

Factors influencing K-pop artists' success on V live online video platform

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Introduction (1/2)

K-pop is solidifying its position as a distinct genre in mainstream music

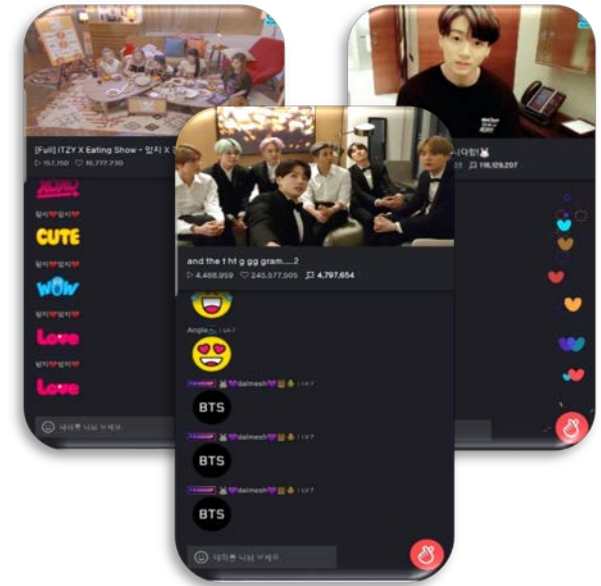
- Korean pop music, commonly referred to as “K-pop,” is a dominant genre with a unique style of sound, dance, and story
 - Since K-pop’s reach to neighboring countries, K-pop has steadily expanded its presence
- The success behind K-pop’s global reach is based on several factors, especially the role of entertainment companies and social media
 - Entertainment companies recruit and nurture new idol groups
 - Social media enhance the popularity of K-pop idols and content
 - Online video platforms like YouTube and V Live are especially important in drawing user attention and engagement



Introduction (2/2)

The study hopes to provide academic and practical implications by examining how K-pop artists' channels achieve success on V Live

- Proliferation of smartphones and internet accessibility encourage K-pop artists to join online media platforms and create content
 - Celebrities are operating their own channels by posting vlog-style videos, music videos, and various visual clips
- As celebrities join online video platforms and promote their own channels, it becomes critical for them to find ways to effectively use and communicate with fans



This study focuses on V Live, a live-streaming platform for K-pop artists, and aims to examine the factors that drive the success of K-pop artists' V Live channels.



Literature Review: K-pop's global expansion (1/3)

Content delivery process, monetization opportunities, and the flow of interactivity between artists and fans has changed significantly throughout the two phases

First generation: 1990s ~ mid 2000s

- K-pop progressed with the help of chaebol companies and the government
 - Idol groups and entertainment companies were rewarded with budgetary support and subsidies
- Artist engagement is generally determined by TV and radio programs
- Monetization opportunities are confined to albums or artist performances
- Fans are perceived as passive consumers with little contribution to the K-pop ecosystem
- K-pop reached neighboring countries

Second generation: mid 2000s ~ present

- Strategic use of online video platforms and social media
- All actors (creators, distributors, and consumers) co-create content and value
 - Entertainment companies efficiently use artist IP and produce digital content
 - Celebrities communicate directly with fans through social media
 - Fans launch club memberships and generate revenue through UGC
- K-pop artists are flourishing outside of Asia and building transnational fandom

Literature Review: K-pop's global expansion (2/3)

