

MANUFACTURED IDOL:
A STUDY ON THE COMMODIFICATION OF THE KOREAN POP
ICON BOA KWON

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For Your greater glory, always.

DEDICATION

To my family, and the rest of the people
who gave me strength throughout the process.

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including fangirls and fanboys in the entire archipelago.

ABSTRACT

Oliquino, M. S. N. (2017). *Manufactured Idol: A Study on the Commodification of the Korean Pop Icon BoA Kwon*. Unpublished Undergraduate Thesis, College of Mass Communication, University of the Philippines Diliman.

The Korean Wave, also known as the *Hallyu* phenomenon, has been a huge hit across different countries ever since its boom in the year 2000s. Its manifestation would take on the form of Korean pop songs and dramas which were admired by numerous fans around the globe. In the Philippines, South Korean acts such as Super Junior, 2NE1, and Rain made their mark while dramas such as “*Full House*” and “*Boys Over Flowers*” were well-received by the Filipino audiences.

However, criticism on the Korean Wave started to arise upon its expansion. As Korean pop was tagged as “*South Korea’s Greatest Export*” by Time Magazine in its March 2012 issue, it is recognized that huge profits are gained by the entertainment labels through their talents’ global expansion.

This paper will focus on *BoA Kwon*, SM Entertainment’s solo artist who became a renowned pop icon across Asia since her debut in the year 2000. Using the Political Economy lens, the study aims to seek how she was treated as a commodity throughout her experiences as a Korean Pop act by analysing different media texts about her.

Keywords: *Commodification, Political Economy, BoA Kwon, Korean Entertainment, Hallyu*

ABSTRAK

Oliquino, M. S. N. (2017). *Manufactured Idol: A Study on the Commodification of the Korean Pop Icon BoA Kwon*. Unpublished Undergraduate Thesis, College of Mass Communication, University of the Philippines Diliman.

Naging popular ang Korean Wave o *Hallyu* sa iba't ibang mga bansa pagpasok pa lamang ng taong 2000s. Patunay dito ang pagtangkilik ng mga fans sa popular na mga tugtuging Koreyano at maging sa mga teleseryeng kanilang pinoproduk. Sa Pilipinas, umani ng atensyon ang mga grupo tulad ng Super Junior at ilang soloista katulad ni Rain. Maliban sa nabanggit, nandiyan ang mga drama katulad ng “*Full House*” at “*Boys Over Flowers*” na mainit na tinanggap ng mga Pilipinong manonood.

Gayumpaman, lumabas din ang mga kritisismo ukol sa *Korean Wave*. Nagkaroon ng mga isyu ukol sa masalimuot na pagtrato sa mga naghahangad na makapasok sa industriya. Tinagurian din ang Korean Pop bilang pinakamalaking kalakal na iniluluwas ng Timog Korea sa isyu Time Magazine noong 2012. Patunay ito ng pagkamit ng mataas na kita ng mga *entertainment labels* habang patuloy na sumimisikat ang mga artista nito.

Magbibigay ng tuon ang papel sa soloista na si BoA Kwon na sumikat sa iba't ibang bahagi ng Asya matapos ilabas ang kaniyang kauna-unahang *studio album* noong 2000. Gamit ang lente ng Ekonomiyang Pampulitika, tuturulin ng pag-aaral kung paano sumailalim si BoA Kwon sa proseso ng komodipikasyon.

Mga Keyword: Komodipikasyon, *Political Economy*, BoA Kwon, *Korean Entertainment*, *Hallyu*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Title Page	ii
University Permission Page	iii
Approval Sheet	iv
Biographical Data	v
Acknowledgements	vi
Dedication	vii
Abstract	viii
Abstrak	ix
Table of Contents	x
List of Tables	xiii
List of Figures	xvi
I. INTRODUCTION	1
A. Background of the Study	1
B. Statement of the Research Problem	7
C. Research Objectives	8
D. Significance of the Study	8
E. Scope and Limitations of the Study	10
II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE	11
A. The Global Star Manufacturer: Korean Entertainment Labels	11

