

# **A STUDY OF 5 POPULAR SONGS BY BTS BAND**

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## **DISSERTATION**

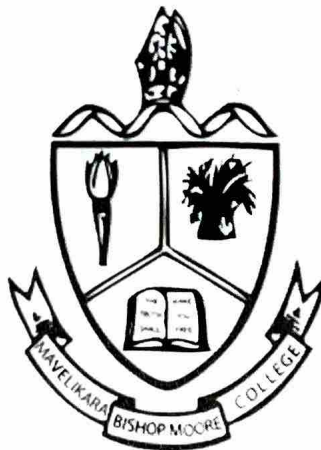
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## **PREFACE**

Music is extremely important and essential in people's lives. We can work, shop, and listen to music at the same time. Music, according to some archaeologists, originated about 55000 years ago. Some musicologists believe that nature is the source of music, and that man is the best part of nature. It is stated that the music of nature is the song sung by men in a different form .

As they continue on their current world tour, BTS has become the biggest boy band in the world, topping charts and breaking records. The seven-member group, which consists of RM, Jin, Suga, J-Hope, Jimin, V, and Jung Kook, has been together since 2013.

The first chapter introduces the aims of the project and the band; it details the formation and history of BTS and about the members. The second chapter is the analysis of five popular songs by the band. This chapter contains details of the creation of the songs, as well as their lyrics and themes and their awards. The concluding chapter discusses the relevance of the songs' themes, their impact on the society as well as the role played by BTS in inspiring and enlightening generations of music lovers.

Through our project we aim to study the five popular songs of the band BTS and analyse their influence in the society.

# Chapter One

## Introduction

When Korean pop (K-pop) first became popular in the 1990s, it was not widely recognised. In the 2000s, Korean popular music and culture, began to acquire traction in Asia, and then globally in the 2010s, when South Korea emerged as a major creator of transnational pop culture. With the popularity of K-Pop, there has been a resurgence of interest in Hallyu, or Korean Wave, as more people desire to understand more about Korean culture.

The group's name, BTS, stands for the Korean expression (Bangtan Sonyeondan), literally meaning "Bulletproof Boy Scouts". According to member JHope, the name signifies the group's desire "to block out stereotypes, criticisms, and expectations that aim on adolescents like bullets". In Japan, they are known as Bōdan Shōnendan which translates similarly. In July 2017, BTS announced that their name would also stand for "Beyond the Scene" as part of their new brand identity. This extended their name to mean "growing youth BTS who is going beyond the realities they are facing, and going forward."

In 2018 BTS, were awarded a fifth-class Hwagwan Order of Cultural Merit. Former Prime Minister Lee Nak Yeon stated that because of BTS, "many young people overseas are now singing Korean lyrics, one of the examples of (BTS) contributing to not only spreading Hallyu, but also Hangeul" .Hallyu or Korean Wave was first used by the Chinese press in the 1990s to refer to the increasing popularity of Korean popular culture in China. Currently, Hallyu is used to describe the surge of Korean popular culture around the world. Hallyu is now considered as a national brand as



Hallyu fans want to see more Korean cultural content and learn Hangeul, the Korean language.

There is also an increase in sales of Korean goods overseas as fans become interested in Korean products and lifestyles. In an interview with Tai, Jenna Gibson, a K-Pop expert and PhD candidate in the Department of Political Science at the University of Chicago in the subfield of International Relations, claimed that — “K-Pop is the ultimate soft power tool for Korea”. Soft power is one’s ability to persuade and attract others to attain the outcomes that one wants. A country has three resources for soft power namely political values, foreign policies, and culture. In this day and age, popular culture for mass entertainment is seen as good soft power. As for K-Pop, Gibson further explained that the songs are performed in Korean therefore essentially making the listeners want to learn more about the culture, industry, and the country it came from. To demonstrate the soft power of K-Pop, South Korea has seen a strong increase in international students for the past six years. In 2019, it was a record high of 160,165 international students with 100,215 enrolling in degree programs and the remaining 59,950 are pursuing Korean language studies. Moreover, BTS albums were given to the children of heads of states as gifts showing a great diplomatic effect. The Hallyu White Paper has recorded BTS’ success as a catalyst for the rapid growth of K-Pop in North America as exports continue to increase by almost double annually.

In 2018, BTS made headlines almost every day leading to Kim calling the septet a — “cultural event”. In their song Airplane pt. 2, they sing, — “We goin’ from NY to Cali, London to Paris... We goin’ from Tokyo, Italy, Hong Kong to Brazil. Wherever in the world, I will sing”. The chorus shows how the group is busy moving from one city to another. Wherever they had concerts, the tickets were all sold out. BTS has led K-Pop to a new level of recognition around the world.

