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How “Smart” Are K-Pop Fans: Can the Study of Emotional Intelligence of K-Pop Fans Increase Marketing Potential?

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Abstract

Emotional intelligence has been studied in conjunction with many topics since its conception in 1995; however, there is no research linking the concept to the marketing potential for any specific music genre. Emotional intelligence involves the ability to recognize your emotions as they occur and regulate them accordingly, as well as the ability to infer information about the emotions of those around you. K-pop is a music genre that has benefitted from globalization and business strategies that incorporate social media such as YouTube. Teens are the primary demographic for K-pop marketing, which coincides with the teenage propensity towards celebrity worship that has been used to capture merchandising opportunities. Celebrity worship has been shown to be negatively correlated with emotional intelligence; however, the emotional intelligence level of celebrity worship of K-pop fans, and how they score on emotional intelligence in general has not been studied. Nor has the emotional intelligence level of aspiring K-pop idols been studied to determine if they can handle the pressure of the role. This paper attempts to set framework to show that studies should be conducted to determine whether a focus on the emotional intelligence levels of fans and idols could reveal marketing techniques and business strategies which might lead result in increased profits for K-pop music companies.

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Introduction

There have been many papers on how Korean pop (“K-pop”) has exploded around the globe, and how Korean culture has spread from music, to food, to television programming, and beauty products. However, there has not yet been research on how K-pop can take advantage of certain marketing strategies such as measuring the average emotional intelligence of the fan demographic. This paper aims to set the groundwork for understanding how K-pop marketing

can be tied to emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence involves the ability to know and regulate your own emotions as they happen, as well as decipher the emotions in others. The relevance of these disciplines together could result in a deeper understanding of K-pop fandom, given that consumer behavior influences marketing of the industry, in order to potentially advance K-pop culture and profits. The K-pop industry can capitalize on the knowledge of what level of emotional intelligence their fans possess, especially for marketing purposes. This paper will create background to establish a forum for future studies on the prospect. To create this background, theoretical framework is needed to understand the Korean music industry as well as the major K-pop business strategies, and emotional intelligence. In order to outline the theoretical framework, this paper will discuss the topics of the history of K-pop, the business and marketing strategies involved with K-pop, what emotional intelligence is and how it is used, fandoms and celebrity worship, and how emotional intelligence can be used in the marketing of K-pop.

The Beginnings of K-pop

Popular music (“Pop”) is music that has a wide appeal and is distributed to large audiences. Music is often thought of as something fun to listen to, have on in the background while working, or for the more creative types, a way to funnel artistic energy into creating. Many countries around the world have varying styles of music that are considered pop music in their culture. “K-pop”, as it is known outside of Korea, is a music genre that grew out of the previously popular music known as “trot” music. The music that is now thought of as K-pop started gaining popularity in the 2000s after music mogul SooMan Lee started his company, SM Entertainment.

Lee was born in 1952 and loved several styles of music as he grew up, from emerging rock styles in Korea, to groups like America, Bob Dylan, and Peter, Paul, and Mary (Russell: 2008). From the time he was in high school, Lee played guitar in church and at public performances at other schools (Russell: 2008). When he entered Seoul National University as an Agricultural Machinery Engineering major, he started a folk duo with friend SunJin Baek (Lie 2015; Russell: 2008). Due to the group’s success, Lee did not study as hard as he could have and therefore did not have the grade point average (at least a B+) to be eligible to travel to the United States to study abroad as he had dreamed of doing (Russell: 2008).

Lee took some time off studying and performing, and when he returned to school a year later, he had a renewed dedication to his studies (Russell 2008: 135). This dedication did not offset the grades from his first two years of college, so he was still unable to study abroad (Russell 2008: 135-136). In 1975, although his parents did not approve of Lee’s interest in singing, he took a job as a deejay, hosting a music show called *Viva Pops*, which became a big hit (Russell 2008: 137). Over the next few years, Lee would go on to win awards for his singing and graduate with his bachelor’s degree (Russell 2008: 137). In 1979, due to a change in political climate in Korea, Lee was finally able to apply for a study abroad visa (Russell 2008: 137-138). Before he could leave for his studies, he received an offer to host his own television talk show that would be a spin-off of *Viva Pops* (Russell 2008: 137). By the next year, the politics in Korea changed once again with the new president, DooHwan Chun, declaring a crackdown on the media, which included Lee’s talk show (Russell 2008: 138). This was ultimately the catalyst for Lee’s move to the United States to study.