B. Music Across the Globe: Korean Pop	15
C. Korean Cultural Representations in the Asian and Global Scale	15
D. Music as a Commodity: Commodification of Songs and Artists	16
E. Music Selling Strategies: Horizontal and Vertical Integration	18
III. STUDY FRAMEWORK	19
A. Theoretical Framework	19
B. Conceptual Framework	22
C. Operational Definition of Terms	23
IV. METHODOLOGY	25
A. Research Design	25
B. Units of Analysis	26
C. Sampling	26
D. Data Gathering Procedures	26
E. Data Analysis Procedure	28
V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION	29
A. Audio Visual Media Texts	30
B. Online Published Articles	43
VI. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION	58
A. Summary	58
B. Conclusion	60

VII. IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	65
A. Theoretical Issues	65
B. Methodological Issues	66
C. Practical Issues	66
BIBLIOGRAPHY	68
APPENDIX A	
APPENDIX B	
APPENDIX C	

LIST OF TABLES

Number	Title	Page
1	State of the South Korean and International Music Industry as seen on “Star Real Story I AM...”	30
2	Commodification as seen on “Star Real Story I AM...”	31
3	Spatialization as seen in “Star Real Story I AM...”	32
4	Consumerism as seen on “Star Real Story I AM...”	32
5	Cultural Imperialism as seen in “Star Real Story I AM...”	33
6	Transmedia Ownership as seen in “Star Real Story I AM...”	34
7	State of the South Korean and International Music Industry as seen on the Ningin Interview (2008)	37
8	Commodification as seen on the Ningin Interview (2008)	38
9	Spatialization as seen on the Ningin Interview (2008)	39
10	Consumerism as seen on the Ningin Interview (2008)	39

11	Cultural Imperialism as seen on the Ningin Interview (2008)	40
12	Transmedia Ownership as seen on the Ningin Interview (2008)	41
13	State of the South Korean and International Music Industry according to “Way Back Wednesday: BoA - From Princess to Queen”	43
14	Commodification according to “Way Back Wednesday: BoA - From Princess to Queen”	44
15	Spatialization according to “Way Back Wednesday: BoA - From Princess to Queen”	45
16	Consumerism according to “Way Back Wednesday: BoA - From Princess to Queen”	45
17	Cultural Imperialism according to “Way Back Wednesday: BoA - From Princess to Queen”	46
18	Transmedia Ownership according to “Way Back Wednesday: BoA - From Princess to Queen”	48
19	State of the South Korean and International Music Industry according to the feature “After 10 years, BoA still carves out her own path”	50

20	Commodification according to the feature “After 10 years, BoA still carves out her own path”	51
21	Spatialization according to the feature “After 10 years, BoA still carves out her own path”	52
22	Consumerism according to the feature “After 10 years, BoA still carves out her own path”	53
23	Cultural Imperialism according to the feature “After 10 years, BoA still carves out her own path”	53
24	Transmedia Ownership according to the feature “After 10 years, BoA still carves out her own path”	55

LIST OF FIGURES

Number	Title	Page
1	BoA's Id; Peace B album cover (SM Entertainment, 2000)	5
2	Soo Man Lee at SM Entertainment video conference (Soompi.com, 2016)	12
3	Concepts involved in Political Economy (cmapublic3.ihmc.us, n.d.)	19
4	BoA training inside the SM Entertainment practice area (Arirang TV, 2007)	36
5	BoA Kwon's Youtube Interview with Ningin (2008)	42
6	Way Back Wednesday: BoA - From Princess to Queen article screenshot (allkpop.com, 2016)	49
7	After 10 years, BoA still carves out her own path article screenshot (Joongang Daily, 2010)	56

CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

The Korean Wave (also known as *Hallyu* in Korean) has put South Korea in the forefront of global cultural exchange. Yecies and Shim (2014) in their study “The Kpop Factory Phenomenon” stated that Hallyu has transformed Korea from an Asian backwater into a vibrant, trend-setting, ultra-modern and super-wired society. Furthermore, Time Magazine’s March 2012 issue had also labeled Korean Pop or K-Pop as “South Korea’s Greatest Export” along with the intense global popularity of local acts such as Super Junior, 2NE1, and 2PM.