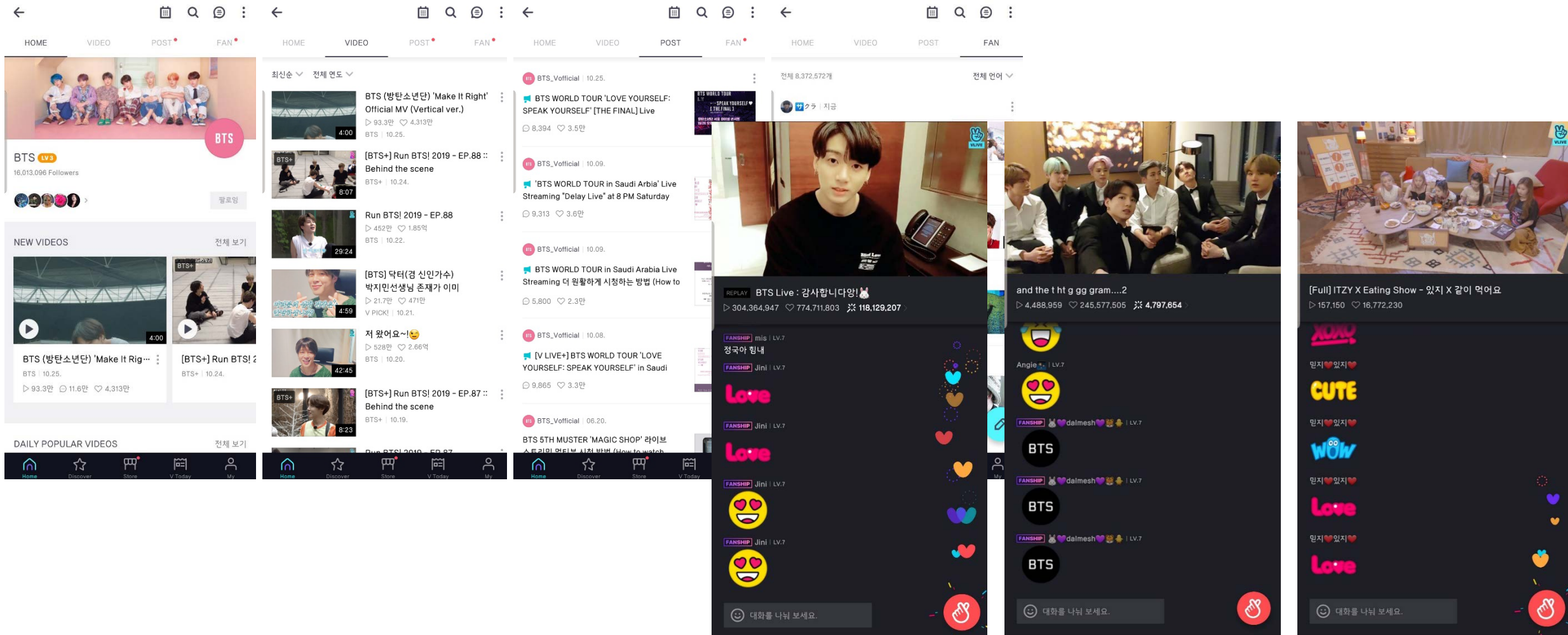
Launched in 2015 by Naver, V Live is a platform with significant potential for creating local buzz and delivering it to the global community



- Launched in 2015 by Korea's search portal company Naver
- Live video-streaming platform for K-pop idols and Asian artists to conduct personal broadcasts and interact intimately with fans
 - Celebrities conduct live broadcasts and reveal their off-stage persona in comfortable settings
 - Fans can cocreate value by creating images or adding subtitles
- More than 30 million monthly active users and 100 million global downloads. Approximately 85 percent of traffic is driven from overseas
- Offers premium subscription channels that provide unique original content and offline event promotions

Literature Review: K-pop's global expansion (3/3)

K-pop artist's V Live channel is an all-in-one package of content, post updates, fan interaction, and better access to live broadcasts of favorite K-pop artists



Literature Review: K-pop artist factors

Debut Date

- Since the early 2000s, more artists are reaching global fans
- Recent entertainment companies are interpreted as venture capital companies that strategically recruit and train K-pop artists to work with global producers, composers, and choreographers

H1a. A later debut by K-pop idols is associated with more subscribers and more average daily subscribers on the K-pop artist's V Live channel.

H1b. A later debut by K-pop idols is associated with more comments and more average daily comments on the K-pop artist's V Live channel.

Band members

- By debuting in groups, K-pop bands are designed to strategically appeal to the heterogeneous tastes of audiences
- Membership diversity enables fans to explore different personalities and build relationships with specific idol members

H2a. K-pop bands with many members will attract more subscribers and more average daily subscribers on their V Live channels.

H2b. K-pop bands with many members will attract more comments and more average daily comments on their V Live channels.

Inclusion of foreign members

- Use of English lyrics serves an important gateway function that inspires foreign fans to relate to and sing along with the band
- Celebrities with multicultural backgrounds enhance acceptance from local fans

H3a. Inclusion of foreigners positively affects the total number of subscribers and the average daily subscribers on the K-pop artist's V Live channel.

