

# Analysis of the Factors of Korean Pop Music's Dissemination -- Taking the NewJeans Girl Group as an Example

Zixu Fang

School of Music Education and Arts Administration, Tianjin Conservatory of Music, Tianjin, China  
fangzixu@ldy.edu.rs

**Abstract.** In the era of globalization, Korean pop music has rapidly made a great impact on the entire Asian music market with its unique charm, and the spread of Korean idol groups in China has gradually become a topic of great concern. This paper firstly starts from the communication background of Korean pop music, takes the NewJeans girl group as the research object, and analyzes its communication factors systematically, from the communication subject to the communication effect, through the 5W communication model with "Who, Says What, In Which Channel, To Whom, With What Effect" as the structural basis. Through the 5W communication model, this research systematically analyzes the factors of their communication, from the main body of communication, song content, to the choice of communication media, to the fan audience and the effect of communication, and comprehensively explains the factors that have contributed to the spread and success of Korean idol groups in Korea and abroad. Through in-depth analysis, this paper provides lessons and insights for the communication of similar groups in the Chinese market. Therefore, Chinese pop music should be clearly positioned in the market when spreading, and the promotion should be fine-tuned to the cultural preferences and aesthetic habits of audiences in different countries and regions. It also needs to be communicated in such a way as to clarify the meaning of the song, create a unique concept, and increase interaction across the board.

**Keywords:** Communication factors, Korean pop music, NewJeans, communication subject, fan audience.

## 1. Introduction

Korean pop music, often referred to as "K-pop," is a highly recognizable genre of pop music that combines diverse musical styles and visual elements [1]. It is characterized by innovative music production, engaging stage performances, and a strong focus on fashion and style; K-pop is not just a musical style, but a comprehensive cultural phenomenon that encompasses music, fashion, dance, and entertainment.

With the booming development of K-pop culture, the spread of Korean idol groups has gradually become the focus of research in China, and NewJeans, as a representative Korean pop idol group, involves various factors behind its successful spread. This paper will comprehensively explain the key factors behind the success of Korean idol groups represented by NewJeans in the Chinese market through an in-depth analysis of the dissemination subject, song content, choice of dissemination media, as well as Chinese fan audience and dissemination effect. For the topic of this study, in the current Chinese academic context, in the "China Knowledge" database query, input the "Korean popular music" keyword, there are only 84 results, the number of related literature is small, and its focus is on the analysis of Korean popular music ontology. Scholars need to further study the revelation of the successful experience of the development of Korean popular music, and to look at the booming development of Korean idol groups correctly and objectively. These need to be discarded in the context of our national conditions. While deeply understanding the dynamics of cross-cultural communication, it also contributes certain insights to the development of cultural exchange and the music industry.

## **2. Background of the spread of Korean popular music**

Since the 21st century, the Korean pop music industry has ushered in a period of rapid development, and according to the data released by the Korea Culture Industry Promotion Agency, the export value of the Korean music industry reached 780 million U.S. dollars in 2021, a year-on-year increase of 14.1% [2]. It can be seen that the rapid development of Korean pop music is not without the local entertainment companies tend to standardize the training and control of artists. This has produced a number of outstanding music composers and built a huge fan base. With these fans, the related musical works have also achieved wider distribution.

The Korean government attaches great importance to the development of the music industry and promotes the development of the industry through policy support and financial support. The Korean government develops the entertainment industry as a national strategic industry and promotes its development through policy support and financial support. South Korea's Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism released its 2020 Work Plan on March 5, mentioning that the Ministry's cultural policy for 2020 focuses on developing the Korean Wave to energize economic development, allowing nationals to enjoy more cultural benefits [3], and providing financial support for the entertainment industry. Also, Korean chaebol groups invest in the entertainment industry to provide adequate financial support for its development.