The Philippines is, as a matter of fact, not a stranger when Hallyu is being talked about. The rise of the Korean Wave in the archipelago was spearheaded by Korean dramas which are also commonly referred to as *Koreanovelas*. The Korean Ministry of Culture and Tourism mentioned that Korean dramas in the Philippines started off with GMA 7’s “The Successful Story of a Bright Girl” which was shown after ABS-CBN 2’s “Meteor Garden” became a huge hit. However, this drama did not garner much attention to the Filipino audiences. It is not until the release of “Endless Love 1: Autumn in My Heart” by GMA 7 in 2003 that Korean dramas became well-received by the Filipino households.

Igno and Cenidoza (2016) in their paper entitled “Beyond the “Fad”:
Understanding Hallyu in the Philippines” further discussed how ABS-CBN 2 started riding the Koreanovela bandwagon with “The Truth”, which was followed by “Lovers in Paris” that became a huge success. There was also KBS 2’s “Full House,” a romantic comedy about the love story of a popular Korean celebrity and an ordinary writer which

was aired by GMA 7 in 2005. The networks also experimented with different Korean drama genres and the broadcasting of a historical piece, “Jewel in the Palace” (2006) is one of its manifestations. Since then, Koreanovelas became staple programs of the huge Filipino television stations.

The study also explained how these dramas became huge hits. The authors inferred that aside from the good-looking actors, it was due to the entirely new story plot that Koreanovelas presented the Filipino viewers. These plots incorporated light, romantic comedies which are far from the heavily dramatic storylines seen in Filipino teleseryes. In no time at all, Filipino television stations such as GMA 7 and ABS-CBN 2 also started to make renditions of Korean dramas with Filipino actors starring in them. These include “My Girl” (2008) which starred Kim Chiu and “Ako si Kim Sam Soon” (2008) who had the Asia’s songbird, Regine Velasquez as its main actress.

Nevertheless, the emergence of Hallyu in the Philippines and in the rest of the globe will not be complete without Korean Pop music. Igno and Cenidoza (2016) also suggested that unlike Korean dramas, K-Pop music did not reach nationwide success during the early 2000s. Filipinos were only limited to the Koreanovelas’ Original Sound Tracks and local television viewers hardly understood the lyrics. Only recently did the technological advancements such as internet access in the country made K-Pop a topic of interest amongst the Filipino youth. Music videos, album releases, and concert clips of K-Pop acts then became accessible to the Filipino audiences. Now, with the songs’ catchy tunes and fancy music videos, members of the youth sector became instant fans and supporters of popular groups such as Girls’ Generation, Big Bang, and 2PM.

K-Pop was able to propel its popularity in the Philippines eventually. The authors added to the discourse by saying:

KPop fans before can just download the songs they want or order CDs over the internet, but now Korean songs have started playing in the airwaves too and Korean Audio CDs can now be bought from record stores. Surprisingly, when you ride taxis, buses, jeepneys and other public form of transportation, you can hear Korean songs played in the car's stereos, and not the English version anymore but the original instead. (Igno & Cenidoza, 2012, p. 724)

Nevertheless, as the Korean Wave garnered more popularity, there came the criticisms on how the Korean entertainment agencies produce their talents. It was reported in the Paris Review blog article by Euny Hong (2014) entitled "The Lean, Mean, Star-making K-pop Machine" that some attribute South Korea's star-making process to modern-day slavery. Using their own internal mechanism, K-pop labels recruit potential stars and bind them to contracts that can last as long as thirteen years. The aspirants then train in singing, dancing, and acting day in and day out before they can formally debut in the Korean Pop music industry.

According to Yoon (2016) in his "Top 5 K-Pop Entertainment Companies in Korea" one of the leading Korean entertainment labels include SM Entertainment which is managed by Soo Man Lee. It operates as a record label, talent agency, travel agency, film production company, music production company, events management, concert production firm and as a music publishing house. It has become the #1 K-Pop Entertainment Company in Korea based on sales as well as talent as of the year 2015.

The author also discussed other labels such as YG Entertainment; the company that produced acts which represented Korean Hip-hop and R&B around the globe. YG has a number of subsidiary ventures under YG PLUS, which includes a clothing line, a cosmetics brand, and even a golf management company. Aside from the aforementioned two, Yoon (2016) added JYP Entertainment which is responsible for the international stardom reached by Rain and the Wonder Girls. It was founded by the singer and record producer, Park Jin Young in the year 1997 and initially put its aim towards the artists' advancement in the American music market.

