in which the Korean fans manage the conflicting local, regional, and global interests and expectations regarding K-pop reveals the genre's status as a discursive space for subversive contestation of identity.

The Cancel the Japan Tour Protest

Turning now to the hashtag protest against EXO and Seventeen, these major K-pop groups had made plans to perform in Japan in 2019 as part of upcoming concert tours. In response, the fans each

started a separate hashtag on Twitter containing the term “cancel_Japan_concert” in Korean to voice their opposition to the agencies’ plans to move forward with the Japan concerts because of the trade dispute between the two countries. They also incorporated into the hashtags the names of the entertainment agencies involved, with Seventeen fans using the hashtag #Pledis_cancel_Japan concert (#플레디스_일본콘_취소해) and EXO fans incorporating SM Entertainment along with more detailed terminology into their hashtag calling for the cancellation of a specific concert site (a concert hall in Miyagi Prefecture), #SM_EXO_cancel_Miyagi concert (#SM_엑소_미야기콘_취소해).

The hashtag protest started when SM Entertainment announced plans for EXO’s Japan tour on July 22. The group’s fans started the hashtag soon after, and it was quickly picked up by other fandoms, including, in addition to Seventeen, TWICE, and Mamamoo. At this moment, the Japanese brand boycott was at its height in Korea, with the Japanese government having announced on July 1 its decision to revise export controls and regulations regarding Korea, quickly prompting the Korean public to start a “No Japan” product boycott (Kwak, 2019). Angry fans circulated a joint statement condemning the agencies for failing to recognize the anti-Japanese sentiment. These statements were then widely shared on social media, and fans started to use the hashtags on Twitter to voice their opinions about the upcoming Japanese tours (S. Y. Kim, 2019a).

This article mainly focuses on the tweets by EXO and Seventeen fans because they took the lead in the Cancel the Japan Tour protest. Critical discourse analysis (CDA) served to analyze the tweets, an approach that takes into account the text, discourse practice, and sociocultural context to identify connections among language, power, and ideology (Fairclough, 2003; Machin & Mayr, 2012). The application of CDA in this study followed the general analytical framework proposed by Mullet (2018). It incorporates the key characteristics shared by various forms of CDA. The analysis involves identifying the major themes in a data set and the internal and external relations between and among the texts in which the data are embedded. Keywords relevant to the protest, such “boycott,” “nuclear,” and “trade dispute,” served to generate a Twitter data set consisting of 2,360 tweets after excluding those that contained no information relevant to the protest or simply repackaged existing information. The initial examination of this data set established the frequency of the keywords, which were then grouped by theme. For example, the keywords “nuclear,” “earthquake,” and “Ebola” constituted the reason why fans had to protect their K-pop groups. In this way, the analysis identified themes relating to Korean fans’ disagreement with the nationalistic understanding of K-pop’s global success, the characteristics and duty of a core fandom, and Korea’s international position.

Disenchantment With K-Pop’s Global Status

During the 2019 Korea-Japan trade dispute, the neoliberal/nationalistic interpretation of the Korean Wave remained a feature of the discourse in Korean mainstream newspapers. Many newspapers praised the resiliency of K-pop as an international phenomenon amid the worsening Korea-Japan political relations. Articles highlighted the continuing travel by Japanese K-pop fans to attend concerts in Korea, and the Japanese releases of BTS and TWICE each received million and platinum certification from the Recording Industry Association of Japan (S. Y. Kim, 2019b; Sohn, 2019). Some mainstream Korean newspapers went far as to call this a “third

wave” of Korean popular culture, this time characterized by imperviousness to political tensions because of the apolitical tendency of the younger generation to which the bulk of K-pop fans in Japan belong (H. J. Kim, 2019). This discussion of a third wave reflects confidence in Korea’s cultural and economic influence in Japan regardless of the latter country’s imposition of trade restrictions on the former.

However, the CDA revealed that the Korean K-pop fans were not necessarily receptive to this celebration of a third Korean wave. One of the key themes in the hashtag tweets was criticism of the entertainment agencies for their inability to recognize the significance of the anti-Japanese sentiment of the Korean public. Fans argued that, because the entire country was participating in the boycott against Japanese products, performing in Japan at this time would hurt the K-pop groups’ image. The boycott involved more than simply refusing to buy certain Japanese products, extending on social media to the display of images depicting Koreans cancelling their reservations for their Japanese trips and public shaming of those who did not participate in the protest as traitors to their country.

The nationalistic fervor thus forced Korean K-pop fans to choose between the patriotism that they were expected to display as Korean citizens and their devotion to their idols as fans. In particular, their desire to support the groups’ international careers conflicted with their desire to avoid travel to Japan. To negotiate this conflict, the Korean fans turned their attention to the entertainment agencies with efforts to remind them of the Korean-ness of the K-pop industry. Therefore, posts accused the agencies of being crazy over the Japanese market, taking sides with Japan, and even suggested that they go live in Japan if they preferred Japan so much. As seen in the following tweet, the logic behind such posts was that, since the groups and agencies were based in Korea, they should be subject to the same patriotic expectations to which other Korean individuals and entities were subject. “SM Entertainment, please read the atmosphere. Don’t you know the country is doing a Japanese product boycott? If all [Korean] EXO fans go to Japan, that would be great for our image, right?”¹ (Shurim, 2019).