## **3. Analysis of NewJeans' dissemination factors**

### **3.1. Who: Analysis of the main body of communication**

NewJeans is a female music group launched in 2022 by South Korea's HYBE Company, an entertainment company famous for BTS, which not only has refined operations but also cooperates with brands. In terms of operation, HYBE manages its artists in a very detailed manner, with professional teams planning and executing the training, music production, dance rehearsal, and styling of its artists; in terms of brand cooperation, HYBE has cooperated with a number of brands, such as the Tencent Music Entertainment Group, and also acquired QC Media Holdings to accelerate its entry into the U.S. market, through brand cooperation. In terms of brand cooperation, HYBE has cooperated with a number of brands, such as Tencent Music Entertainment Group, and also acquired QC Media Holdings to accelerate its entry into the U.S. market. At the same time, HYBE attaches great importance to the fan economy, interacting with fans through online and offline means, such as the Weverse platform and even its own proprietary fan communication app, Phoning, as well as organizing regular fan autograph sessions, concerts and other activities to enhance fan bonding.

NewJeans' highly publicized debut was met with a large investment of resources from HYBE, such as the 16 billion won production cost of the Phoning program [4], and this high investment provided NewJeans with a good foundation for development and promotional efforts. Producer Min Hee-jin's unique creative perspective has been a key element in the NewJeans' continued popularity since their debut. The traditional marketing strategy for idol groups is to reveal their members, release a trailer, and launch a music video in sequence. However, its company was the first to release the music video for NewJeans' first single, "Attention," before officially announcing the five members of NewJeans. The following day, the identity of the team members was then revealed with the release of the video for the second single, "Hype Boy". In the second music video, which revealed the members' identities, each member displayed a unique personality and style. This practice does not allow viewers to easily identify each member, and can prompt viewers to revisit all posted video content in order to identify individual members. With a youthful and vibrant image, a departure from the current phenomenon of heavy makeup and showy fashion, the average age of NewJeans members is in their late teens. They dress in a minimalist style, usually in T-shirts, slacks and sneakers, a look not unlike the everyday attire of the average teenage girl, reinforcing their down-to-earth image.

### **3.2. Says What: Analysis of communication content**

NewJeans' songs show a unique artistic pursuit and the spirit of the times in terms of composition style and expression concept to satisfy people's spiritual needs for daily life. In terms of compositional style, the keywords of New Jeans' music are niche, stylized and ambient ; NewJeans has been looking for broken beat and lively drums, pursuing an extremely light atmosphere, using bright melodies and energetic rhythms to show the youthful vitality of the members and their musical interaction; in terms of the concept of expression, the songs of NewJeans revolve around themes of youth and self-expression, etc. The representative songs of NewJeans show unique artistic pursuits and the spirit of the times to meet the spiritual needs of people's daily lives. The lyrics and music video of "Attention", one of NewJeans' most famous songs, show NewJeans' pursuit of youth, confidence and self-expression. The recurring phrase "You got me looking for attention" in the lyrics expresses the young generation's desire to be noticed and understood, while the music video shows the members dancing with confidence and fashionable images, conveying the message of female independence and strength.

NewJeans is also particularly popular with Chinese fans. From the perspective of cultural products, Jiang Shuzhuo and others believe that Chinese "popular culture" in the modern sense is mainly a kind of cultural product to satisfy people's spiritual needs for daily life and affirmation of current secular life, and this kind of cultural products is mainly "popular novels, network literature, popular music, film and television dramas, variety shows, etc" [5]. Through their lyrics and music video, they convey the young people's desire for freedom, dreams and personal growth.

In order to transmit or have an impact on another cultural circle, a civilization must possess a specific superiority and a cultural material foundation that can facilitate communication and interoperability, i.e., cultural identity. From the perspective of cultural transmission, the Korean Wave fulfills these requirements and possesses such elements [6]. Korea has long been a vassal state of China in ancient times and thus has been influenced by China in its culture and way of life, an influence that continues to this day. Therefore, the values and aesthetics in Korean culture will feel familiar to the Chinese, making it easier to accept Korean culture mentally. In addition, although the languages of China and Korea are different, they both belong to the "Chinese Character Cultural Circle", and more than 50% of the Korean vocabulary is derived from the Chinese language. This cultural closeness, together with the artistic style of Korean pop music, makes it more popular with the Chinese public [7]. Therefore, the group's communication content has similar values and aesthetics to China, and there is a certain cultural closeness between China and Korea, which is more favorable for the group's music to spread in China. Through their music, NewJeans has brought new perspectives and vitality to the Korean pop music industry and also provided a new window for global listeners to appreciate Korean pop culture.