. The continuous growth of the Korean Pop music industry gave birth to notable acts which spearheaded the Korean Wave across the globe. As a matter of fact, one will not be able to finish narrating its roots without mentioning the Korean Pop queen herself, BoA Kwon. It was mentioned by allkpop.com (2016) in the feature "Way Back Wednesday: BoA - From Princess to Queen" that the Korean Pop icon was SM Entertainment's first female soloist who debuted in the year 2000. Along with the rigorous training in singing and dancing came her lessons in Japanese and English speaking. She was then made to release albums in South Korea and Japan consecutively at the tender age of 13. In no time at all, the young pop sensation sold million copies of her records in both South Korea and Japan, having hits such as "*Valenti*" and "*No. 1.*" SM entertainment's multilingual and multi-country strategy used for BoA's establishment as an Asian pop icon has become a model that the agency used for other artists under its management such as Girls' Generation, TVXQ, Super Junior, and EXO.

Cho (2010) in the Joongang Daily article "After 10 years, BoA still carves out her own path" stated that BoA Kwon's career started out in 1998 when she accompanied her

brother to an SM Entertainment audition. Nevertheless, it was her who caught the attention of the agency and became a contract artist eventually. The author narrated how BoA managed to receive training from SM acts themselves which included the hit 1990s South Korean boyband, H.O.T. The then 11-year old girl dedicated most of her time inside the company's premises in order to make sure that her singing and dancing skills were developed.

It was also stated in the feature that after two years of rigorous training, Lee Soo Man finally decided that BoA is ready to take on the Korean music industry which was then dominated by pop groups such as S.E.S. and H.O.T. The rookie climbed her way to national stardom when she released her debut song, "*ID; Peace B*" and the public could not get enough of her fresh vocals and amazing dance moves. By the end of the year 2000, the singer was able to bag awards from various music stations in South Korea.



Figure 1. BoA's Id; Peace B album cover (SM Entertainment, 2000)

As of 2001, BoA already became a household name in Korea and SM entertainment wanted to capitalize on its first successful soloist. Arirang TV (2007) in the documentary “STAR Real Story I AM...” discussed that the agency later on decided to partner with the Japanese music label, Avex Trax in order in order to ensure BoA’s debut in the second largest music market in the globe. The young singer entered the scene with the Japanese version of her debut single, “*ID; Peace B*” and it landed on the Oricon Top 20, which was the Japanese version of America’s Billboard Top 100. Her follow-up singles, “*Amazing Kiss*” and “*Kimochi Wa Tsutawaru*” were also well-received by the Japanese listeners.

BoA’s management team kept on working hard for the young pop star and by 2002, her single “*Listen to My Heart*” already landed in the fifth spot of the Oricon charts. People eventually realized BoA’s talent and passion and thus, she became a remarkable artist for the Japanese listeners. It was also mentioned in the allkpop.com (2016) feature that her first Japanese full length album, also entitled “*Listen to My Heart*”, became an instant hit. Meanwhile, the pop icon also released another single, “*Every Heart*” and it established her popularity in the Japanese music scene as it became a “*RIAJ million bestseller,*” which was a first time achievement for a Korean artist during that time.

As expected, the singer won trophies in both the South Korean and Japanese year-end ceremonies. Some of these include the Gold Prize from the prestigious “*44th Japan Record Awards.*” While she was rising to superstardom in the Asian music scene, reports from various entertainment sources were not always kind to her. It was also revealed in the article that there had been news about BoA getting together with other male artists in

a club and as a matter of fact, some of these news items were released in Japanese tabloids. It did some harm to the image of the pop star but she was able to rise once again as she kept on releasing materials that both the Korean and Japanese community loved.