H3b. Inclusion of foreigners positively affects the total number of comments and the average daily comments on the K-pop artist's V Live channel.

Literature Review: Parasocial interaction (1/2)

Internet communication technologies and online video content encourage parasocial relationships with celebrities



- The concept of “parasocial interaction” refers to the imaginary, one-sided relationship that a media consumer forms with presenters, actors, or celebrities
 - Similar to interpersonal relationships, repetitive encounters encourage viewers to gain confidence in the person’s behavior and form intimate relationships with media figures
- Internet communication technologies extend parasocial interaction from a one-sided, passive interaction to a two-way interaction between the fan and the artist
 - Availability of content in multi-screens and various platforms gives fans more opportunities to immerse themselves in and build intimate relationships with celebrities
 - Fans’ fervent attachment toward idol group members is expressed through merchandise purchase, donations, and establishment of fan club communities

Literature Review: Parasocial interaction (2/2)

Amount of video content

- Amount of video content is believed to represent the actual activities and the variety of video content that fans can see and relate to
- Celebrity's online activities affect fans' level of parasocial interaction
- Similar to social interactions, exposure to celebrity's cues through videos enhances the potential for fans to build intimate relationships

H4a. Amount of video content positively affects the total number of subscribers and the average daily subscribers on the K-pop artist's V Live channel.

H4b. Amount of video content positively affects the total number of comments and the average daily comments on the K-pop artist's V Live channel.

Number of textual posts

- Textual posts are also ways to communicate with fans
- Number of new entry posts and upload frequency has a significant effect on monetization opportunities and the number of visits to blog sites
- Celebrity's often practice emotional labor and build relationships with fans on social media

H5a. Number of textual posts positively affects the total number of subscribers and the average daily subscribers on the K-pop artist's V Live channel.

H5b. Number of textual posts positively affects the total number of comments and the average daily comments on the K-pop artist's V Live channel.

Literature Review: Resource-based view (1/2)

IT resources are regarded as key assets that differentiate the firm from other competitive service providers

- Resource-based theory perceives firms as a collection of resources that are immobile and heterogeneous
 - Firms achieve a sustainable competitive advantage when their resources are valuable, rare, imperfectly imitable, and non-substitutable
 - Resources are important as they contribute to the firm's competitive advantage and protect the firm from current or potential competitors
- Recent studies emphasize IT as the critical resource in helping firms gain competitive advantage
 - IT resources are a set of complementary resources comprising a firm's technical infrastructure, logistics, distribution system, and loyal customer base
 - For example, Netflix's recommendation system is a core IT resource that enables the firm to collect valuable user data, strengthen personalization services, and retain users
 - Firm's high commitment to resource investment strengthens the process of knowledge acquisition and helps the firm gain competitive advantage

Literature Review: Resource-based view (2/2)

Entertainment company's support

- The technological, human, and organizational resources of entertainment companies help K-pop artists thrive locally and globally
- Entertainment company's V Live activities serve as a substitutionary channel for artists to further increase their popularity

H6a. Entertainment company's channel on V Live positively affects the number of subscribers and the average daily subscribers on the K-pop artist's V Live channel.

H6b. Entertainment company's activity on V Live positively affects the total number of comments and the average daily comments on the K-pop artist's V Live channel.

V Live support

- Professionally generated content has greater potential of achieving high engagement rates than amateur content
- Similar to entertainment companies or MCNs, V Live offers technical infrastructure and intangible support content production
- V Live also sponsors global collaborations and performances through its own network and partnerships

H7a. V Live's promotional support positively affects the number of subscribers and the average daily subscribers on a K-pop artist's V Live channel.