Another frequent topic in the tweets is the inappropriateness of the Osaka-jo Hall, where K-pop singers have usually performed when visiting Japan’s third-largest city, as a venue. The site became an issue when fans pointed out that the hall stands on the grounds of the Osaka Castle, which was built by Toyotomi Hideyoshi, the feudal ruler who invaded Korea in the 16th century and started the Imjin War. Holding a concert at a site associated with such a problematic historical figure would, according to the tweets, be disgraceful to Korea and displaying ignorance of Korean history.

Osaka Castle was built by Toyotomi Hideyoshi and this site idolizes Toyotomi Hideyoshi. I don’t know why you [the agency] want to hold a concert at Osaka-jo Hall. Do you have to do this [the concert] at this historically painful site for Koreans? (AThingYeon:Jeong, 2019)

As an export-oriented industry designed to appeal to diverse markets, K-pop has a strong incentive to avoid political and nationalistic issues (Fedorenko, 2017). In fact, the accessibility of K-pop has been attributed in part to the lack of any influence from traditional Korean culture (Lie, 2012). Nevertheless, the fans invoked the “Korean-ness” of K-pop in the posts, arguing that, to behave as responsible Korean

¹The original posts in Korean were translated into English by the author.

companies, agencies should be mindful of the boycott and cancel their groups' Japanese tours. Interestingly, this argument departed from the mainstream news reports on K-pop's continued global expansion. National identity does not always take priority in individuals' daily lives, often conflicting with other identities and shifting depending on circumstances (Cho, 2020; Oh, 2009). In the present case, the Korean fans appropriated nationalistic discourses associated with the Japanese brand boycott that resonated with them and used these discourses to justify the personal choice as fans not to support their idols' activities in Japan. On a deeper level, though, these fans prioritized their fan identity because the purpose of the Japanese brand boycott was to minimize Korea's economic dependence on Japan rather than to sever all ties with it. By citing the boycott as the reason that their idols should cancel their Japanese tours, the fans expressed disagreement with the nationalistic rhetoric that classifies K-pop as a national economic asset, perceiving this rhetoric as a form of political correctness. From this perspective, K-pop fandom is a personal choice rather than a moral imperative for Koreans.

The Core Fandom

The Twitter posts naturally emphasized the importance of Korean fans. They referred to themselves as the "core fandom" and attributed to themselves the power to influence the groups' careers. This term was specifically used by the fans, and the word "core" relates to the Korean fans' status as the foundation for the global success of K-pop groups. The tweets advised the agencies not to take the support of the core fandom for granted and to consider the detrimental effect of a Japanese tour on the groups' careers. According to the argument, the agencies had to take the domestic market seriously and grow the core fan base since it would be up to the Korean core fans to support the groups if their global popularity waned.

To be honest, who helped Seventeen become popular in the early days...isn't it the domestic fans? If you know this, you [the agency] should treat us better. Why do you keep on going to that country [Japan] to promote [Seventeen]? (Cherita, personal communication, July 25, 2019).

I get that you [the agency] want to earn money but come to your senses. If you hold Japan concerts when everyone is doing Japanese product boycotts, then you ruin our group's image. Think about your artists. Don't think that we [the core fans] will stay around forever. (Hyeoni, 2019)

The fans also expressed particular concern regarding their idols' health if the agencies chose to go forward with the Japan tour, with the nuclear contamination resulting from the 2011 Fukushima Daiichi nuclear disaster being a key topic in the hashtag protest. As exemplified by the quote below, the tweets pointed out that the concert site in Miyagi, where all three groups were scheduled to perform, was close to Fukushima.

Apart from the Japanese product boycott, have you even calculated how much nuclear contamination you would be exposed to when moving from Fukushima to Miyagi in an hour and 30 minutes? Why hold a concert in a place that is number two in nuclear contamination? Take care of your artists. (Chundeokssi, 2019)

Nuclear contamination was already a concern with the Korean general public, and this wariness escalated with the boycott. Thus, the Korean government declared an import ban on seafood from the Fukushima area following the nuclear disaster, and Korean food-related businesses announced that they would stop using both raw and processed materials from Japan. The fans' tweets, then, included statistics for the radiation levels in Japan and criticized the entertainment agencies for sending K-pop groups where they would, presumably, have to eat produce from nuclear contaminated areas.

The fans criticized the agencies in other ways for neglecting the mental and physical well-being of the K-pop groups in their pursuit of profit. Seventeen had already done a tour of Japan and released several albums earlier that year and would again be touring Japan without any break in the group's schedule. EXO members Baekhyun and Kai were performing in two separate world tours, as part of EXO and part of SuperM (another SM Entertainment group), at the same time. Furthermore, a suspected case of Ebola in a Japanese citizen who had returned from the Democratic Republic of Congo, which later proved to be a false alarm, had earlier fueled the fans' distrust of agencies, as the tweets show.