### **3.3. In Which Channel: Analysis of communication media**

#### **3.3.1 Music Digital Media**

Digital media, as a form of communication utilizing digital technology, provides information and services to users through carriers such as computers, cell phones, and digital televisions and using computer networks and wireless communication networks as the main channels. Compared to traditional media, new digital media based on digital technology redefines the spatial and temporal scope and subject of cultural communication [8]. The popularity of this digital medium has allowed for more outlets to receive music without the constraints of time and space, allowing users to listen to or download their albums and singles online, which has allowed NewJeans' music to face a wider audience.

#### **3.3.2 Social Media**

Social media is an important channel for NewJeans to interact with their fans and promote their music. They release new song previews, music videos, behind-the-scenes footage or peripheral pre-sales through their official accounts on Twitter, Instagram, Weibo, Jitterbug and other platforms; for example, the official account of NEWJEANS OFFICAL on Instagram releases the group's peripheral

pre-sale and flash store location on March 29, 2023, which had more than 660,000 likes. Establishing direct communication and connection with fans and the sharing of posted videos has played a key role in the spread of NewJeans' songs. Social media has allowed for a more comprehensive distribution of content, and the likes, retweets and shares from viewers have further expanded their reach.

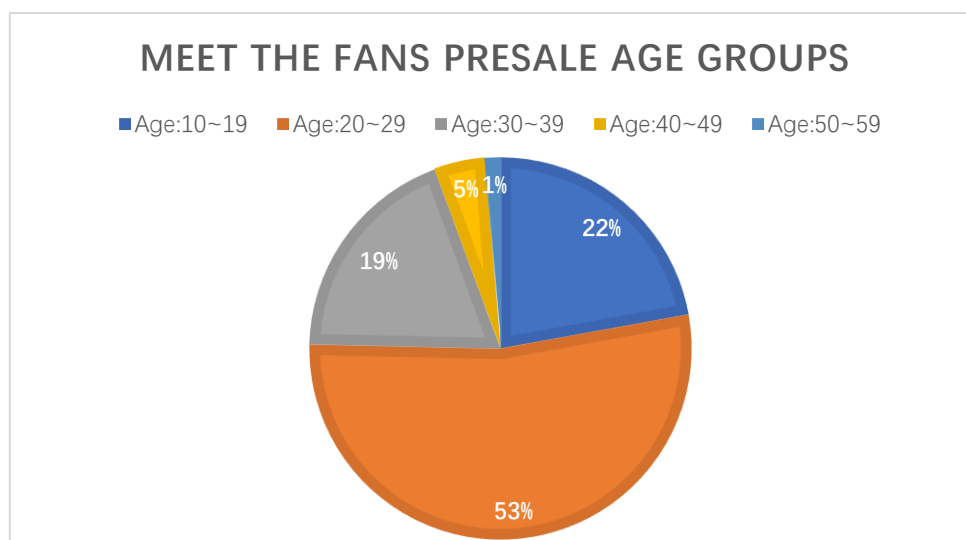
### 3.3.3 Collaboration and Linkage

NewJeans has also expanded the reach of its songs by collaborating with other brands or companies in cross-border marketing and linkage campaigns, with both individual and group endorsements. For example, member Hanni partnered with GUCCI in October 2022 as the new brand ambassador or group endorsement, such as Coca-Cola. Product cooperation between brands and artists is also a more direct way of cross-border cooperation between art and brands [9] NewJeans cooperated with the League of Legends game, and the theme song of the 2023 Global Finals, "GODS" was sung by the group, which is more conducive to attracting fans in different fields, expanding the consumer groups of art, increasing the scope of the communication audience and the team's popularity.