BTS began its formation in 2010 after Big Hit Entertainment CEO Bang Si-hyuk met with group leader RM and was impressed with his rapping. BTS was originally supposed to be a hip-hop group similar to YG Entertainment's 1TYM, but between their initial formation and their debut, Bang Si-hyuk decided that the contemporary youth needed instead — “a hero who can lend them a shoulder to lean on, even without speaking a single word”. The group was meant to debut in 2011 and featured on several tracks by artists such as 2AM and Lee Seung-gi before their debut was postponed and the group was reorganized into a more traditional idol group. The lineup was then finalized with Jin, Suga, J-Hope, RM, Jimin, V, and Jungkook in 2012. Six months prior to their debut, they began to gain attention for their presence on various social media websites, as well as song covers on YouTube and Sound Cloud.

BTS songs were not in English and they do not have viral music videos like Psy's Gangnam Style. What made BTS appealing to their fans is music with meaning. They share stories about “bullying, depression, struggles of youth, pursuit of happiness, and forsaking society's ideals and temptation” which the fans can relate to. Moreover, what makes BTS stand out even more is that instead of adapting Western music, they have chosen to incorporate Korean traditional culture into their musical arrangements. This is due to the creative freedom that their label, Big Hit Entertainment, has given them. BTS integrate their messages of love, hope, and inspiration in their music videos by adding metaphors and cultural references. With this, Kim has stated that — “it is not because the Korean-style attraction helps spur the popularity of BTS but because BTS popularity helps spur the Korean-style

attraction”. This is a good example of a successful cultural export through the “re-creation of traditional Korean values and cultural identity”.

BTS maintains a large social media presence with 17 million Twitter followers and was the subject of 379 worldwide trends during 2018. BTS fandom, ‘ARMY’ was named the most active fandom community on Instagram for the same year period.

BTS, with their breakthrough into the western market, continues to press against the limits of the K-pop industry, becoming Korean musicians instead of K-pop leaders.

BTS ascension to worldwide popularity landed them the number one spot on Forbes Korea Power Celebrity list for the year 2018.

Revolutionizing what it means to be seen as a Korean celebrity, BTS entered into a two year partnership near the end of 2017 with the Korean Committee for UNICEF to launch the ‘Love Myself’ Anti-violence campaign in support of ending violence and spoke in 2018 to the United Nations as a UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador for the Generation Unlimited initiative. BTS has led Big Hit Entertainment to its current prosperity—Big Hit Entertainment’s current net worth was most recently reported at around 2.23 billion USD. Big Hit Entertainment and BTS shows no signs of stopping their record breaking, trailblazing path anytime soon—and as far as BTS is concerned, there’s nothing stopping them from total worldwide domination.

Hailing from South Korea, BTS is now the biggest boy band in the world, topping charts and setting records. Since their debut in 2013, the seven member group have grown beyond the bounds of traditional K-pop acts, making a splash everywhere from Chile to California.



## Chapter Two

### A Study of Popular songs by BTS band

The BTS canon of music is filled with mythological symbolism, classical references and Renaissance imagery. A deep dive into their lyrics is to understand the power of the written word.

"Fake Love" is a song recorded in Korean and Japanese by South Korean boy band BTS. It was written by Hitman Bang, RM, and Pdogg, with the latter as producer. The Korean version was released through Big Hit Entertainment on May 18, 2018, as the lead single from the band's third album *Love Yourself: Tear* (2018). Columbia Records serviced the song to US contemporary hit radio on June 12, 2018, as a single in the country. A remix, titled "Rocking Vibe", was released on June 4, 2018, and appears on the band's third compilation album, *Love Yourself: Answer* (2018). The Japanese version of the song was released for digital download and streaming on October 16, 2018 by Universal Music Japan as a single album that included the remix and "Airplane Pt. 2", both also in Japanese. "Fake Love" is an emo hip hop, grunge-rock, rap-rock and electropop song which relies on rock instrumentals. The lyrics talk about the love that was once believed to be destiny, but turned out fake at the end.

The song received generally positive reviews from critics who praised its dark production, eclectic sound, and the band's vocal delivery. It received several accolades, including the Song of the Year and Best Pop Song at the 2019 Korean Music Awards, and appeared on the decade-end lists of NME and *Consequence of Sound*. Commercially, the Korean version of "Fake Love" debuted at number one on

the Gaon Digital Chart and number ten on the US Billboard Hot 100, becoming the band's first top-ten single in the US. The Japanese version debuted and peaked at number one on the Oricon Singles Chart, becoming the 12th bestselling single of 2018 in Japan.

"Fake Love" is composed in 4/4 time in the key of D minor, with a moderate tempo of 78 beats per minute, and runs for 4:02m. Though the song keeps up with the band's signature hip hop sound, it employs a dark production consisting of thumping trap beats, "gritty guitars", "ambient synth quirks" and "doomy bass."