Lee enrolled at California State University at Northridge to pursue a computer engineering master's degree (Lie 2015; Russell 2008). Lee was in the States for five years, at which time MTV was becoming popular, and he found himself drawn to the sounds of dance, pop, and other new American styles, especially that of Michael Jackson, and wondered how the dance genre could be utilized in Korea (Lie, 2015; Russell 2008: 139). Back home in Seoul, Lee realized the only way he could make music was if he was running his own music studio (Russell 2008: 140). To earn money for his own studio, Lee opened a restaurant (Russell 2008, 140). Lee also went back to work as a radio deejay to renew contacts within the industry, and by 1988 had saved enough money to open SM Studios (Russell 2008: 150).

The creation of SM Studios had Lee looking towards the future, evident in his hiring songwriters and creating music that was more electronic sounding than most of what was on the radio in Korea (Russell 2008: 150-151). Through his deejay job, he learned what Koreans like and responded to best, and started looking for artists to bring into his company (Russell 2008, 151). After a few rocky starts, Lee realized that the best way to promote artists was to gather aspiring performers with notable personality and character traits, and singing and dancing ability (Russell 2008: 152). Although Lee decided that singing and dancing could be taught, he knew that the ability to have fans was the most important aspect (Russell 2008: 152). This began auditions for those that wanted to become pop stars in Korea, Japan and the United States (Russell 2008: 152). Those that passed auditions were brought to SM Studios for training which included singing, dance, and how to act like a star (Russell 2008: 152-153). SM Studios changed to SM Entertainment in 1995, thus marking the beginning of the modern era of Korean pop music (Russell 2008: 150).

The Business of the K-pop Industry

The K-pop industry consists of competing businesses and, as such, these businesses are always looking for a way to leverage an advantage. There are several business strategies a company can use to attempt to create a competitive advantage, and with large companies like SM and JYP, the differentiation strategy is most often used. A differentiation strategy means that the company will try to make their "product" different enough from the competition to entice consumers to choose their product. For some K-pop companies, it is the training that their idols receive that is more extensive and time consuming. For other companies, it is bringing in producers and songwriters from other countries to create a sound that is representative of the sound for which the company or specific group is known.

Another way for a company to set themselves apart from competition is to create a market niche through either business to consumer (B2C) marketing or business to business (B2B) marketing. B2C is a business marketing strategy in which a business markets products and goods to the consumer directly through a variety of venues including social media such as Twitter, Tumblr, or Facebook (Debi and Sharma 2013). B2C selling is also the foundation for album and merchandise sales, which the Korean music industry capitalizes on by filling CDs with pages of photos of the artist(s), photocards, and adding posters to create a product package. Including these items with albums are a delight for fans, and a way for the company to charge more for the album because of the images included that fans want for their own collections. The types of social media that are involved in B2C can be tapped into to record social media web analytics which gathers demographic information to advise future marketing tactics. Web analytics can gather information such as how many people have visited a company's website

or social media page, how many “likes” a page has received, and what the demographics of those people are in order to more accurately target a market for goods or services.

Other social media platforms utilize an effective B2B marketing strategy. These social media platforms can include YouTube, LinkedIn, and Pinterest (Debi and Sharma 2013). Social media is different from broadcast-based media due to the speed at which news can be transmitted to populations, and the blurring of the boundaries between author and reader (Zeng et al. 2010). Through social media, fans are now able to obtain content any time of day or night instead of having to wait for a company to release new photos or albums of artists. Fans are able, via both B2B and B2C marketing and social media, to create content about anything they are interested in, and K-pop is one industry that has indirectly benefitted from this creative content. Blogs and fan fiction sites which share fan created content can draw attention to groups that heretofore had gone unnoticed.