## 3.4. To Whom: Fan audience analysis

### 3.4.1 Fan Composition

The youth demographic is the main fan base of pop music, covering a wide range of ages from elementary school students to office workers, and the same applies to the many consumers of Korean pop music. Despite the differences in age, knowledge background and education level, consumers show some common class attributes, i.e., they experience the visual and auditory enjoyment of music in a similar way and express their complex inner emotions through music together [10]. Getting data from Korean forums, the age of NewJeans fans from 20 to 29 years old accounted for the highest percentage of 53% (as shown in Figure 1) [11], which shows that the fan base of NewJeans is dominated by young people, especially teenagers and young adults. NewJeans' fan base is predominantly young, especially teenagers and young adults. NewJeans' fresh and beautiful image and lively music are more loved by this group, who are usually more active on social media and music platforms, and they often upload and share videos and photos about NewJeans on platforms such as TikTok, Xiaohongshu, and Weibo, use related hashtags and topics, and create and participate in groups and forums for discussion about NewJeans. As of January 12, 2024, searching for " As of January 12, 2024, the topic of "NewJeans" on the TikTok platform had 5.92 billion views, and they are the main consumers and disseminators of K-pop culture.



**Figure 1.** Meet the Fans Presale Age Groups

### 3.4.2 Fan Consumption Mode

In *The Consumer Society*, Baudrillard states that in a consumerist culture, the true purpose of consumption is not to satisfy actual needs but rather to continually pursue the fulfillment of those desires that are created and aroused. It is not the actual use value of products and services that people seek, but rather the meaning symbolized behind the substance [12]. In the process of fans generating the desire to buy and implementing consumption, this behavior often stems from using emotional attachment as a bond, aiming to satisfy the emotional exchange between fans and celebrities or brands, thus making fans feel some kind of satisfaction, which in turn triggers irrational consumption behavior [13]. When consuming cultural commodities, the fan base not only pursues the use value of their artistic aspects but sometimes values the emotional significance behind the cultural commodities more. Fans of NewJeans emphasize the sensibility of consumption; whether it is the group's singles, albums or derivatives of the peripheral products that are all frantically purchased, the fans will be the worship of their idols into the consumption of the fans. NewJeans fans buy official peripheral products such as support sticks, posters and photo albums to show their support for their idols, to express their support for their idols. These peripheral products range in price but have high sales, and the NewJeans Annual 2022-2023 PHOTOBOOK photo album on the QQ music platform has already sold 2,754 copies, with a revenue of more than RMB 900,000. This large number of purchases also reflects the emotional attachment of fans.

### 3.5. With What Effect: Analysis of Communication Effects

#### 3.5.1 Social Benefits

Popular culture stands out for its remarkable "realism" in order to stimulate the public's cultural identity. This realism stimulates young people's interest by depicting the emotions and personal behaviors of everyday life in detail, making the content both concrete and intuitive. It adopts a micro and personalized approach, allowing young people to feel the close connection between the content of the works and their own experiences and to be closer to the reality of young people's lives, thus making it easier for young people to understand and accept the values of cultural works [14]. NewJeans' musical works and stage performances display youthfulness and vitality and make young people feel close. Through wide dissemination in the international arena, more international fans have become interested in Korean culture, increasing the sense of cultural identity and thus enhancing the international status of Korean culture.

With the spread of Korean pop music, such as the NewJeans girl group in Korea and abroad, Korea's domestic music market has also received a bit of a boost. This impetus is mainly reflected in the increased competition in the domestic music market, prompting domestic musicians to improve their creative ability and performance level, thus promoting the overall development of the domestic music market.

#### 3.5.2 Economic Benefits

With the spread of Korean pop music such as girl groups at home and abroad, the sales and copyright income of their music works have also been significantly increased. In July 2023, NewJeans released the album *Get Up*. The album sold 1,651,810 copies in its debut week, thus setting the second-highest first-week sales record in the history of Korean girl groups, in addition to reaching the highest sales level in the history of girl groups. The album's lead single, "Super Shy," entered the *Billboard Hot 100* at No. 66 on the first week of its release, which is considered to be one of the most authoritative singles charts in the United States. This has not only brought lucrative financial gains for music production companies and artists, but has also provided strong support for the development of the Korean music industry.

Also, Kpop attracts a large number of overseas fans who come to Korea to travel and visit the filming locations and companies of the girl group members etc. As Korean pop music spreads internationally, more and more international fans choose to travel to Korea to experience Korean

culture. This is important for enhancing the international influence of Korea's tourism industry and increasing tourism revenue.