Moreover, Joongang Daily's material narrated that SM entertainment wanted more and thus, Soo Man Lee decided for BoA to take on the American music scene by 2008. After releasing hits in Asia, she went on and trained with American producers to prepare for her US debut album. Her first single released in America was entitled "*Eat You Up*" and unfortunately, it did not do well in the charts. BoA also snatched an opportunity to act in a Hollywood film as she starred in "*Make Your Move 3D*" alongside actor and ballroom dancer Derek Hough. However, just like her American single releases, the movie did poorly in the box office.

Moving forward, the now established pop icon returned to the Asian market. She continuously became an inspiration for other Korean pop idol stars who wanted to expand their horizons beyond the Korean entertainment industry. According to allkpop.com's report, BoA is the first foreign artist in Japan to have three separate albums sold in more than a million units. In Japan, the pop icon remains as the only artist to have six consecutive albums to place first on the Oricon chart since her debut, aside from the Japanese pop singer, Ayumi Hamasaki.

B. Statement of the Research Problem

The study will focus on the Korean Pop icon BoA Kwon, her international expansion and how she was treated as a commodity in the process.

The study aims to answer the question, “*How did the Korean Pop icon BoA Kwon become a commodity as shown in the 2007 Arirang TV documentary “Star Real Story: I am...” and in selected feature stories about her?*”

C. Research Objectives

Recognizing the global success of the South Korean entertainment industry and BoA Kwon’s influence in the Hallyu phenomenon, the specific objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To discuss how South Korean entertainment agencies, particularly SM Entertainment, produce talents and how the company’s motivations affect the processes its artists go through before and after being able to debut in the music industry.
2. To analyze how the Korean Pop icon BoA Kwon had undergone the process of commodification based on Arirang TV’s 2007 documentary “*Star Real Story: I am...*” and in selected feature stories about her.
3. To describe the Korean Pop entertainment landscape, how does it relate to the “manufacturing” of their idols and its relevance to the Philippine media studies.

D. Significance of the Study

As the passion for Korean entertainment and culture intensifies in the international scene, several markets see the Korean method of producing and propelling artists to superstardom as a model. For an instance, there came a time when VIVA Entertainment, an entertainment company here in the Philippines, tried to produce Pinoy

Pop or P-Pop groups such as XLR8 and Pop Girls. The members' physical appearance showed resemblance to that of Korean idol stars – long wavy hairdo for the boys of XLR8 and slim body types for the Pop Girls. Both are also clothed in fancy costumes during live performances. These bands released materials similar to those of K-Pop groups such as Super Junior and Girls' Generation, having songs with upbeat tunes and catchy lyrics. However, both XLR8 and Pop Girls received mediocre success in the Filipino music industry.

Aside from this, Sablayan (2013) in her study "Oppa has no style: On K-pop, the culture industry, and the illusion of style" has researched on how the visual and aural aspects of selected K-Pop songs as well as the ideologies associated with them took elements from Western pop. This paper also discussed how the production of K-Pop songs showed standardization of content.

The same study also presented how SM Entertainment, BoA Kwon's talent agency, aimed to generate more profit by having its artists release materials both in the local and international music markets.

This study will sought how these were manifested through BoA Kwon's releases especially as she remains to be one of the best-selling K-Pop acts. It also aimed to analyze the commodification process the soloist went through and how it reflected South Korea's entertainment landscape. It is also important to note that SM Entertainment's manner in producing this solo female artist has influenced several other entertainment agencies such as JYP and YG entertainment.

It is now without a doubt that analysing SM Entertainment's capability to maintain its position as a leader in manufacturing idols is a research that would garner interest amongst entertainment industries in Asia and in the rest of the globe.

E. Scope and Limitations of the Study

For this study, the Arirang TV's 2007 documentary about BoA Kwon's way to stardom entitled, "*Star Real Story: I AM...*" was taken into consideration. Aside from this, another audio visual material was analyzed which was the artist's YouTube interview with Ningin conducted back in 2008.

The researcher also examined two articles published online that presented BoA Kwon's career milestones throughout the years. First, there was allkpop.com's feature "Way Back Wednesday: BoA - From Princess to Queen" which was published in 2016, sixteen years after her debut. The second one was Jae Eun Cho's Joongang Daily article "After 10 years, BoA still carves out her own path" that discussed how the artist continued to strive to be the best at her chosen craft even after a decade of being in the industry. The published material was part of the artist's 10th Anniversary Special Interview Series.