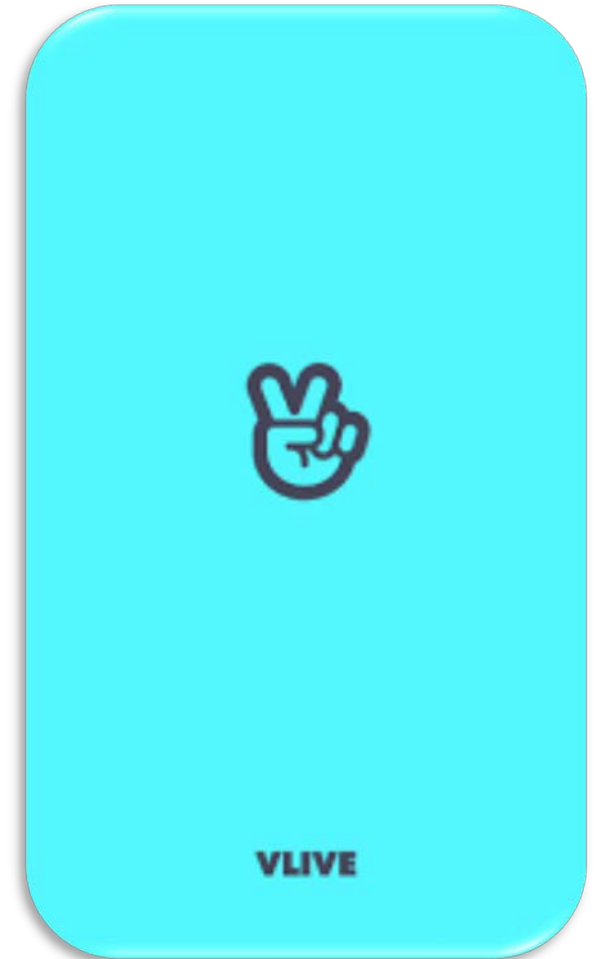
H7b. V Live's promotional support positively affects the total number of comments and the average daily comments on a K-pop artist's V Live channel.

H8a. V Live's global reach support positively affects the number of subscribers and the average daily subscribers on a K-pop artist's V Live channel.

H8b. V Live's global reach support positively affects the total number of comments and the average daily comments on a K-pop artist's V Live channel.

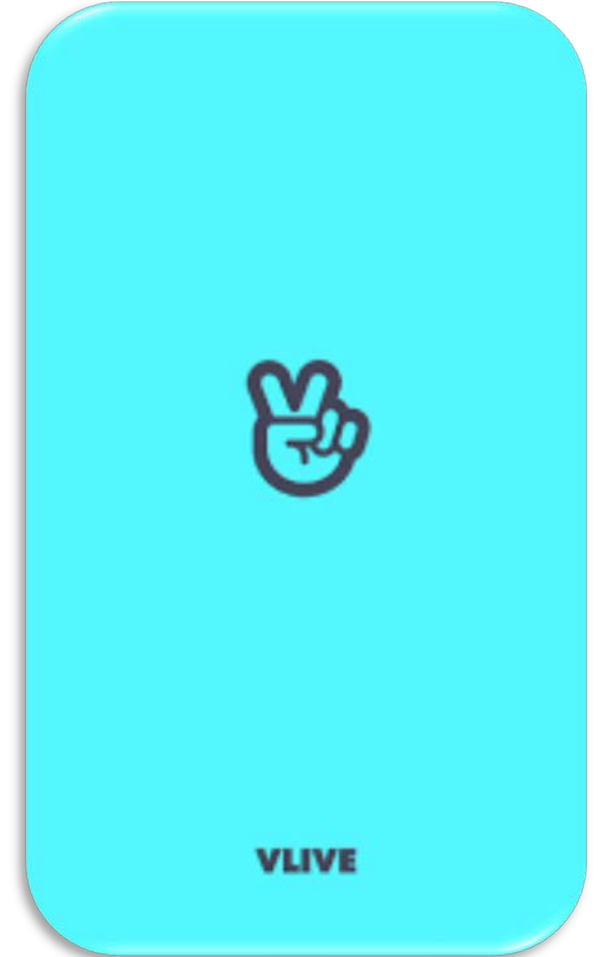
Methodology (1/2)

- Total of 289 channels were used for the analysis
 - V Live channels categorized under the “K-pop” and “music” sections were studied
 - Premium subscription channels, TV program channels, disbanded group channels, and non-active idol group members’ individual channels were eliminated
- Data collection
 - (DV) The total number of subscribers and comments for each K-pop artist’s channel were requested and retrieved from the V Live database in March, 2019
 - (IV) Entertainment company’s V Live channels, star promotion support, global reach support, amount of video content, and number of posts were also provided by V Live’s database in March 2019
 - (IV) The band’s debut year, number of foreign members, and the number of social media channels operated by each K-pop artist were collected from the search portal, Naver