We're not asking for much; we want protection of artists and their health. We don't care about other areas, but you should avoid places that have Ebola cases, 6.2-scale earthquakes, and nuclear contamination. Even tourists are avoiding these areas. All you higher-ups should visit those places instead. (Kong, 2019)

There's a suspected case of Ebola, nuclear contamination, and so many dangerous things [in Japan]. If you think that earning money is more important than human lives, then you [the agency] are inhumane. If you are human beings just cancel. (Toby, 2019)

The hashtag protest revealed how Korean fans perceived their role in the K-pop industry as both consumers of the agencies' product (K-pop groups) and protectors of the singers (Jung & Lee, 2009). The agencies, some of the fans complained, had failed to fulfill their role as caretakers because of their profit-driven nature, so it was up to the core fans to step in, and only they, the Korean core fans, were up to the task, which could not be done by other fans overseas (especially those in Japan). As the following quote indicates, the Korean fans tended to view the Japanese fans as failing to put the well-being of the idols first, thus excluding themselves from the true core fandom.

Some Japanese fans are saying "come to Japan because the air quality is better" [compared with Korea]. Are you saying that our group [EXO] should sacrifice their health just to make you happy? How can you call yourself a true fan? (Banhyuteu Baeknyo, 2019)

Elfving-Hwang (2018) has referred to the strong attachments of K-pop fans to their idols as "parasocial kinship," in which the latter are constructed "simultaneously as an object of adulation and familial affection" (p. 190). This familial relationship extends to the fans' desire to take on a nurturing role to protect their idols from exploitation by the entertainment agencies. Intertwined with geopolitical relations, the sense of parasocial kinship encouraged the Korean fans to distinguish themselves from the Japanese fans by emphasizing this protective role and to draw a boundary around a core fandom, with the act of exclusion serving to create solidarity among them. Furthermore, the dispute over what constitutes a politically correct

fan speaks to larger issues related to shifting structures and centers of power in the K-pop industry (Epstein, 2021). In particular, the control by the major management agencies over the groups has diminished as the fandoms have become increasingly systematic and organized (Choi & Maliangkay, 2014; E. J. Kim, 2020). For instance, the common practices of using special chants and colors to represent the idols started with the fans, who also often act as cultural intermediaries to correct any misrepresentations in the media regarding their idols. Thus, the Korean fans' growing confidence regarding their place in the industry has led them to demand that the agencies maintain what they see as the appropriate conditions for their idols.

It Is Not a "Real" World Tour

Many Korean fans discussed the political implications of the Japanese tour during the hashtag protest. Unlike the Japanese fans, who have tended to separate politics from popular culture to enjoy K-pop fully (Ahn & Yoon, 2020), Korean fans called attention to the strained political relations between their country and Japan. The established practice is that K-pop groups partner with Japanese labels to facilitate local promotional activities in that country (Jung, 2014). Examples include EXO partnering with AVEX and Seventeen with Pledis Japan/Universal Music. According to the tweets, these Japanese companies influenced the decision to push ahead with the tour of Japan. The Korean fans complained that their idols were being forced to perform at unfavorable locations because of anti-Korean sentiment in Japan using terms such as political retaliation and political maneuvering to describe the situation. As mentioned, the venue in Miyagi (specifically, Sekisui Heim Super Arena) was troubling for EXO fans.

Because of the current situation, I can only think that AVEX is using our group [EXO] politically because they reserved that concert hall [in Miyagi]. Our group usually performs at domes, and why would they perform at a 7,000-seat concert hall? (Chokyo, 2019).

It is not like Miyagi Prefecture has a major dome. That place does not have any historical importance, and we [EXO] don't have any Japanese members [with ties to Miyagi]. So, why are we going there for a 7,000-seat concert? (jun_I, 2019).

The EXO fans then argued that there was no significant reason for their idols to perform in Miyagi. Dome tours refer to concerts held at the major dome halls in Japan—the Tokyo Dome, Saitama Dome, Sapporo Dome, Kyocera Dome Osaka, Fukuoka Dome, and Nagoya Dome. The dome halls each have around 50,000 seats, so only exceptionally popular singers are able to perform at these locations. In previous years, EXO had held concerts at the Kyocera and Tokyo Domes, while no K-pop concerts were held in Miyagi until 2019, with the fans describing this location as the "middle of nowhere and as a "high school gymnasium out in the countryside" (Cheongsi, 2019). They argued that, since the small concert at Miyagi would not be beneficial to EXO's career, either symbolically or financially, it should be canceled. Moreover, some fans saw these world tours as being something less than advertised. Seventeen's 2019 tour, titled "Seventeen World Tour 'Ode to You,'" was scheduled to reach thirteen countries in Asia, the Americas, and Europe, with four concert dates in Japan (Osaka, Aichi, Yokohama, and Chiba), but only one date in each of the other countries. Therefore, the Korean fans criticized the tour for prioritizing Japan. Seventeen had already toured five cities in the exclusive tour of the country earlier that year mentioned above, and the fans saw no reason to spend so much time in Japan, especially in a politically strained environment. Thus, the tweets included

complaints that there was more to the world than Japan (and also Asia) and expressed disbelief that the agencies did not consider America or Europe for concerts. These posts indicated that the K-pop groups had potential to further their career outside of Japan, but the agencies had neglected such opportunities by focusing on the immediate revenue from the Japanese market. The EXO fans echoed this sentiment: "If you [SM Entertainment] want to go overseas, go to Europe or America! We have been waiting for concerts, but why are you going to an isolated place [i.e., Japan]?" (blueloey, 2019).