The researcher selected texts which discussed BoA Kwon's experiences before, during, and after her debut as a Korean Pop act under the entertainment label, SM entertainment. I personally decided to analyse merely one documentary, one YouTube interview, and two online feature articles in order to limit the study and to avoid unnecessary concepts being discussed.

CHAPTER II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Literature used for the thesis came from previous studies on the Korean Pop music industry and the South Korean entertainment in general. I also included materials that further explained the state of the South Korean society and how the Hallyu phenomenon produced Korean cultural representations at an international level. Furthermore, these literatures provided research on commodification, commoditization, and spatialization of cultural products.

A. The Global Star Manufacturer: Korean Entertainment Labels

Yecies and Shim (2014) in “The Kpop Factory Phenomenon” dealt with how the Korean entertainment industry enjoyed success of its cultural contents in terms of both production and export values. The study also aimed to establish how the biggest Korean entertainment labels such as SM, YG, and JYP produced global idols and how did the processes involving their artists’ debut evolved through the years. The paper also emphasized how BoA Kwon achieved huge success in Asia, especially in Japan which the authors pointed out as the second biggest national music market outside the United States.

Furthermore, Sablayan (2013) through her study “Oppa has no style: On K-pop, the culture industry, and the illusion of style” narrated how several factors found in selected K-Pop songs such as the visual and aural aspects took elements from Western pop. The study also further discussed how the ideologies associated with K-Pop reflected the Western way of thinking.

The author also presented how SM Entertainment, BoA Kwon's management company, remained profit-centered as its artists released materials both locally and internationally.

1. Hallyu Superpower: SM Entertainment

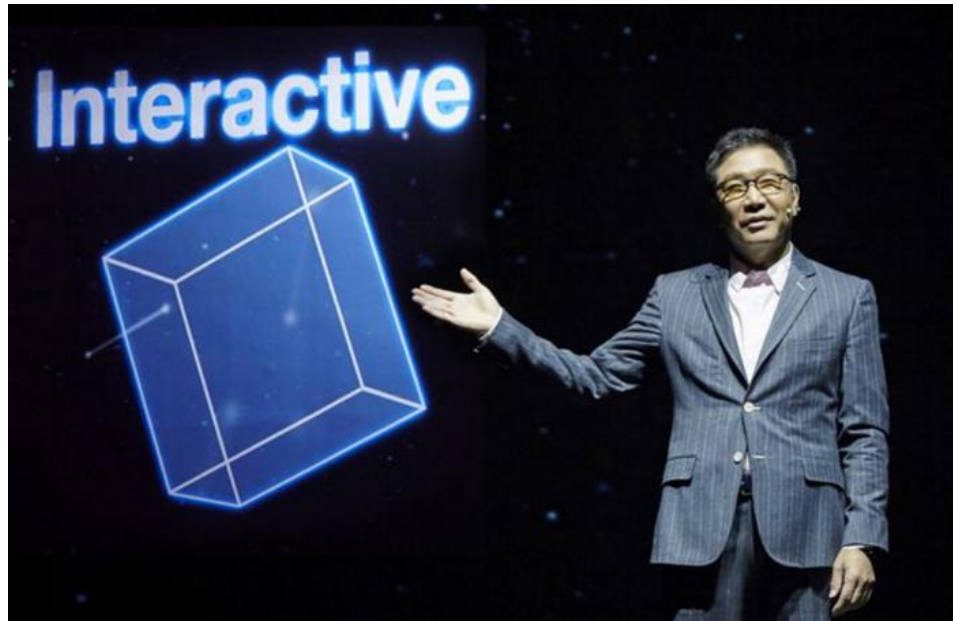


Figure 2. Soo Man Lee at SM Entertainment video conference (Soompi.com, 2016)

SM Entertainment, one of South Korea's top entertainment labels, conducted a video conference last January 2016 and made an announcement about the development of the so-called "Culture Technology" or CT. This business model was used by the company in managing its idols for more than twenty years and it has created artists which are able to achieve success in the local and international music scenes such as Super Junior and Girls' Generation.