The song primarily relies on rock instrumentation which includes electric guitar, drums, keyboards, and synthesizers. The drums have a repeating kick and snare sequence, which remains constant throughout the song. The verses are led by both arpeggiated and rhythm guitars. The song makes use of dissonant and dark chord progressions and contains a "tense" chorus which is boosted by heavy bass. It features a "tenacious" and "blocky" bassline, which was compared to that of Atlanta hip-hop. The opening verse uses a "serpentine" delivery characterized by "breathy" vocals while the refrain is accompanied by "wailing" vocals from band. The song features "anguished" singing blending "warm" melodies and "dreamy, echoing" verses with "brusque" raps. The staccato-driven rapped verses follow the triplet flow saturating hip hop. The remix version adds "dynamic" electronic and acoustic string instruments over the original melody, introducing rock vibes to the song. The latter is also composed in the same key as the original recording, but with a moderately fast tempo of 155 beats per minute.



Lyricaly, the song talks about love that was once believed to be destiny, but turned out fake at the end and reflects the theme of the entire "Love Yourself" series — "that any love wherein one does not love oneself is not real." It also recounts the emptiness that comes to a person who has invested too much in a relationship, only to lose one's own identity in the process through lyrics such as, "I even became quite unsure of who I was / Try babbling into the mirror, who the heck are you?" The lyrics further reference to the notion of holding onto a toxic relationship: "I grew a flower that can't be bloomed in a dream that can't come true". Lines like "Mold a pretty lie for you" and "Try to erase myself and make me your doll" suggest themes of "hiding depression" and "pressure" to maintain relationships despite struggling with mental health. During the chorus, the band chant the titular phrase singing, "I'm so sick of this fake love" admitting "disenchantment".

"Fake Love" received generally positive reviews from critics. Jeff Benjamin of Paper praised the track's sound and the band's vocal delivery, writing that the song "might very well be the best representation of the pop excellence BTS brings to music. —"In The Korea Herald, Damyoung Hong wrote that the musical style" offers an overwhelming sense of darkness and maturity" to the song. She also appreciated its lyrical content, writing that the "poetic refrains" used throughout it " adds to the song's ineffable sensitivity". Hyun-su Yim praised the song for brilliantly capturing the genre-bending and emotion-heavy musical essence of BTS. Rhian Daly of NME commended the dark production and labelled the song "beautifully gloomy," adding that the track is an "early instance of BTS tackling the idea of one's persona. IZM's Do-heon Kim compared the song to the band's previous tracks "I Need U" (2015) and "Blood Sweat & Tears" (2016), and praised the blend of aggressive guitar riff, tensed

synth samples, and dreamy sounds in the production which recreates depression and anxiety that is expressed through the emotive lyrics of the song.

Markos Papadatos of Digital Journal said the song was —sonically and lyrically powerful and embodies the emotions of saying goodbye in a raw yet sincere fashion". He called the lyrics exceptional.

Fake Love was positively reviewed by the writers of Rolling Stone, who likened the guitar line to that of 80's rock band, Def Leppard and stated that the track is an impressive fusion, simultaneously bruised and bruising. In a separate review, music critic Elias Leight of the same publication viewed the song as "a jolt of angst-ridden", arena-ready rap-rock.

In a Billboard publication, Caitlin Kelley cited it as one of the best songs of the band and wrote, "this is BTS at their angstiest, wallowing in the heartache of changing yourself so much for someone that your love is fake". Writing for The Malaysia Star, Chester Chin praised the song for "its explosive hook-heavy glory". Taylor Glasby from Dazed appreciated the poignant rawness of the pre-choruses while also complimenting the song's lyrical content. Billboard ranked "Fake Love" at number 22 on their list of 2018's best songs. Other publications that included the track among their lists of the best songs of 2018 were The Dong-a Ilbo, The Guardian, The New York Times, and Rolling Stone. The latter also ranked "Fake Love" as one of the greatest boy band songs of all time. Consequence of Sound and NME placed it on their decade-end list of the 100 best songs of the 2010s. "Fake Love" won the Song of the Year and Best Pop Song awards at the Korean Music Awards in 2019. It also won the Best Rap / Hip Hop song at the 2018 Melon Music Awards.

The song also achieved the top spot on various South Korean music programmes, garnering a total of 12 awards including "triple-crowns" (three consecutive wins) on Music Bank, Show! Music Core and Inkigayo. It also achieved five consecutive Melon Weekly Popularity Awards due to its substantial success on digital platforms.

"DNA" is another song recorded in two languages (Korean and Japanese) and the Korean version was released on September 18, 2017 as the lead single from the band's fifth extended play *Love Yourself: Her* (2017) by Big Hit Entertainment.