Some forms of social media are more closely aligned with a B2B strategy than blogs and creative fan content outlets. YouTube is an example of how social media can be used as a B2B driver. B2B marketing allows the entertainment industry to maximize potential profit through activities such as commercials, advertisements, and royalties (Oh and Park 2012). With YouTube as a B2B driver, entertainment companies can upload their artist content and disseminate it to fans worldwide for free, while also collecting money for advertisements and commercials that YouTube watchers interspersed throughout the videos. (Oh and Park 2012). The business model of YouTube, which pays the company based on the amount of views the content generates, is a passive way for a business to create income (Oh and Park 2012). Fans also like accessing media through sites like YouTube because the service is free, and they can listen to their favorite singles without having to purchase the entire album. YouTube makes it easy for viewers to create playlists of their favorite content. The platform’s algorithms can create playlists based upon users’ viewing history that attempt to predict what they are likely to enjoy. As a result of these features, sites like YouTube are popular amongst fans and businesses. Korea’s ability to adapt early to technological changes also primed the K-pop industry for internet sites such as iTunes and Spotify, which pioneered (legal) internet music distribution (Lie 2015, 129). Transitioning market focus from B2C to B2B is a smart strategy because of the greater profit potential from B2B sales (Oh and Park 2012).

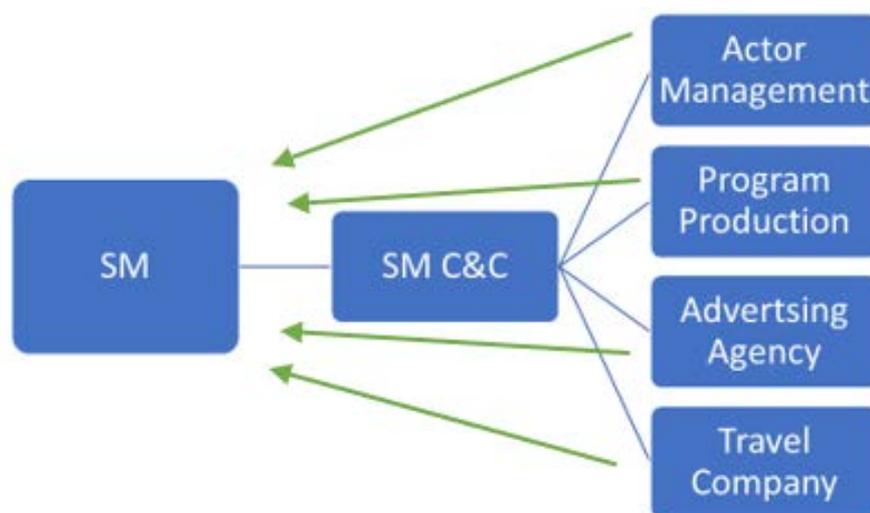


Figure 1 SM Entertainment

Another business strategy that Korea capitalized on is vertical integration. Vertical integration involves a parent company having subsidiary companies that are part of the final product. For example, a large conglomerate company who manufactures computers would also have a secondary company that produces computer hardware, another that produces computer software, yet another that is a retail outlet for computers, and so on. This allows for the business to control all parts of the production chain, resulting in the parent company benefitting from all potential profits. An example in the Korean entertainment industry is CJ ENM. CJ ENM is a subsidiary company of the CJ Group which was an offshoot of Samsung originally (Russell 2008; Hong 2014). CJ ENM owns MNET, tvN, OnStyle, Korean television channels, as well as being the artist management company or provider of investment support, for Stone Music Entertainment, Jellyfish Entertainment, AOMG, and more. With this arrangement, CJ Group, as the parent company, can keep profits made when artists of the subsidiaries appear on the shows or channels that are owned by their other subsidiaries. Another example, depicted in Figure 1, looks at only one of SM's subsidiary companies, SM C&C, which is a talent management company for actors and actresses, comedians, and other entertainers. SM C&C is also a program production company, producing several shows on which SM artists often appear. Under the SM C&C umbrella is a travel company with its own subsidiaries that include tours throughout the world. It creates fan experiences for international fans to see SM artists perform in concert, both in Korea and around the world, as part of an "International package" for SM artist concerts that includes concert tickets, merchandise not available to the general public, hotel accommodations, and transportation from hotel to concert venue. The other arm of SM C&C is an advertising agency. Having talent, television production, travel agencies, and advertising agencies that promote the artists of the parent company are all economically beneficial to the parent business, SM. This idea of a "one hand washes another" business model has become the model for which Korea and K-pop is known (Hong 2012: 127-128).

Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence (also known as "EQ" or "EI" but will be referred to as "EQ" in this paper) is a field that emerged in 1995 (Goleman, 1995). EQ has five domains that make up the concept: knowing your own emotions, managing your emotions, motivating yourself, recognizing emotions in others, and handling relationships (Goleman, 1995: 43). Self-awareness is the ability to recognize a feeling or emotion as it happens. It is knowing what "pushes [your] buttons and why" (Walton, 2012: 25). When you interact with someone, your own emotions can be projected onto them, so it is important to know what your own emotions are and why you experience them when you do so that you can avoid projection. Managing the emotions once you recognize them in yourself is also important; acting in a manner appropriate for a situation is a key component of this aspect of EQ. Self-esteem also plays a role in how you manage your emotions as people with lower levels of self-esteem are more likely to have a negative self-image which can lead to poor decision making (Walton, 2012: 28). Higher self-confidence can lead to having higher levels of motivation. Motivation and willpower can help you resist unwanted thoughts or feelings and help control impulses; while the ability to set clearly defined, realistic, and achievable goals will assist in motivating yourself to accomplish goals and raise your self-esteem. Empathy is also known as "people skills", but is a large component of EQ. The ability to recognize the emotions of others assists in resolving conflicts, understanding what shapes the point of view of others, and can help raise the morale of others (Walton 2012: 88-89). Handling relationships revolves around managing emotions in others;

interpersonal skills provide the framework to be able to have open communication and good leadership abilities (Goleman, 1995; Walton, 2012).

Intelligence (IQ) is a concept that had been looked at throughout history as a cognitive ability, like memory skills or problem-solving ability; which are skills that can be used to predict academic success (Walton 2012: 15). This type of intelligence combines intellectual, logical, rational, and analytical abilities. EQ is more aligned with understanding yourself and being aware of your actions and how they can emotionally affect others. Early studies on EQ were called ‘social intelligence’ and they focused more on the kind of intelligence that can be used towards dealing with others, not skills focused solely on problem-solving (Walton 2012: 15). Testing for EQ can look suspiciously like personality tests with questions asking how you would react in certain situations, not how you think you should react. A sample question testing EQ could ask what you would do in a situation if you are in a car with a colleague driving when another driver cuts you off, and your colleague reacts by aggressively honking the horn and getting visibly angry. The answer to the question that most closely aligns with possessing a high EQ involves telling your colleague about a time the same type of situation happened to you and how angry you became in that situation...until you saw that the car that cut you off turned into the Emergency Room at the local hospital (Walton 2012: 11-14). In this example, empathizing with your colleague (the ability to put yourself in their shoes), and calmly letting them know that there could have been an emergency for the other driver, is the best way to get them to calm down quickly and think of others’ emotions as well.