Soo Man Lee, the agency's Chief Executive Officer, elaborated its ability to increase Hallyu's popularity in different parts of the globe. The speech started out with the timeline of SM Entertainment's achievements which included BoA Kwon's milestone

in the Japanese music market in 2002 – it was during the time when her Japanese debut album, “*Listen to my Heart*” landed on the first place of the Oricon charts.

Lee continued his speech by mentioning the four key stages comprising the Culture Technology - Casting, Training, Producing and Marketing (also known as Management). The first stage, casting, pertains to the process of discovering new talents by conducting auditions inside and outside South Korea. The agency carefully chooses its potential stars regardless of their nationalities. This is now followed by training wherein the aspiring artists undergo the process of developing their skills in different entertainment fields such as singing, dancing, hosting, and acting. The second stage also leads to the introduction of “SM Rookies” to the audiences which is divided into several groups of trainees. The company eventually ventures into formally producing its artists and establishing global trends as it aims to release new materials such as songs and music videos. Lastly, SM Entertainment talents are marketed by the label through the construction of strategic partnerships with different companies to ensure omnidirectional promotions. This last stage ensures the artists’ presence in different media content which includes advertisements and even television dramas.

The man behind SM Entertainment’s success further announces his plans about the establishment of “New Culture Technology” or NCT in the said conference. According to Soo Man Lee, the mechanism’s main objective is to sustain and intensify the popularity of the agency’s artists in the domestic and international markets. He mentioned five new projects and the first one would be the introduction of STATION, a Digital Music Channel that aims to release one new digital single every week for an entire year. The second one is called ScreaM records, an Electronic Dance Music (EDM)

label which will serve as a DJ agency having Asian identities at its forefront. For this project, SM decided to work with internationally acclaimed EDM acts such as Skrillex. NCT's third project is named Vyrl which works as a digital playground for K-Pop fans. This includes various apps that are designed to expand SM Entertainment's power in the Social Networking Sites. The company's Chief Executive Officer adds Rookies Entertainment in the line-up of projects under the New Culture Technology. It is an application for aspiring producers that shows off SM Entertainment's producing system experienced by the user first-hand. Lastly, he introduced the Multi Channel Network (MCN) business. This works as a celebrity-driven application where fans will be able to view their idols' shared content which may vary from rehearsals to make-up tutorials.

Aside from the five projects mentioned above, Soo Man Lee also announced in the video conference that the New Culture Technology mechanism includes the presentation of a new boy group which is divided into sub teams launched in the major cities around the world. These sub units will produce materials in various languages and will be done alongside the release of localized music contents. This group's expansion in the entire globe is a manifestation of the so-called "glocalization" strategy used by SM Entertainment. Soo Man Lee describes the process as "the exportation of cultural products of Hallyu to the expansion of the market through cooperating with local companies and artists." For this one, the agency aims to create joint ventures with businesses that could aid it in penetrating the local and international markets. The number of the members of the new boy group will be limitless and SM plans to let it grow until the sub groups are able to establish themselves in their respective target markets.

B. Music Across the Globe: Korean Pop

I also took a look at “The Globalization of K-pop: Korea's Place in the Global Music Industry” by Ingyu Oh (2013). It aimed to explain how K-pop’s rise in the international market involved modifying Western materials into Korean content and redistributing it on a global scale afterwards. The study further discussed how Korean Pop became a commercial combination of: (1) the global liberalization of music markets in Asia and the rest of the world; and (2) the rapid advancement of digital technologies.

A material by Fuhr (2016) entitled “Globalization and Popular Music in South Korea: Sounding Out K-pop” was also used a reference in the study. The study presented the history of Korean music from 1885-2000 and how it transformed through the years. Furthermore, the book went into the specifics of Korean Pop music such as its transnational production, the music patterns used, and how it gives the audiences song recalls.

C. Korean Cultural Representations in the Asian and Global Scale

A compilation of essays on East Asia media studies edited by Chua and Iwabuchi (2008), “East Asian Pop Culture: Analysing the Korean Wave” aimed to present the television industry in East Asia as well as the Transnational and Cross-cultural receptions of different Asian entertainment materials such as Television dramas and music releases. It also proposed Hallyu’s role in establishing an Asian identity in the global market.