In these respects, the hashtag protest operated as a site for Korean fans to discuss their perspectives on Korea-Japan relations. Yoon (2017) viewed the usual nationalistic responses to the global reception in Korea as a postcolonial desire on the part of the country to "ensure its identity as a nation-state that developed through struggles to overcome colonial legacy" (p. 112). In this context, "global" tends to refer to regions outside Asia while, in the mainstream media, Asia is typically depicted as an area where Korean culture has already been successful in contrast with, in particular, the Americas and Europe, which are felt to represent the "real" global arena that Korea must target to achieve full recognition (S. A. Kim, 2013). Hence, the fans' complaints about the lack of a "real" world tour to boost the groups' fame align with this discourse. This understanding was not necessarily a product of hatred toward Japan, as the Korean fans were positive about the dome tours, but had more to do with imagining the position of K-pop in the world market. Amid the antagonistic atmosphere, the Korean fans were confident about the status of K-pop as a fixture of Japanese popular culture (as their argument about dome tours indicates) and that its popularity would not be hindered by the political dispute between Korea and Japan. At the same time, the reality of the West as the dominant framework for understanding globalization was evident in that the fans did not see their idols' popularity in Japan as representing global success for K-pop (Darling-Wolf, 2014), which they continued to identify with finding a market in Western countries.

Conclusion: K-Pop as a Site for Alternative Identities

In the end, the 2019 hashtag protest by Korean K-pop fans failed to convince the entertainment agencies to cancel the Japan concert dates. The only cancellation was by Pledis Entertainment, which was forced to scrap plans for Seventeen's Japan tour when the pandemic hit in the following year. Nevertheless, the protest represents a moment in time when heightened tensions between Korea and Japan forced the Korean fans to confront the conflicting nationalistic and capitalistic discourses and their identity as fans.

The existing fan research has tended to focus on non-Korean fans, though, mentioning the Korean fans in passing in reference to their nationalistic sentiments (Berbiguier & Cho, 2017; Yoon, 2018). Their protest against the Japanese concerts demonstrates, to the contrary, the absence of a collective national identity among them. Thus, fans did not necessarily embrace the dominant discourse about K-pop as a national asset that uplifts the country's pride even at a time when nationalistic passions were inflamed. Sometimes, they aligned with the mainstream perspective by demanding that the K-pop industry demonstrate patriotism or expressing the view that K-pop is an influential force in Japan. At other times, their fan loyalties were at odds with this nationalistic allegiance, as the tweets prioritizing the idols' health and well-being over their exchange value on a Japanese concert tour demonstrate.

More broadly, the results presented here speak to the status of K-pop as a site of alternative identity where “a different voice can be raised and a self can be expressed, contested, re-articulated or reaffirmed” (Y. Kim, 2013, p. 15) by Korean fans as well as fans in other countries. As K-pop becomes a global phenomenon, “the force of globalization is interpreted and negotiated in audiences’ everyday lives” (Yoon, 2018, p. 386). The Korean fans whose tweets are analyzed here grappled with intertwined global, regional, and local sensibilities—that is, K-pop’s worldwide presence, Korea-Japan political disputes, and anti-Japanese sentiments, respectively—that are intertwined yet contradictory rather than mutually exclusive. These fans’ perspectives challenge the popular perception of Koreans’ nationalistic response to K-pop, revealing their use of the genre as a space for alternative, even subversive modes of identity.