K-pop Fandoms and Celebrity Worship

A fandom is a grouping of people, officially or unofficially, that are dedicated to the love or admiration of a certain person, fictional character or series, or team of people. K-pop is home to many fandoms; while there are those that like the genre in general, there are many that support just a few groups. Korean entertainment companies make it easy to show others what group you are a fan of by assigning colors and names to the fan groups of each musical group which creates a marketing opportunity for fans to purchase merchandise. For K-pop fans outside of Korea, being involved in fandoms can bring new friends and a place to fit in with peers. Often, international fans of K-pop can tend to hide their feelings about the genre due to a fear of being ostracized by others, including parents that are unaccepting of their children being interested in something so foreign (Choi and Maliangkay 2015: 6). Many times, when a person reveals that they are a fan of anyone or anything, they are peppered with many questions and judgements if the person they are speaking to is not a fan of the same thing. When you find other people who have the same interest as you, you can open up and relax with like-minded fans without feelings of embarrassment, or fears of being left out. Over 75 percent of young adults reported having a strong attraction to a celebrity, typically a musician or movie star. Finding others who like the same celebrity brings a feeling of security in revealing your adoration (Caldwell and Paul 2005). In the past few decades, the term ‘fan’ has gone from someone for society to ridicule, to a part of a target market which has, in turn, created more acceptance for being such a fan in society. Social media platforms such as Twitter or Tumblr often have fanwars where fans compete against others by claiming that their favorite group is better others’, as well as ‘anti-fans’ which are people that are against a particular group or artist. This is not surprising given that being part of a fan club indicates a deep enthusiasm and passion for something, and teens that engage in fanwars, or anti-fan behaviors, are fueled by hormones and competitive enthusiasm.

Despite the hormones and competitive spirits of fans in their teens, the fact remains that K-pop is a business and fans are a source of income for entertainment companies. Companies produce many forms of merchandise for fans to buy, even if the items have no practical utility for fans. For example, SM produced a cassette tape of boy group SHINee's album, *1of1*, which sold out in pre-sales. Many of the fans that purchased the item were not yet born when cassette tapes were en vogue, much less did they have access to a cassette player to play the cassettes. This reveals the deep need of fans to purchase any merchandise connected favorite artists and groups. Celebrity worship, or having strong feelings towards a certain celebrity or music group, is a consumer relationship that is a highly profitable business strategy. As the above example of the cassette sale indicates, when a person identifies with a certain celebrity, they are more likely to purchase goods which the celebrity endorsed, or memorabilia directly associated with that celebrity.

There is a link found between celebrity worship and identity formation during youth (Caldwell and Paul 2005). During this time, celebrities are used as role models of culturally accepted values and morals (Caldwell and Paul 2005). This can be witnessed through K-pop stars being used as spokespeople for certain Korean brands like Red Velvet and TCXQ for the popular Shilla Duty-Free store. This exposure can contribute to future preferences in personal appearance and fashion for fans, as well as the basis for sexual attraction (Caldwell and Paul 2005). The time in a teenager's life that they encounter their favorite celebrity can be very emotional and intense, for example, many adults can still recall the details of seeing their favorite celebrity in concert, or when they were lucky enough to get an autograph for the first time. This is a phenomenon that K-pop capitalizes on by offering fan signings and fan meetings with idols on a regular basis when idol groups are promoting a new song or album.

As early as the 1950s, it was hypothesized that "socially inept and lonely persons" would be more likely to show signs of celebrity worship (McCutcheon and Maltby, 2002). In movies and television, those that are obsessed with celebrities are shown to be immature, irresponsible, lonely, isolated, and usually female (McCutcheon and Maltby 2002). Many that worship celebrities fantasize about their idol to the extent that they try to resemble them in hairstyle, dress, speaking style, or even by buying the same products that their object of worship own (Sulianti et al 2018). Research in 2018 shows that persons who participate in celebrity worship have a lower EQ level than those that do not idolize celebrities (Sulianti et al 2018). The same survey found that there is a negative correlation between EQ level and celebrity worship behavior.

