

# A Case Study on Korean Wave: Focused on K-POP Concert by Korean Idol Group in Paris, June 2011

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**Abstract.** The study dealt with Korean Wave focusing on K-POP and analyzed its success factors, the changes in Korean Wave and the future directions for development. Also the study has compared the results of the idol groups' performance, held by SM Entertainment in June 2011 in Paris, and the perspective of Korean and French media. Key reasons were examined to analyze what led K-POP to play a crucial part in spreading the Korean Wave: The expansion of the age of its takers ranging from teens to females in their 20s; the fusion of a variety of cultural elements including oriental dance and occidental pop; the systematic system of idol training; marketing activities based on social media, etc.

For the expansion of Korean Wave including K-POP and its successful positioning in the world market, there are several suggestions to make which are inventing the differentiated contents and highly appealing stories, approaching the local customers while considering local features, operating co-marketing with other cultural products.

**Keywords:** Social Media, K-POP, Korean Wave, Idol Group.

## 1 Introduction

### 1.1 Background and Purpose of Study

Korean Wave covers the cultural phenomena of people in China, Japan or the regions of East Asia following and learning the Korean pop culture, such as music, drama, movies, etc.<sup>1</sup> This was conceptualized in the late 1990s when Korean pop culture was acknowledged in China, Southeast Asia and "Globalization," the national policy, was launched.<sup>2</sup> The range of Korean Wave has been expanded to the traditional Korean culture such as Hansik (Korean food), Hangeul (Korean alphabet), Hanok (Korean

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<sup>1</sup> Yongsoo Oh (2010), The changes in Korean Wave and The creation of competitiveness of tourism of Korean Wave, Korean Tourism Policy 2010, Winter, No.42, Korean Culture and Tourism Institute, P78.

<sup>2</sup> Woongjae Rhyu (2009), The eclectic globalization and the political discourse of country, Korean Media Journal, No. 53, Issue 5

traditional house), Hanbok (Korean traditional clothing), and so on. However, the Korean Wave market has been limited to China, Japan, Southeast Asia and Central Asia, and it is recognized only by a few dramas and stars.

Nevertheless, in the late 2010s, the flow which was represented by the performances of Korean celebrities including K-POP idol group, has been clearly different from the existing features, the stretch of Korean Wave and the target market. Different marketing approaches have been implemented in the way that the contents were not localized and Korean Wave focusing on new cultural icon was carried out simultaneously in the U.S., the Middle East, and South America. Consequently, the difference in time and place has decreased. In this sense, 'SM Town World Tour' in June 2011 was meaningful in many aspects. As the performance of Korean idol was held for the first time in the center of Europe, the effects on the European market and the strategies of Korean Wave need to be examined.

This study focuses on the performance of idols from SM Entertainment in Paris. Also, this study has analyzed the idol group, which is regarded as a key player, and its performance and strategy. Regarding the perspective that Korean Wave targeted the European market, the study has tried to analyze the outcome of the performance while comparing the Korean and European media in an objective manner. Furthermore, this study will suggest the supportive policies and activities that are essential for the development of Korean Wave in the future.

## 1.2 The Precedent Studies

It seems that the academic study of Korean Wave is not sufficient in terms of quantity and quality. Most studies cover the whole Korean Wave or its contents, such as movies, drama and Korean pop. One example is journals based on the general understanding of Korean Wave, including the evolutionary process. Sungsoo Kim (2010) summarizes the development stage of Korean Wave and suggests "Glocal" convergence for sustainable development of Korean Wave. Hyejung JoHan (2003) analyzes the meaning of Korean Wave depending on articles, commentaries and reviews regarding the early stage of Korean Wave.

The other example is analyzed based on the success factors and the directions for the spread of Korean Wave. In the early 2000, there were many studies predicting the potential for development and evaluating the success factors of early Korean Wave (Hyoojong Kim, 2002; Buhyung Lee, 2004; Sangchul Jung and others, 2001). And there are studies on Korean Wave from a political perspective. Woongjae Rhyu (2009) analyzes ideology regarding globalization and explains Korean Wave with a frame of globalizing Korea and neo-liberalism. Jungah Rhyu and others (2003) analyze Korea Wave in a political view of cultural exchange policy in Northeastern countries.

Since 2010, idol group has been analyzed as a new icon of Korean Wave (Taesoo Jung, 2010). There are suggestions on the triggers and barriers of Korean Wave, expansion strategies beyond Asia and successful future plans based on trend analysis (Philsoo Kim, 2011; Sohyun Park, 2011).