The Japanese version of the song was released on December 6, 2017 by Universal Music Japan as a triple A-side single album that included "Mic Drop" and a new, original song "Crystal Snow", both also in Japanese. Both versions were written by "Hitman" Bang, Supreme Boi, KASS, Suga, RM, Pdogg, with the latter of the six solely handling production. A "Pedal 2 LA" remix of the track appears on the band's third compilation album, *Love Yourself: Answer* (2018). An EDM and pop song, the lyrics talk about fate and love at first sight.

The song received generally favourable reviews from music critics, who praised its production, sound, and the band's musical direction. The song peaked at number 67 on the US Billboard Hot 100 and at number 90 on the UK Singles Chart, becoming the band's first entry on both the charts. The Japanese version debuted and peaked at number one on the Oricon Singles Chart, becoming the 13th bestselling single of 2017 in Japan.

The song was certified gold by the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) and double platinum by the Recording Industry Association of



Japan (RIAJ). "DNA" received several accolades, including a nomination for Song of the Year at the 15th Korean Music Awards and the 19th Mnet Asian Music Awards. The original version of DNA also appears on that album. A Japanese version of the song was digitally released for purchase on December 6, 2017 by Universal Music Japan as the band's eighth Japanese-language single album, together with the Japanese version of previously released Korean single "Mic Drop" and a new, original Japanese track "Crystal Snow".

"DNA" has been characterized as an upbeat EDM and pop song. Some music journalists have noted elements of soft rock, hip hop and turbo-pop. In terms of musical notation, the song is composed in the key of C sharp minor, with a tempo of 130 beats per minute, and runs for 3:43. The modern electronic production consists of whistles, added bells, and acoustic guitar.

It is driven by dynamic strings and a pulsating drum-line. Instrumentation for the song is provided by guitar, bass, keyboards, synthesizer, and drums. Band members RM, J-Hope and Jungkook provided backing vocals for the track, alongside KASS, Supreme Boi, Pdogg, and Lee Shinseong, while Tim Finn provided the bass vocals. The music video opens with close-up shots of Jungkook whistling against a backdrop of mathematical formulas and molecular structures. The video then switches to show him joining the rest of the band as they start dancing, being backed by gentle guitar strumming. In it, they are seen in bubble gum-shade hair with technicolors exploding in the background.

The clip alternates between close-ups of each member staring directly into the camera and group shots of the band performing "complex, floor-sweeping"

choreography in multiple vibrant coloured CGI-enhanced sets. In some of these scenes, the members are dressed in casual basketball jerseys and jumpers of bold primary colours, while in others, they wear retro-themed outfits. At one point, they roam around a glowing set illuminated with pastel hued lights.

The video features helix structures, mathematical and molecular formulas as imagery. It also keeps up with the theme of science and religion depicting solar systems, stars and celestial symbolism. In one scene, the band is surrounded by stars and they start dancing with a giant moon in the background. During the final chorus, the visual depicts images of actual DNA as BTS hold hands and impersonate the chemical structure of the molecule through choreography. The clip ends with the band performing a "dramatic finale" as J-Hope sings "la la la." In January 2019, it became the first music video by a K-pop group to reach 600 million views on the platform.

—*We are Bulletproof: the Eternal*" is a song by BTS. It was released on February 21, 2020, and appears as the eighteenth track in their fourth studio album *Map of the Soul: 7*. The title is a reference to their predebut song "We Are Bulletproof" released in 2010, and its sequel, *We Are Bulletproof Pt. 2*, released in 2013.

The song's lyrics likely symbolize the growth of BTS overtime and their thanking to their fans, the ARMY. The song reflects on the BTS' past struggles. However, it also celebrates the present and future of the seven members — RM, Jin, Suga, J-Hope, Jimin, V, and Jungkook. But ultimately, if you take a look at the

meaning behind the lyrics — such as “We were only seven, but we have you all now” — you’ll see “We Are Bulletproof: The Eternal” is a love letter to ARMY.

When BTS dropped the “We Are Bulletproof: The Eternal” music video, the band solidified their love for ARMY. The animated video opened with RM in his “Boy With Luv” outfit walking in the old Big Hit Entertainment practice room. He sees his former self in the mirror, dressed in his debut outfit from June 13, 2013.