References

- Ahn, J.-H., & Lin, T. (2019). The politics of apology: The ‘Tzuyu Scandal’ and transnational dynamics of K-pop. *International Communication Gazette*, 81(2), 158–175. doi:10.1177/1748048518802947
- Ahn, J.-H., & Yoon, E. K. (2020). Between love and hate: The New Korean Wave, Japanese female fans, and Anti-Korean sentiment in Japan. *Journal of Contemporary Eastern Asia*, 19(2), 179–196. doi:10.17477/jcea.2020.19.2.179
- AThingYeon:Jeong [@AThing48]. (2019, July 22). *Osakaseongeun imjinwaeran ireukin doyotomi hideyosiga mandeun goseuro, doyotomi hideyosireul singyeokwahan gosinde guji osakaseonghoreseo haeya haneun iyureul moreugetseumnida. hangugindeurege apeun yeoksau jangsoeseo kkong haeya hanayo?* [Osaka Castle was built by Toyotomi Hideyoshi and this site idolizes Toyotomi Hideyoshi. I don’t know why you want to hold a concert at Osaka-jo Hall. Do you have to do this at this historically painful site for Koreans?] [Tweet]. Retrieved from <https://twitter.com/AThing48/status/1153200931476889601>
- Banhuteu Baeknyo [@ex8young_0506]. (2019, July 22). *#Eseuem_ekso_miyagikon_chwisohae Ninedeureun saenggagi inneungeonya eomneungeonya bangsaneung suchi 2wiyeoyo yuyu amuri done michyeotdahaedo igeon seoneul neomneun jisiya jebal jom jeongsin charija, geurigo ilbonpaen ilbu saramdeuri gyesong orago gonggi jotago ugideonde geujjong joeurago uri aedeul geongangkaji nappajige hallyeogoyo? jinjeonghanpaenmannayo?* [#SM_EXO_MiyagiCon_Cancel Do you have any thoughts at all the nuclear contamination numbers are the second highest this is too much even if you are all about money. Some Japanese fans are saying “come to Japan because the air quality is better,” are you saying that our group should sacrifice their health just to make you happy? How can you call yourself a true fan?] [Tweet]. Retrieved from https://twitter.com/ex8young_0506/status/1153275888944869377
- Blackpink. (2020, June 26). *How you like that* [Video]. YouTube. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ioNng23DKIM>

blueoey [@blue_loey]. (2019, July 23). *Geureoke oeguge bonaego sipeumyeon yureobina migugeseo harago! konseoteu jom haedallago eonjebuteo mokppaego inneunde eomhan deseon nalliram. jeil joeun geon gungnaetueogo!!* [If you want to go overseas, go to Europe or America! We have been waiting for concerts, but why are you going to an isolated place and going crazy. The best is a domestic tour!!] [Tweet]. Retrieved from https://twitter.com/blue_loey/status/1153347127898062849

Berbiguier, M., & Cho, Y. (2017). Understanding the Korean fandom of the K-pop focusing on its perspectives on foreign fans. *Korean Journal of Communication & Information*, 81, 272–298. doi:10.46407/kjci.2017.02.81.272

Cheongsi [@blue_see0506]. (2019, July 22). *Domeseo ilbon debwihaetdeon eksoreul gapjagi kkangsigol miyagi godeunghakgyo cheyukgwancheoreomsaenggin goseseo konseoteureul?? 7000seogimyeon eoje konseoteu seutaending inwonbodado jeogeungeonde cham jjipjjipajyo?* [Exo debuted in Japan at a Dome and now they have to perform a concert at high school gymnasium out in the countryside?? 7000 seats are less than a single concert standing area it's very unsettling] [Tweet]. Retrieved from https://twitter.com/blue_see0506/status/1153213355831599104

Cho, Y. (2020). *Global sports fandom in South Korea—American Major League baseball and its fans in the online community*. Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan.

Choi, J., & Maliangkay, R. (2014). Introduction: Why fandom matters to the international rise of K-pop. In J. B. Choi & R. Maliangkay (Eds.), *K-pop—The international rise of the Korean music industry* (pp. 1–18). London, UK: Routledge.

Chokyo [@CC_40805]. (2019, July 22). *#Eseuem_ekso_miyagikon_chwisohae I sijeomi ittaguro daegwansikingeo bomyeon ebegi gukgajeogin ire uriaedeul sayonghaneungeorago bakke saenggang andeumdomeseo hadeon aedeureul tteungeumeopsi 7cheonbakke mon deureoganeun horeseo gongyeon sikigetdaneungeonman bwado dam naojaneum* [#SM_EXO_MiyagiCon_Cancel Because of the current situation, I can only think that AVEX is using our group politically because they reserved that concert hall. Our group usually performs at domes, and why would they perform at a 7,000-seat concert hall?] [Tweet]. Retrieved from https://twitter.com/CC_40805/status/1153210958682062848

Chundeokssi [@doso_1122]. (2019, July 22). *#Eseuem_ekso_miyagikon_chwisohae Bulmaereul tteonaseo hukusimaeseo miyagikkaji 1 sigan 30 bun namjin geollineun georieseo bangsaneungi eolmanadoeneunji cheukjeongeun haebwanni? ilbon bangsaneungsuchi 2 wiingoseseo mwon konseoteuya; atiseuteu boho jebaljom haejwo* [#SM_EXO_MiyagiCon_Cancel Apart from the Japanese product boycott, have you even calculated how much nuclear contamination you would be exposed to when moving from Fukushima to Miyagi in an hour and 30 minutes? Why hold a concert in a place that is number two in nuclear contamination? Take care of your artists] [Tweet]. Retrieved from https://twitter.com/doso_1122/status/1153225524488986624