There are three stages of celebrity worship. The first stage, social value entertainment, is when a person actively searches for all available information about their idol (Sulianti et al 2018). When doing this, memory in the brain saves information with repeated audiovisual data, which is tied to emotions (Sulianti et al 2018). The second stage of celebrity worship is when intense personal feelings about the celebrity are born that create the desire to imitate the idol in their habits, aesthetics, and even speech patterns (Sulianti et al 2018). Should EQ practices be applied by the fan at this stage, that fan might discover that this type of behavior can be destructive to their everyday life and curb the desires of wanting to imitate the celebrity before reaching the third stage which is excessive fanaticism (Sulianti et al 2018). There are some excessive fans, and anti-fans, of K-pop that are known as *sasaeng* fans, those that are more intense, crazed, and obsessive than other fans (Russell 2008, 134). These *sasaeng* fans regularly stalk celebrities in their personal life, be it their home, television studios, airports, or even hair salons. These types of "fans" have also been the cause of intentional car accidents. In one incident in 2006, an anti-fan gained access to a backstage area of a concert to put super glue in a singer's drink (Lam et al 2018).

There are several reasons why music is a vital part of many people's lives: music can help manage and regulate moods, it can help with expressing identity, be a way to interact and relate with others, simply be a source of enjoyment (Lonsdale, 2018). Since regulating moods is a reason for people to listen to music, one may automatically draw the conclusion that people who listen to music must have higher EQ levels. But there have not yet been definitive studies that show significantly enough that there is a positive or negative correlation between EQ and listening to music (Lonsdale, 2018). There is also research to suggest that older individuals have higher EQ than younger people, teenagers especially, which is likely due to life experience alone. (Kidwell et al 2008).

Using Emotional Intelligence in K-pop Marketing

Future study outcomes relating K-pop artists and fans to EQ can be used in several different ways. One way is through marketing. Marketing is the ability to sell a good or product which is what K-pop does: the companies and artists sell the package of the idol through various means, such as music videos, television appearances, or photo shoots. The music itself is also a key component of marketing. When a listener feels a connection with music, it creates a feeling of belonging which is a powerful tool to use in sales (Ogden et al 2011). Feeling a connection with a song or artist also leads to word-of-mouth (WOM) advertising which is free to the company and has proven to be a strong marketing tactic (Ogden et al 2011). Musicians promote emotions. They help sell the feeling of the piece they are performing and connect with the audience. It is through these emotions, and the level to which the consumer understands their emotions, that this paper aims to lay groundwork for future studies on the topic.

Consumer EQ is something that entertainment companies cater to by how they market their idol groups to the demographic of their fans. Consumer EQ is a person's ability to deftly use emotional information to reach a desired outcome as a consumer (Kidwell et al 2008). Another term for this is emotional branding; a way to connect people and brands which is what the K-pop industry aims to do. An example of how K-pop does this when compared to the United States: in the U.S. most fans are not aware of what music label their favorite artist is signed with, however in Korea, a company often has a fanbase that supports the artists in that company because they like the label. K-pop entertainment houses use emotional branding to their benefit in part by creating music that fits a company's "brand", as fans are more likely to continue to support that company if they like the image that company puts forth.

Retailing and marketing strategies depend on understanding consumer behavior, from needs to buying trends. An effective retailing and marketing plan can anticipate those behaviors better than that of the competitor. Knowing that consumer behavior can be affected by emotions and learning the EQ of the demographic of your marketing strategy can be the competitive advantage a company needs. Teens are generally the target demographic of pop music, and teens are also more involved with current trends than any other age group (Martin and Bush 2000). K-pop idols are often used as spokespeople for Korean brands marketing for teenagers and young adults so it would follow that discerning their consumer habits would be beneficial to entertainment companies. As discussed in relation to celebrity worship, teenagers are often influenced by outside interests which can include celebrities, especially if their peers are also interested in the same celebrity or brand. In a study by Martin and Bush (2000), it was found that teens perceive direct as well as indirect role models as important influences on their purchasing, with famous entertainers like singers and actors being indirect role models in that

study. Due to this influence, brand image is important, which is why K-pop idols are packaged the way they are by entertainment houses. As long as an idol has the image of being a role model to fans, the company can profit from that image, however a tarnished image will result in backlash by fans.