As the MV continues, BTS fans are taken down memory lane. Flashes of previous music videos go by, including “No More Dream”, “We Are Bulletproof”, “N.O”, “Danger”, “I Need You”, “Run”, “Young Forever”, “Blood Sweat & Tears”, “Not Today”, “Spring Day” and “Boy With Luv”. At the start of “We Are Bulletproof: The Eternal,” there’s a moment where “BTS” and “Solo” are written on a wall in the background. Of course, it could indicate the seven members choosing this path. It could also be a reference to the prank where Bang Si-hyuk asked RM to choose between a solo career or the band, and the leader instantly chose BTS. Meanwhile, a purple whale comes to save the seven members from the darkness toward the end of the MV. Then once they reach the highest point, the whale explodes into a sea of purple lights. The whale represents “Whalien 52,” which is a song about loneliness. “Whalien 52” is the one that cannot be heard at first and the one who sings and dreams nonstop in the blind. But it has raised out of the ocean and burst into thousands of violet lights around them which represents the ARMY that has brought BTS to the top.

The animated music video shows the obstacles and hardships that BTS has faced throughout the seven years. It expressed BTS way from the very beginning to



this moment, their ups and downs, and their growth from the labour and success of which they have achieved. It's been a difficult and long road to get where they are now. They have put all this in one video and represented the ARMY in the form of purple lights.

"Boy with Luv" is a song featuring American singer Halsey, as the lead single for their sixth extended play *Map of the Soul: Persona*. It was released on April 12, 2019 by Big Hit Entertainment. The song's music video was the most viewed online music video in 24 hours at the time, garnering over 74.6 million views within its first day of release. On June 24, 2019, Billboard announced that the song had been certified Platinum by the RIAA. "Boy with Luv" held the record for the song with the most music show wins after the 2000s in South Korea with 21 wins, until the record was broken by "Dynamite".

"Boy With Luv" has been described as a "funk pop" song about happiness and love. It serves as a parallel track to their earlier song "Boy in Luv", released in 2014.

According to Tamar Herman of Billboard, the song describes how true strength and love come from finding joy in the smallest things in life.

The video for the song was released on April 12, 2019, and was directed by Yong-Seok Choi from Lumpens. It simultaneously obtained the records of fastest-liked video and fastest viewed video on YouTube, reaching 3 million likes in 2 hours and 74.6 million views within 24 hours of release, making it the most viewed YouTube video in the first 24 hours after its release at the time, averaging about 860 views per second during that interval. Furthermore, it was also the fastest video to reach 100 million views on YouTube, doing so in approximately one day and 10

hours. On April 26, 2019, Big Hit released a second version of the music video, titled "ARMY With Luv", dedicated to the band's fandom, ARMY. The sunshine-drenched collaboration with Halsey was the band's first official comeback after their most successful year yet.

Following the CGI sensory overload of 2018's —IDOL, and the angst-laced "Fake Love" before it, "Boy With Luv" marked a new era for BTS. In the music video, the group moves between bright set pieces, laughing through pastel costume changes to the song's addictive melody. A relatively stripped-back showcase of BTS's choreography and enigmatic charm, it's impossible to watch — "Boy With Luv" and not feel joy radiating off the members as they interact softly with each other. For people tentatively dipping their toe into the very wide and deep pool of BTS, the video created an accessible escapism into something warm, soothing, and fun. To put it bluntly, "Boy With Luv" is incredibly easy to enjoy.

In English, the literal translation is "A Poem for Small Things," and that title especially resonates with ARMY. Lyrically, that title and the song's lyrics can be interpreted as BTS learning to appreciate the little things that make them happy away from their larger-than-life existence as some of the world's most influential artists. And this full-circle theme wasn't just a pleasing easter egg for fans, but a sigh of relief after an unsettling time for BTS.

BTS comebacks are a rush of emotions. They resemble the starting line of a race as you wait on tenterhooks for the siren to blast and tell you it's time to go. It's often hard to focus on the details as you try to absorb hidden messages and keep up with the online discourse. But one of the final shots of "Boy With Luv" was easy to



sit back and appreciate, whether you were a veteran ARMY or someone wading in for the first time. Across seven seconds, the seven members of BTS smile and shout into the camera, their arms draped around each other. For newcomers, it felt like a shot of serotonin right into the optic nerve; for experienced fans, it was that too — but it also felt like BTS was back, together and stronger than ever with a message of love for each other and for ARMY. .

It was a meaningful choice for the band, as “Boy With Luv” was the first single following their trilogy of Love Yourself albums. Their mission of empowering people to love themselves was the through-line of that tour and the key message in leader RM’s impassioned speech at the United Nations in 2018.

The boys of BTS—RM, Jin, V, Jungkook, J-Hope, Suga, and Jimin—released their first big English single of the new decade, disco pop song "Dynamite".

It is the band's first song that was fully recorded in English. The song was written by David Stewart and Jessica Agombar and produced by Stewart. "Dynamite" is an upbeat disco-pop song with elements of funk, soul and bubblegum pop. The track features snapping handclaps, echoing synths, and celebratory horns, taking influence from 1970s music. Intended to soothe listeners during the COVID-19 pandemic, the song talks about joy and appreciation for the little things that make life valuable.