- Darling-Wolf, F. (2014). Virtually multicultural: Trans-Asian identity and gender in an international fan community of a Japanese star. *New Media & Society*, 6(4), 507–528.
doi:10.1177/146144804044332
- Elfving-Hwang, J. (2018). K-pop idols, artificial beauty and affective fan relationships in South Korea. In A. Elliot (Ed.), *Routledge handbook of celebrity studies* (1st ed., pp. 190–201). London, UK: Routledge.
- Epstein, S. (2021). Fly the flag (at your own risk): Netizens, nationalism and celebrities between South Korea, Japan and beyond. In R. Sakamoto & S. Epstein (Eds.), *Popular culture and the transformation of Japan–Korea relations* (1st ed., pp. 167–181). London, UK: Routledge.
- Fairclough, N. (2003). *Analysing discourse: Textual analysis for social research*. London, UK: Routledge.
- Fedorenko, O. (2017). Korean-Wave celebrities between global capital and regional nationalisms. *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, 18(4), 498–517. doi:10.1080/14649373.2017.1388070
- Fiske, J. (1992). The cultural economy of fandom. In L. A. Lewis (Ed.), *The adoring audience: Fan culture and popular media* (1st ed., pp. 30–49). London, UK: Routledge.
- Fuhr, M. (2015). *Globalization and popular music in South Korea: Sounding out K-Pop*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Howard, K. (2017). Mapping K-Pop past and present: Shifting the modes of exchange. In I. Oh & G.-S. Park (Eds.), *The Political economy of business ethics in East Asia* (pp. 95–111). Cambridge, MA: Chandos Publishing.
- Hyeoni [@HE_SVT_]. (2019, July 26). #Peullediseu_ilbonkon_chwisohae Donbeolgo sipeungeon algenneunde peuldiya jebal jeongsin charyeora bulmaeundonghago ilbon angandago hago inneunde geu sanghwangeseo ilbonkoneul handaneungeon jachejeogeuro imiji kkaganaerigetdaneun sorinde...atiseuteujom wihaedallagoyo. jedaero hongbodo motago tteokbabeul juneungeotdo aninde uriga gyesong isseulgeoraneun bojang X [#Pledis_JapanCon_Cancel I get that you want to earn money but come to your senses if you hold Japan concerts when everyone is doing Japanese product boycotts, then you ruin our group's image. Think about your artists. You are not promoting them properly and not giving us enough and don't think that we will stay around forever] [Tweet]. Retrieved from https://twitter.com/HE_SVT_/status/1154439956112142336
- Iwabuchi, K. (2010). Undoing inter-national fandom in the age of brand nationalism. *Mechademia*, 5(1), 87–96. Retrieved from <https://www.muse.jhu.edu/article/400551>

- Jin, D. Y., & Ryoo, W. (2014). Critical interpretation of hybrid K-Pop: The global-local paradigm of English mixing in lyrics. *Popular Music and Society*, 37(2), 113–131. doi:10.1080/03007766.2012.731721
- Ju, H., & Lee, S. (2015). The Korean Wave and Asian Americans: The ethnic meanings of transnational Korean pop culture in the USA. *Continuum: Journal of Media & Cultural Studies*, 29(3), 323–338. doi:10.1080/10304312.2014.986059
- jun_I [@JUN_noodle_L]. (2019, July 22). *Ani miyagihyeone eomcheongnan domi inneungeotdo anigo yeoksajeogeuro mwoga inneungotdo anigo geureotago uri membeoe ilbonini inneungeotdo aninde 7000seong jjari gongyeonhajago geogilga?* [It is not like Miyagi Prefecture has a major dome. That place does not have any historical importance, and we don't have any Japanese members so why are we going there for a 7,000-seat concert?] [Tweet]. Retrieved from https://twitter.com/JUN_noodle_L/status/1153307589578350594
- Jung, E. Y. (2014). Hallyu and the K-pop boom in Japan: Patterns of consumption and reactionary responses. In J. B. Choi & R. Maliangkay (Eds.), *K-pop—The international rise of the Korean music industry* (1st ed., pp. 116–132). London, UK: Routledge.
- Jung, M. W., & Lee, N. Y. (2009). Fandom managing stars, entertainment industry managing fandom. *Media, Gender & Culture*, 12, 191–240.
- Khiun, L. K. (2013). K-pop dance trackers and cover dances: Global cosmopolitanization and local spatialization. In Y. Kim (Ed.), *The Korean Wave: Korean Media Go Global* (1st ed., pp. 165–182). Abingdon, UK: Routledge.
- Kim, E. J. (2020). Fandom and new cultural intermediary in new media era: Focusing on the case of BTS. *The Journal of the Korea Contents Association*, 20(1), 378–391. doi:10.5392/JKCA.2020.20.01.378
- Kim, H. J. (2019, August 11). Hanil galdeungi daejungmunhwaeh michineun yeonghyangeun [The influence of Korea-Japan conflict on popular culture]. *Seoul Economy Newspaper*. Retrieved from <https://www.sedaily.com/NewsView/1VMXF2DE62/GH0301>
- Kim, J. H. (2019, March 4). Oe-kwi, hwaiteuwosing...K-pop, Injongjuui deocheul noanna deoche geollyeonna [Oe-Kwi, whitewashing...K-pop caught in, or set in racism trap?]. *Kyunghyang Newspaper*. Retrieved from <https://m.khan.co.kr/culture/culture-general/article/201903041746001>
- Kim, S. A. (2011). A study on the masculinity image of male idol stars and the construction of fandom identity: Focusing on 2PM and SHINee. *Media, Gender & Culture*, 19, 5–38.
- Kim, S. A. (2013). Television discourse on K-POP and K-POP idol stars' passion. *Journal of Communication Research*, 50(1), 45–83. doi:10.22174/jcr.2013.50.1.45