Methodology (2/2)

- Associations between K-pop artist factors, K-pop artist's V Live activity factors, and V Live support factors were investigated through a series of hierarchical regressions
 - All pairs of instrumental variables had a correlation below .50, which indicates a weak relationship among the independent variables
 - Multicollinearity was not found as all models had VIFs below 2.5
- The model was composed of four steps:
 - 1st step: Number of SNS channels operated by K-pop artists
 - 2nd step: K-pop artist-related factors
 - 3rd step: K-pop artist's activity on V Live
 - 4th step: V Live support factors



Results: Total number of subscribers (1/4)

The number of channel subscribers are influenced by debut recency, number of video content, entertainment company's support, and star promotion support

Variables		Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Control variable	Number of SNS	.287***	.199**	.046	.024
	Debut recency		-.354***	-.280***	-.243***
K-pop artist factors	Number of members		.351***	-.001	-.022
	Foreign member inclusion		.108	.108*	.054
K-pop artist's V Live activity factors	Amount of video content			.615***	.478***
	Number of posts			.032	.018
V Live support factors	Entertainment company's support				.152**
	Star promotion support				.192**
	Global Reach support				.063
R Square		.082	.222	.453	.512
Adjusted R Square		.079	.211	.442	.496
F		25.702	20.243	38.946	32.477

Note: Dependent variable in log-transformation (ln [number of subscribers]).

*p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001

Results: Average daily subscribers (2/4)

Average daily subscribers are influenced by debut recency, entertainment company's V Live support, V Live's star promotion, and global reach support

Variables		Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Control variable	Number of SNS	.233***	.152*	.077	.043
	Debut recency		-.217**	-.185**	-.135*
K-pop artist factors	Number of members		.269***	.104	.070
	Foreign member inclusion		.110	.110	.037
K-pop artist's V Live activity factors	Amount of video content			.278***	.083
	Number of posts			.049	.030
V Live support factors	Entertainment company's support				.167**
	Star promotion support				.293***
	Global Reach support				.112*
R Square		.054	.131	.185	.298
Adjusted R Square		.051	.119	.168	.275
F		16.456	10.710	10.661	13.153

Note: Dependent variable in log-transformation (ln [average daily subscribers]).

*p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001

Results: Total number of comments (3/4)

The number of comments are influenced by the number of video content, entertainment company's support and V Live's star promotion support

Variables		Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Control variable	Number of SNS	.420***	.254***	.076	.060
	Debut recency		-.164**	-.078	-.054
	Number of members		.502***	.093	.077
K-pop artist factors	Foreign member inclusion		-.002	-.002	-.037
	Amount of video content			.718***	.628***
	Number of posts			.031	.022
K-pop artist's V Live activity factors	Entertainment company's support				.086*
	Star promotion support				.136**
	Global Reach support				.040
R Square		.176	.348	.660	.685
Adjusted R Square		.174	.339	.653	.675
F		61.503	37.903	91.386	67.376

Note: Dependent variable in log-transformation (ln [comments]).

*p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001

Results: Average daily comments (4/4)

Average daily comments on the artist's V Live channel are influenced by debut recency, number of members, amount of video content, and star promotion support

Variables		Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Control variable	Number of SNS	.412***	.223***	.101*	.083
K-pop artist factors	Debut recency		.035	.086	.107*
	Member number		.458***	.188**	.169**
	Foreign member inclusion		.017	.015	-.017
K-pop artist's V Live activity factors	Amount of video content			.453***	.363***
	Number of posts			.079	.070
V Live support factors	Entertainment company's support				.051
	Star promotion support				.158**
	Global reach support				.046
R Square		.169	.365	.508	.532
Adjusted R Square		.166	.356	.497	.517
F		58.515	40.815	48.444	35.218