#### 4. Conclusion

Korean pop music, especially the spread of the NewJeans girl group in Korea and abroad, not only enhances the international status of Korean culture and promotes the development of the Korean domestic music market but also contributes to the spread of positive energy in society and the development of the Korean economy. Therefore, absorbing the experience of Korean popular music dissemination and giving insights into the dissemination of Chinese popular music. Chinese pop music should have a clear market positioning when spreading and fine-tune its promotion to the cultural preferences and aesthetic habits of regional audiences in order to improve the spreading effect. It also needs to be communicated in a way that illuminates the meaning of the song and creates a unique concept. Unique and interesting concepts are the soul of a song. If a song or album has a deep and interesting idea, it will be attractive to a wide audience and spread widely. Improving interaction across the board is also an important way to enhance the effectiveness of communication. Currently, most Chinese artists only interact with our fan base. The way of interaction is also more limited, mainly in microblogging, live concerts and other occasions. This kind of interaction also has limitations for cultural dissemination, so there is a need to strengthen the interaction between Chinese artists and their foreign fans to further cultural dissemination. As the research object of this paper only focuses on a single girl group in South Korea, it does not pay comprehensive attention to the overall development of idol groups in South Korea and fails to fully develop the research on South Korean pop culture in the subsequent research ; it will pay more attention to the overall music market in South Korea, and carry out further exploration, so as to make more reflections on China and make the Chinese pop music bring new values to the world.

#### References

- [1] Wang Zichen. Research on cross-cultural marketing strategy of Korean pop music in China. Nanjing Arts Institute, 2023.
- [2] Korea Creative Content Agency. 2021 Content Industry Survey (Content Industry Statistical Survey). February 2, 2023. Retrieved on January 10, 2023. Retrieved from: <https://www.kocca.kr/>.
- [3] Yonhap. Korea's Ministry of Culture, Sports and Physical Education work plan: leading cultural and economic development with Korean Wave. March 5, 2020. Retrieved on January 10, 2024. Retrieved from: <https://cn.yna.co.kr>.
- [4] Kpop Start. HYBE & ADOR Invested THIS Staggering Amount to Debut NewJeans. July 29, 2022. Retrieved on January 16, 2023. Retrieved from: <https://www.kpopstarz.com/>.
- [5] Jiang Shujiao and Li Shi. The Development History, Discourse Controversy and Value Orientation of Contemporary Popular Culture. Journal of Hangzhou Normal University (Social Science Edition), 2019 (2).
- [6] Park Kwang-hae. The Cultural Revelation of the Korean Wave--An Introduction to the Influence of the Korean Wave on the Lifestyle of Modern Society and Its Cultural Roots. Overseas Social Science, 2011 (04): 98-104.
- [7] Jung, Yuan-Yuan. The spread of Korean pop music in mainland China (1998-2004). Harbin Normal University, 2017.
- [8] Zong Ling, Yi Shuai, Zhao Feng. Exploration of Traditional Culture in New Digital Media Communication Methods--Taking Southern Cantonese Culture as an Example. Dagan (Forum), 2023 (07): 130-132.
- [9] Wang Shaotong. Research on the phenomenon of cross-border cooperation between brands and art. Donghua University, 2016.
- [10] Yin Hongqing, Chen Hao. Characterization of Korean pop music. Art Research, 2021, (03): 68-69.

- [11] Theqoo. NewJeans Fan Meeting Presale Age Groups. May 26. 2023. Retrieved on February 7. 2024. Retrieved from: <https://theqoo.net/2813043220>.
- [12] Jean Baudrillard. Consumer society. Nanjing: Nanjing University Press, 2014: 238.
- [13] Yang Yanlei. Exploration of enterprise marketing strategy based on the perspective of "fan economy". Shanghai Business, 2022 (07): 39-41.
- [14] Tang Zhenwei, Yan Fangjie. The Utility of Popular Culture in the Shaping of Youth Mainstream Cultural Identity and Its Path. Journal of Central Institute of Socialism, 2022 (05): 182-190.