- Kim, S. Y. (2019a, July 23). Fukushima ingeunseo konseoteu? EXO il tueo jangsoe paendeul chwisohara banbal [A concert near Fukushima? EXO fans protest against Japan tour announcement]. *The Korea Economic Daily*. Retrieved from <https://www.hankyung.com/life/article/201907234828H>
- Kim, S. Y. (2019b, October 5). K-pop pogi motaeyo.. nnaenggakdoen han-il gwangye peolpeol kkeulleun Hallyu ingi [Cannot give up K-pop.. Chilled Korea-Japan relations, continued popularity of Korean Wave]. *The Korea Economic Daily*. Retrieved from <https://www.hankyung.com/life/article/201910032042H>
- Kim, S.-Y. (2018). *K-pop live: Fans, idols, and multimedia performance*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Kim, Y. (2008). Research of the change in Korean popular music after the 1990s—Based on SM Entertainments and JYP Entertainments. *Humanities Content*, 12, 159–175.
- Kim, Y. (2013). Introduction: Korean media in a digital cosmopolitan world. In Y. Kim (Ed.), *The Korean Wave: Korean media go global* (1st ed., pp. 1–28). Abingdon, UK: Routledge.
- Kong [@cdefg_l_0506]. (2019, August 4). *Dareun geol yoguhaneunge anira uriga wonhaneungeon atiseuteu bohowa geongang hwakboingeojana. dareun jiyeong gongyeon sanggwan eopseunikka jigeum ebollae 6.2 jjjin nago bangsaneung munje jegidoeneun gon pihaedallago. yeohaengdo geugoseun ilbureo pihaneunde mwohajaneungeoya. animyeon neone gowigwandeuri gadeonga* [We're not asking for much we want protection of artists and their health. We don't care about other areas but you should avoid places that have Ebola cases, 6.2-scale earthquakes, and nuclear contamination. Even tourists are avoiding these areas. All you higher-ups should visit those places instead] [Tweet]. Retrieved from https://twitter.com/cdefg_l_0506/status/1157991632538464258
- Korean Foundation for International Cultural Exchange. (2020). *Hallyu White Paper 2019*. Seoul, Korea: KOFICE. Retrieved from https://kofice.or.kr/b20industry/b20_industry_00_view.asp?seq=1130&page=1&find=&search=
- Kwak, Y. S. (2019, July 18). "Boycott Japan" becomes more intense, sophisticated. *The Korea Times*. Retrieved from https://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/tech/2021/10/694_272533.html
- Lee, H. (2018). A 'real' fantasy: Hybridity, Korean drama, and pop cosmopolitans. *Media, Culture & Society*, 40(3), 365–380. doi:10.1177/0163443717718926
- Lee, H. K. (2013). Cultural policy and the Korean Wave: From national culture to transnational consumerism. In Y. Kim (Ed.), *The Korean Wave: Korean Media Go Global* (pp. 185–198). Abingdon, UK: Routledge.

- Lee, K. (2008). Mapping out the cultural politics of "the Korean Wave" in contemporary South Korea. In C. B. Huat & K. Iwabuchi (Eds.), *East Asian pop culture: Analysing the Korean wave* (pp. 175–189). Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.
- Lee, M. H. (2011). Korean entertainment management companies' idol group training strategies: Focusing on SM Entertainment. *Symposium of The Korean Society for Journalism & Communication Studies*, 8, 5–25.
- Lie, J. (2012). What is the K in K-pop? South Korean popular music, the culture industry, and national identity. *Korea Observer*, 43(3), 339–363. Retrieved from http://www.tobiashubINETTE.se/hallyu_1.pdf
- Lyan, I. (2019). Welcome to Korea Day: From diasporic to Hallyu "fan-nationalism." *International Journal of Communication*, 13, 3764–3780.
- Machin, D., & Mayr, A. (2012). *How to do critical discourse analysis: A multimodal introduction*. London, UK: SAGE Publications.
- Messerlin, P. A., & Shin, W. (2013, November). *The K-pop Wave: An economic analysis*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of Korean Development Economics Association, Seoul, Korea.
- Min, K. W. (2020, September 6). Yeongeoro bilbodeu ilwi.. gungnaepaen holdaehana galdeung gipeojineun K-pop [Billboard #1 in English...Are domestic fans neglected in K-pop]. *The Joong Ang Daily*. Retrieved from <https://www.joongang.co.kr/article/23865384>
- Morimoto, L. H., & Chin, B. (2017). Reimagining the imagined community: Online media fandoms in the age of global convergence. In J. Gray, C. Sandvoss, & C. Harrington (Eds.), *Fandom: Identities and communities in a mediated world* (2nd ed., pp. 174–188). New York: New York University Press.
- Mullet, D. R. (2018). A general critical discourse analysis framework for educational research. *Journal of Advanced Academics*, 29(2), 116–142. doi:10.1177/1932202X18758260
- Noh, K. W. (2011). A study on the transnational circulation of K-Pop through YouTube: The case of Girls' Generation's online fandom. *Symposium of The Korean Society for Journalism & Communication Studies*, 8, 57–75.
- Oh, I., & Lee, H. J. (2013). K-pop in Korea: How the pop music industry is changing a post-developmental society. *Cross-Currents: East Asian History and Culture Review*, 3(1), 105–124. doi:10.1353/ach.2014.0007
- Oh, M. (2009). 'Eternal other' Japan: South Koreans' postcolonial identity. *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 26(3), 371–389. doi:10.1080/09523360802602257