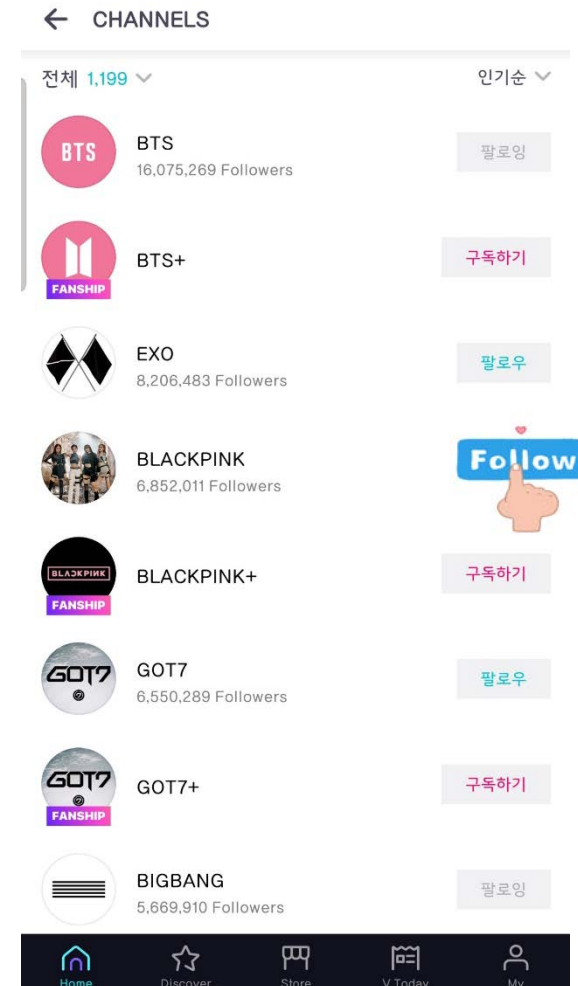
Note: Dependent variable in log-transformation (ln [average daily comments]).

*p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001

Discussion & Conclusion (1/4)

V Live is a platform for popular artists that reveal high volumes of visual content through the help of entertainment companies and V Live

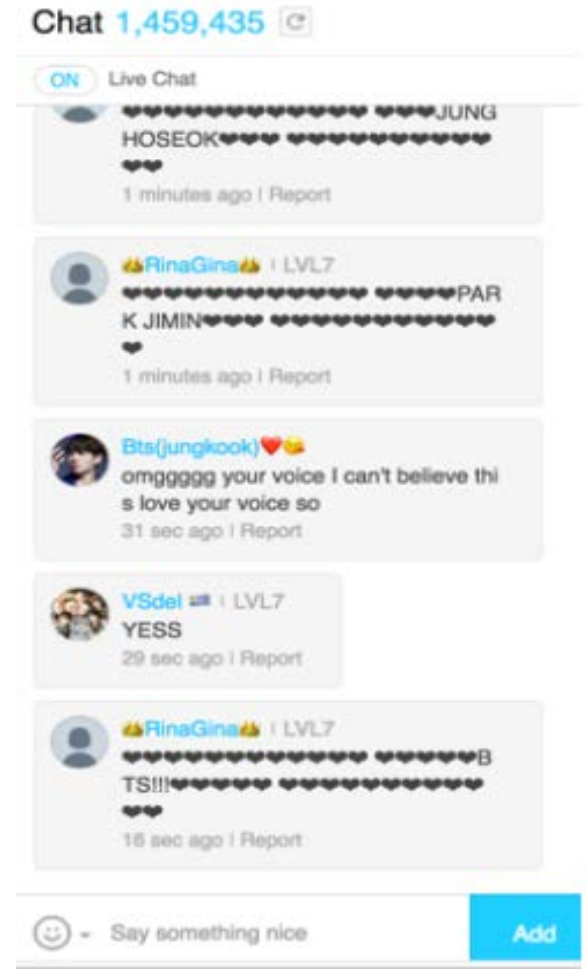
- V Live appeared to be a catalyst platform that supports the growth of existing brands
 - The popularity and use of V Live appear to originate from fans who already have certain levels of loyalty and interest toward K-pop artists
- Amount of video content was found to be important in attracting users
 - Diverse and exclusive visual content seem to enhance parasocial interaction and lead users to follow the artist's channel
- V Live management-related factors are important in strategically enhancing K-pop brand's awareness
 - Entertainment company's support and promotional support are critical in attracting local and global fans



Discussion & Conclusion (2/4)