Upon release, "Dynamite" received positive reviews from music critics, with praise towards its catchiness and broadly appealing retro sound. At the 63rd Annual Grammy Awards, "Dynamite" received a nomination for Best Pop Duo/Group Performance, which was the band's first nomination, also making them the first Korean pop act to receive a Grammy nod.

"Dynamite" debuted at number one on the Billboard Hot 100 chart, becoming the band's first number-one single in the United States and making BTS the first all-South Korean act to top the Hot 100. The song sold 265,000 downloads in its first week, marking the biggest pure sales week since Taylor Swift's "Look What You Made Me Do" (2017). "Dynamite" stayed atop the Hot 100 for three total weeks. On Spotify, "Dynamite" debuted with 7.778 million streams, marking the biggest opening-day for a song in 2020. Additionally, "Dynamite" peaked at number one on both the Billboard Global 200 and Billboard Global Excl. U.S. charts, topping the latter for three consecutive weeks. The song charted in the top 10 in 25 different countries and topped the charts in Hungary, Israel, Lithuania, Malaysia, Scotland, Singapore and South Korea. The band promoted the song with many televised live performances. The song opens with a snippet of the chorus, where Jungkook sings, "Cause I, I, I'm in the stars tonight/ So watch me bring the fire and set the night alight." Percussion and bass are added in the next section. It further builds with Nile Rodgers-esque guitar that is later boosted by "vibrant" brass sound. The chorus is "unifying" and gains speed as the song progresses. Craig Jenkins of Vulture compared the horns in the chorus to that of Neon Genesis Evangelion's theme song, "A Cruel Angel's Thesis" (1995) and described "Dynamite" as "a vehicle expressly designed to break through the stratosphere", noting its similarity in genre to the handful of other disco-influenced songs that reached number one on the US Billboard Hot 100 earlier that year (namely Doja Cat's "Say So", Harry Styles' "Watermelon Sugar", and Lady Gaga and Ariana Grande's "Rain on Me"). Pitchfork's Noah Yoo compared the song

musically to Taio Cruz's 2010 song of the same name. The last two verses of the track introduce a change in the key.

“Dynamite” is a Disco Pop single that sings of joy and confidence, bringing a new surge of much-needed ‘energy’ to reinvigorate the global community. In this song, the global superstars find happiness by doing again what they do best: engaging in a perpetual cycle of giving and receiving joy with the world through music and performances. It also marks BTS’ s first song to be released completely in English.; Having sought a “breakthrough” to overcome a sense of disheartenment from within the new global climate, BTS embarks on a new challenge through “Dynamite.”. The choreography is edgy and upbeat, with deeply addicting movements that highlight the distinct charms of each BTS member. “Dynamite” is the first and only song by a Korean artist to ever debut at the top position on the chart. It is also BTS’s first time reaching No. 1 on Spotify’s Global Top 50.

“Dynamite” achieved 100 No.1s on iTunes within 8 hours, making BTS the fastest artist to ever reach 100 iTunes No.1s. With *My Time*, *Black Swan*, *Moon*, *Your Eyes Tell*, and *Dynamite*, the group is now the only artist to ever have five songs achieve 100 No.1s on iTunes. BTS has received many awards and honours, including 33 Mnet Asian Music Awards, 29 Melon Music Awards, 20 Golden Disc Awards, 14 Seoul Music Awards, 13 Gaon Chart Music Awards, 5 Billboard Music Awards, 6 American Music Awards, 4 Korean Music Awards, and 6 MTV Video Music Awards. Having sold over 20.3 million albums on the Gaon Music Chart, BTS is the best-selling artist in South Korean history, surpassing Shin Seung-hun's record of 17 million albums. In South Korea, BTS holds four Multi-Million albums and three Platinum streaming singles. As the first Korean group to receive an RIAA



certification, BTS has two Platinum album, three Platinum singles, two Gold singles, and one Gold album in the United States.

BTS has a large social influence and as of 2020, have attained fifteen Guinness World Records, including the world record for most Twitter engagements. To date, they have spent 210 weeks at number one on the Billboard Social 50 chart. In October 2018, BTS was awarded a fifth-class Hwagwan Order of Cultural Merit from the President of South Korea for their contributions in spreading Korean culture and language. In 2019, members of BTS were invited to become members of the Recording Academy in honour of their contributions to music and as part of a push to help diversify Grammy Award voters.

Although BTS started experiencing success in Korea several years ago, the group has started to enjoy an almost unprecedented level of international success, with a huge American fan base. Social media can also be partially credited for the group's success. The group's members interact with fans frequently on social media, helping to create a sense of community in the fandom.