There is a high percent of K-pop idol trainees who drop out before debuting, according to SM founder SooMan Lee (Oh and Park, 2012). Idol trainees are teens themselves. The difficulties of training before and after attending school every day, of being separated from family, and having to live and work with other teens that you are ultimately competing with for a place in a K-pop group creates a high level of stress. Measuring an incoming trainee's EQ could potentially play a role as a possible predictor of how the trainee would fare through the mental hardships of the new lifestyle to which they would be committing. Knowing the EQ of trainees could also help discern which trainees would be the most effective leaders within the group. Usually, the leader position in a K-pop group is awarded to the person that is the oldest, but perhaps that is not always the best method for choosing a leader. There is evidence that EQ can be taught. Groves et al (2008) completed a study of 535 college students to determine if EQ could be developed with training and found that it is possible to enhance the EQ of an individual through deliberate training. This type of EQ training could be added into the training K-pop companies are already providing for trainees that fit the company requirements for future group leaders in debuted groups. In fact, there are some private schools and academies throughout Korea that offer classes in personality training, (Ho 2012) so it stands to reason that those lessons could include how to raise the EQ of potential idols.

Petrides et al (2006) performed a study of musicians in Cyprus with the average age of 17 years old who had been studying music an average of just over 6 years. The results of the study showed that the musicians with longer training scored significantly higher in the EQ categories of self-control, well-being, and emotionality, showing a positive correlation between length of musical study and EQ. Those artists that are talented enough to debut and become celebrities are often fueled by the need for adoration which is apparent in many celebrities. This need for adoration becomes stronger if the person is excessively narcissistic. A narcissist is classified as a person that is self-centered with excessive interest or admiration for themselves and their physical appearance. EQ studies could be used by K-pop companies to reveal such character traits in idol trainees.

Conclusion

Emotional intelligence is still an emerging discipline, especially with regard to the business industry. The concept of EQ was relegated to the discipline of psychology for many years; however, many businesses are finding that EQ relates to aspects of business from sales and marketing to leadership. Business leaders have found EQ to be so important that after the *Harvard Business Review* published an article on the topic in 1998, the CEO of the American headquartered company Johnson & Johnson (a Fortune 500 company) sent out copies of the article to 400 top executives in the company worldwide (Cherniss 2006).

Knowing specifics about the EQ levels of K-pop fans would be beneficial in developing marketing strategies. Individuals with higher than average EQ's are shown to be less susceptible to marketing tactics such as celebrity endorsement and are more likely to make buying decisions based on what music most appeals to them rather than what is popular

(Kidwell et al 2008). Marketing strategies to those individuals would be different than to the current strategies used to market to lower level EQ K-pop fans who are shown to be more susceptible to purchasing products representing the idols themselves via commercialism and brand recognition (Kidwell et al 2008). Lower EQ scoring individuals are also more likely to use music for mood regulation as they do not have the emotional skillset to adapt their mood on their own. Research has shown that there is a strong positive correlation between high pitch music and happiness as well as constant harmonies which are more playful (Bruner 1990). This is exemplified in the release of higher pitched songs during summer months while lower pitched, slower songs are generally released in the autumn and winter months.

While there are many articles regarding the history of K-pop and globalization, especially since Psy's *Gangnam Style* music video and song went viral in 2012, there are not many articles on the marketing and business aspect of K-pop. Likewise, there are many articles and books that address emotional intelligence from many viewpoints, however there are few articles that look at the relationship between EQ and musicians or EQ and fandoms. There is a gap when looking at pop from any culture regarding EQ and how the information gathered could be utilized to boost music company profits by developing innovative marketing and business strategies that capitalize on fan segments according to their distinct EQ levels. In order to find this information and draw conclusions, research studies will need to be conducted measuring both the EQ level of K-pop fans and aspiring K-pop idols.

Elizabeth Bland is currently a doctorate student in business and management at Saint Leo University in Florida, USA. She is a member of the World Association for Hallyu Studies and the Association for Asian Studies. Her academic interests include international business, emotional intelligence, cultural studies, and music.

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