K-pop artists that produce and deliver qualitative content on V Live are anticipated to accumulate large number of comments

- Total number of comments are influenced by online activities of K-pop artists and entertainment companies
 - Qualitative content produced from V Live's promotional support is also an important factor
- Recently debuted K-pop artists are also advised to use the platform
 - Media coverage on artists' recent debuts seem to drive user attention and facilitate discussion on V Live
 - V Live promotional support help artists upload qualitative content and strategically expose themselves to online potential fans



Discussion & Conclusion (3/4)

Artists

- K-pop artists are advised to actively use their channels as important mediums of communication and information delivery
- Frequent uploads of visual content that unveil the artist's backstage appearances and candid expressions should be strategically exposed

Entertainment Companies

- Entertainment companies need to provide appropriate guidelines related to artist's social media activities and self-disclosure
- Entertainment company's promotional support is important as it extends the artist's brand power and improves user engagement

V Live

- Technical support can be offered to help users comfortably access the platform and view content seamlessly
- Instrumental and counseling assistance based on accumulated user data is effective in creating content effectively

Discussion & Conclusion (4/4)

- **Implications for academia**

- Parasocial interaction theory's applicability is extended to include K-pop fans on online video platforms
- The use of resource-based view is extended to understand the rationale behind K-pop artist's V Live channel popularity
- Based on the hierarchical regression model, the study demonstrates that resources of entertainment companies and the V Live platform are important in promoting celebrities' online popularity

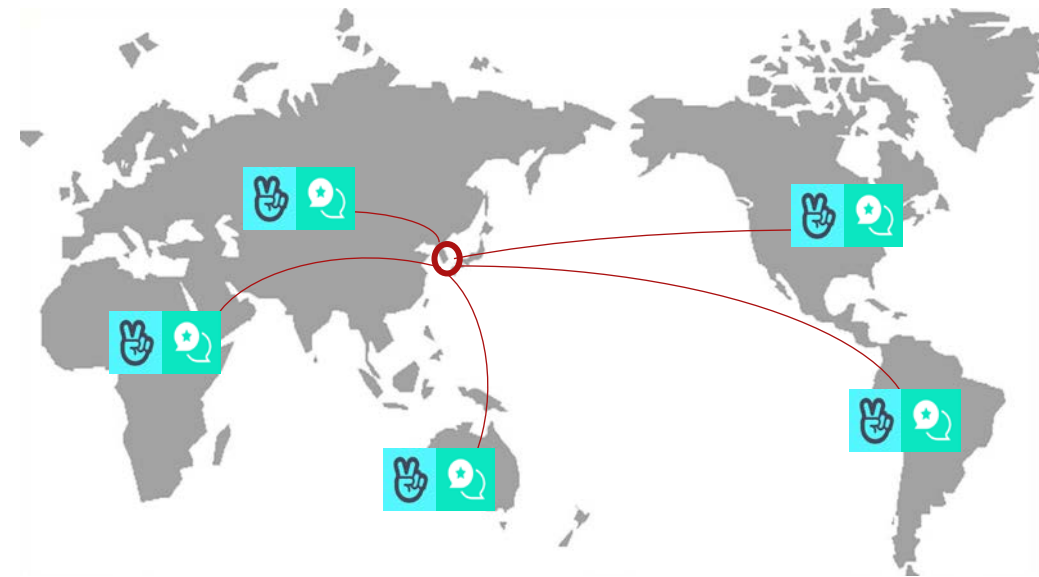
- **Limitations**

- Availability of information was limited and time-restricted
- Survey findings are based on secondary data

V LIVE as of 2021

The approved merger deal between V Live and Weverse is anticipated to extend the capacity of local platforms to become the biggest global online K-pop community

- In January, Naver's V Live and Big Hit (now HYBE) Entertainment's Weverse confirmed their decisions to integrate the two global fan community platforms
 - Weverse is a text-based platform for fans to purchase merchandise and tickets of in-house artists, namely BTS, TXT, and British pop trio New Hope Club
- In May, Korea's FTC approved a merger deal between V Live and Weverse
 - V Live will acquire 49 percent share in the company and Weverse will have 51 percent
 - The merger will create a strong content pipeline that collaborates Hybe's industry related resources and Naver's technological strengths



Thank You