In April 2019, BTS was the musical guest on Saturday Night Live. The late-night TV show has been a staple of American pop culture for nearly forty years, and a group's inclusion in the show is often considered the pinnacle of career achievement. But BTS isn't content to rest on their laurels, and since then, they've been making the rounds of other late night talk shows, making new fans and even drawing a comparison to The Beatles.

There is no other international boy band as successful as K-Pop seven-member group BTS. BTS has broken a ton of records. Not only have they become

the first-ever K-Pop band to top U.S. album charts, but they have also become the first K-Pop artists to win a Billboard Music Award and became the first K-Pop group to go Gold by the RIAA.

In 2017, BTS was nominated for Top Social Artists at the Billboard Music Awards and not only were they the first K-Pop group to ever be nominated for a Billboard, but they won, too. And, The boys broke Justin Bieber's six-year winning streak. In 2019, BTS was nominated for a bigger award at the Billboard Music Awards, Top Duo/Artist, going against Maroon 5 and Imagine Dragons, and they won, breaking yet another record. At the 2017 American Music Awards, BTS got the chance to perform live, making it the first time a K-Pop group ever took the stage on a major U.S. award show.

The boys broke their record in 2020 when they sold more than 3.71 million copies of their album *Map of the Soul: Persona* beating the previous record on Korea's Gaon Music Chart of their 2018 album *Love Yourself: Answer*, which sold a whopping 2.2 million copies. The Gaon Music Chart is the Korean version of the U.S. Billboard chart and BTS made history by having the highest-selling album in their native Korea. BTS became the first Korean group to receive a gold album certification from the Recording Industry Association of America after the release of their album *Love Yourself: Answer* in 2018. It became the first Korean album to ever go gold. A year later, the RIAA recognized the group's album *Map of the Soul: Persona* and also certified it gold after it became the bestselling Korean album of all time.

The only Korean to ever reach a higher spot on the Billboard charts was solo

act Psy, who reached No.2 with "Gangnam Style". "Boy With Luv" featuring Halsey is one of the group's biggest hits and it did amazingly well on the music streaming app Spotify. According to Forbes, the song, which came off their popular album, Map of the Soul: 7, was played on Spotify almost 285 million times.

Their music isn't for a certain group of individuals; it is for everyone who has moved through the stages of life. BTS' lyrics break down moments that the majority of us living on this planet have in common, including experiences during school days, bonds (forged and broken) with friends, expectations placed upon us by our parents and the roles thrust onto us by society, all leading to the seemingly unavoidable fate of falling into the rat race. By addressing these stages of our lives, the core of this band's message ties into the examination of what it means to be human, to understand where you lie in the grand scheme of things. There is no limit to who can be a fan or who can see themselves in these seven men from South Korea, and with this very simple truth, it is a legacy cemented for all generations to discover and fall in love with.



## Chapter Three

### Conclusion

BTS, a global talent, is shattering barriers and setting records all over the world, demonstrating their place as the world's biggest boy band. They topped official music charts in the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, and Canada, among other countries, and won numerous awards at music award events across the world. They have performed (and continue to perform) at the world's most prestigious stadiums, which have witnessed significant musical milestones. Outside of music, they leveraged their worldwide fame to start the "Love Myself" global anti-violence campaign. As UNICEF's global ambassadors, they were able to speak before the United Nations because of their humanitarian work. They've been dubbed the "Next Generation Leaders" and one of the "Most Influential People of 2019" by TIME Magazine. They are making unprecedented history as Koreans and as artists.

Analysts have noticed that BTS' impact is not only limited to music and humanitarian efforts, but that it is also favourably impacting their own hometown and culture around the world. Several research institutes have offered statistics and findings indicating that the BTS Effect benefits South Korea's culture, economy and industry. On Dec, 2018, the Hyundai Research Institute (HRI) reported that BTS generates an estimated amount of 4 trillion won (\$3.54 billion) as economic value to the country per year and 1.42 trillion won (\$1.26 billion) as added value per year. According to Statista's analysis of 2018 company revenues report, BTS's contribution to South Korea's GDP is

almost comparable with Korean Air. According to the latest report, the economic effect is currently at \$4.9 billion which is around 5.6 Trillion won.

No Korean artist has brought such a huge economic effect in South Korea. Korean artist Psy (famous for his global viral song “Gangnam Style”) brought an economic value of 1 trillion won while Korean actor Bae Yong Joon brought an economic value of around 3 trillion won via his lead role in the famous Korean drama (K-Drama) “Winter Sonata” (the K-Drama was a mega huge hit in Asia). The fact that BTS managed to surpass them is mind boggling. HRI predicted that BTS’s 10-year economic impact will reach 56.2 trillion won (\$49.8 billion). This number will easily surpass the PyeongChang Winter Olympics 2018 which reached 41.6 trillion won.