- Shim, D. (2006). Hybridity and the rise of Korean popular culture in Asia. *Media, Culture & Society*, 28(1), 25–44. doi:10.1177/0163443706059278
- Shim, D. (2016). Hybridity, Korean Wave, and Asian media. In K. Iwabuchi, E. Tsai, & C. Berry (Eds.), *Routledge handbook of East Asian popular culture* (1st ed, pp. 34–44). Abingdon, UK: Routledge.
- Shome, R., & Hegde, R. (2002). Culture, communication, and the challenge of globalization. *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, 19(2), 172–189. doi:10.1080/07393180216560
- Shurim [@DO_baekhyun_exo]. (2019, July 23). #Eseuem_ekso_miyagikon_chwisohae #Eseuem_ekso_miyagikon_chwisohae Bangsaneungi jeil keun munjeginhande tto wae hapil jigeum ilbontueoya jebal bunwigi jom ikja seuemayuyu jigeum bulmaeundong jungingeo moreuseyou konseoteuhandago eksoeldeul ureureu ilbongamyeon baneung cham joketda geuji? [#SM_EXO_MiyagiCon_Cancel #SM_EXO_MiyagiCon_Cancel SM Entertainment, please read the atmosphere. Don't you know the country is doing a Japanese product boycott? If all EXO fans go to Japan, that would be great for our image, right?] [Tweet]. Retrieved from https://twitter.com/DO_baekhyun_exo/status/1153396896011935744
- Siriyuvasak, U., & Shin, H. (2007). Asianizing K-pop: Production, consumption and identification patterns among Thai youth. *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, 8(1), 109–136. doi:10.1080/14649370601119113
- Sohn, W. C. (2019, September 23). Il an ganeun hanguk, geuraedo oneun Ilbon.. gwangwanggaeng yeokjeondoena [Koreans not going to Japan, but Japanese still come]. *Seoul Newspaper*. Retrieved from <https://www.seoul.co.kr/news/newsView.php?id=20190924011025>
- Sung, S.-Y. (2014). K-pop reception and participatory fan culture in Austria. *Cross-Currents: East Asian History and Culture Review*, 3(1), 56–71. doi:10.1353/ach.2014.0011
- Swan, A. L. (2018). Transnational identities and feeling in fandom: Place and embodiment in K-pop fan reaction videos. *Communication, Culture and Critique*, 11(4), 548–565. doi:10.1093/ccc/tcy026
- Toby [@B4JFB_exo]. (2019, August 4). #Eseuem_ekso_miyagikon_chwisohae Jigeum ebollausime jijine bangsaneunge wiheomhangeotdeutdeul cheonjinde donbeoneunge saramsaengmyeongboda jungyohangeomyeon nideuri inganinya seuema inganirameon jinjja chwisohae igeonjinjja aniya [#SM_EXO_MiyagiCon_Cancel There's a suspected case of Ebola, nuclear contamination, and so many dangerous things If you think that earning money is more important than human lives, then you are inhumane. If you are human beings just cancel] [Tweet]. Retrieved from https://twitter.com/B4JFB_exo/status/1157987327739695104
- Tsai, E. (2008). Existing in the age of innocence: Pop stars, publics, and politics in Asia. In C. B. Huat & K. Iwabuchi (Eds.), *East Asian pop culture: Analysing the Korean wave* (pp. 217–242). Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.

- Yoon, K. (2017). Postcolonial production and consumption of global K-pop. In T.-J. Yoon & D. Y. Jin (Eds.), *The Korean Wave: Evolution, fandom, and transnationality* (pp. 109–126). Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.
- Yoon, K. (2018). Global imagination of K-Pop: Pop music fans' lived experiences of cultural hybridity. *Popular Music and Society*, 41(4), 373–389. doi:10.1080/03007766.2017.1292819
- Yoon, K., Min, W., & Jin, D. Y. (2020). Consuming the contra-flow of K-pop in Spain. *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, 41(2), 1–16. doi:10.1080/07256868.2020.1724907