According to HRI, 796,000 foreigners visit South Korea annually because of BTS, promoting the local tourism industry. Out of the 10.41 million people, 7.6% of the visits in 2017 were influenced by the Korean group. HRI has also stated that one in every thirteen foreign tourists visited South Korea in 2017 thanks to BTS. Before BTS, 650,000 tourists visited the Nami Island in Chuncheon in 2002 after —Winter Sonata was broadcasted (Nami Island is one of the filming sites). Psy’s “Gangnam Style” also helped in boosting tourism in 2012 (unfortunately, there is no official data to show how much influence he brought). The Seoul Metropolitan Government gave credit to BTS in helping recover Seoul’s tourism industry which was negatively affected by the THAAD ban. The Korea Tourism Organization even conducted a survey on the most popular spots in South Korea where the top five locations selected were BTS-related places. It is rare for any country to have a boost in the



tourism industry contributed by a specific group of people rather than sights or events.

The fact that BTS contributed in improving the BOP surplus is remarkable. When China imposed the THAAD ban in 2016, the stocks of entertainment companies were badly affected because China is one of the top countries for Korean entertainment in terms of investment and export. Thanks to BTS, the investment stocks of the entertainment companies improved and they are focusing on the American and European markets.

According to the National Gugak Centre, there was also an increase in demand and interest for Korean traditional sounds resulting in the introduction of sounds of 50 more instruments. This was due to the live performance of BTS's worldwide hit song "IDOL" at the Melon Music Awards 2018 where they fused traditional Korean sounds with the song, attracting both local and global audiences.

The civic group Nation's People Preserving the Korean Language chose BTS as the "Top Promoter of the Korean Language" of 2018 for promoting and increasing the interest of the Korean language around the world. So we can see that it is rare for a single Korean artist to make such an impact on the economy, industry and culture of a nation. Looking at the confirmed data, it is no surprise that BTS is South Korea's national treasure and pride, that is bringing positive influence with authenticity and sincerity.

Self-love is the key to happiness. BTS has taught us about the importance of self-love through their Love Yourself album series. The three albums detail the progression of a romantic relationship, from the blissful beginnings to the devastating

conclusion, followed by a surprising revelation that comes in the song “Epiphany” that shows such relationships are doomed unless we can first learn to love ourselves, complete with faults and all. “I’m the one I should love, in this world – shining me, the precious soul of mine. I finally realized, so I love me. Not so perfect, but so beautiful, I’m the one I should love.” Jin sings in Epiphany. In collaboration with the United Nations, the group launched their Love Yourself campaign: having the courage to face your faults and weaknesses and having compassion to forgive yourself for them. When the band addressed the UN in 2018, RM stood behind the podium and said, “Maybe I made a mistake yesterday, but yesterday’s me is still me. I am who I am today, with all my faults. Tomorrow I might be a tiny bit wiser, and that’s me, too. These faults and mistakes are what I am, making up the brightest stars in the constellation of my life. I have come to love myself for who I was, who I am, and who I hope to become.”

BTS has taught us that it is okay to be different from the norm, to question the wrong, and to fight for what is right. While most idol groups stuck to a slick apolitical formula that had a proven record for success, BTS made music and talked about the more controversial topics. The 7 membered boy band has always openly discussed topics like LGBTQ rights, mental health, and the pressure to succeed in a cut-throat society – all subjects that are considered taboo in South Korea.

Ever since their rookie days, they wrote lyrics that had a particularly bold stance, given the Korean government’s history of keeping an eye on controversial themes. They provided a refreshing change from the rigid K-Pop machine, by writing critical lyrics that questioned the system and touching topics no one dared to before.

Music is global and has the power to heal individuals from all walks of life. It is the most effective natural therapy since it unites people across cultures and languages. BTS, a South Korean boyband, performs and records music in their native language of Korean. That didn't stop their music from touching the emotions of millions of people who didn't speak Korean. Even though their songs were written in a language that the majority of people didn't understand, they went on to become one of the most popular boy bands. It's because their music connects with people and gives them hope and motivation. During an interview, when they were once asked their opinion why audiences internationally were able to connect to them despite the language barrier, they talked about the message behind their lyrics and how their passion for performing excites both themselves and the audience. "Even If there is a language barrier, people react pretty much the same wherever we go. It feels like music really brings us together", one member Suga said. Jimin added, "We give energy to our audience members and listeners, but we also draw energy from them."

At the end of the day, the grand megastars BTS, underneath their polished appearances and show-stopping performances, are just 7 guys who love music, each other, and their fans. They were discriminated against, looked down upon, cut from broadcasts, and made fun of. But they never gave up and they are now on top of the world.

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