“Cultural Industry and Asianization: The new ‘imagined’ inter-asia economy” by Siriyuvasak (2010) was also used in further realizing the study. The work talked about the rising flow of cultural products in East Asia particularly in Japan, Korea and

Thailand. The author's main argument dealt with the unevenly transformed cultural industries in the region brought about by the long global economic downturn and the mainstreaming of neoliberalism in the East Asian economies during the last two decades.

Adding to these, Igno and Cenidoza (2016) in their work "Beyond the "Fad": Understanding Hallyu in the Philippines" aided the researcher in discussing how the Korean Wave was embraced by the Filipino media consumers. The authors presented the concept of Cultural Imperialism, which they defined as the manner when one nation imposes its culture to another or influences them through culture. Thus, it becomes a more subtle way of colonization as the people subjected to it do not identify that they are already being influenced by another culture.

Pacis (2012) in her material "Popping the K-pop Bubble: A Study on the World of K-pop Fandom as a Subculture" narrated how the K-Pop fan culture in the Philippines developed. It discussed how Filipino fans interacted with one another and through this interactions; how power was exercised in the practices they engage in. The author was able to conclude that the K-Pop fan community in the country is a subculture that is rich with politics and power relations. Furthermore, one of the study's implications focused on how media texts can become tools for the generation of new communities.

D. Music as a Commodity: Commodification of Songs and Artists

According to Beaster-Jones (2016) in "Music Commodities, Markets, and Values: Music as Merchandise", music store interactions reveal complex negotiations among values derived from widespread sources – those promoted media industries, those that emerge from local and global ideologies, and those interjected by individual store owners

and costumers. The author also figured out how his case studies, Indian music retailers, was able to mobilize cultural values in order to sell music and how it incorporated a wide range of ideological perspectives.

The research pointed out the general state of the Indian economy as the changing dynamics of music shopping went by. It asserted that trends on music selling is directly associated with the implementation of neoliberal economic philosophies that went large scale during the 1990s. The term “Neoliberalism” first came about during the 1930s and was coined by the German scholar Alexander Rustow at the Colloque Walter Lippmann. Pioneers of neoliberalism defined it as “the priority of the price mechanism, the free enterprise, the system of competition and a strong and impartial state.” These people are associated to what were called the Freiburg School, the Austrian School and the Chicago School of Economics.

Prof. Jose Maria Sison (2012), in his article “Neoliberalism: A Scourge to Humankind” provided significant details about this economic and political framework;

It holds as sacred and inviolable the right to private property in the means of production and it vehemently stands against state ownership of any means of production and against state intervention in the economy unless it favors the private capitalists with profit-making opportunities, including the expansion of money supply and credit, tax cuts, contracts, subsidies, investment guarantees and other incentives. (Sison, 2012, para. 3)

Those who forward neoliberalism believe that individual initiative and market competition are the most efficient means of achieving other social goals. These are done

by deregulation of industrial production, removal of national barriers to the free flow of capital, and stringent enforcement of property rights.

Beaster-Jones further describes what a music industry is. According to him, it is the collection of institutions and practices that transform music into a commodity and exploit the economic value of that commodity on a massive scale. He also mentioned that music scholars now tend to view the production of music recordings as just one component of industries that also specialize in the manufacturing and selling of reproduction hardware, branded merchandise, sheet music, performance experiences, and so forth. Nowadays, companies are able to use music in order to sell several other commodities such as cars, perfumes, and restaurants. Its integration with other media platforms such as television and radio also use music as a means to generate more income.

E. Music Selling Strategies: Horizontal and Vertical Integrations

In order to ensure profit, entertainment labels also resort to strategies of integration, concentration, and synergy (Beaster-Jones, 2016). According to Mosco (1996), vertical integration is the process of acquiring the channels of production and distribution of a media product. Meanwhile, horizontal integration is manifested when a company owns the same type of media in a different market or platform. As a matter of fact, the driving force behind these concentrations is the desire for control over the market and to further realize exploitation. The continuous acquisitions eventually lead to conglomeration and multimedia integration. Now, in terms of producing popular music, goods are filtered before releasing it into the market in order to ensure more profit and prevent financial losses.

CHAPTER III. STUDY FRAMEWORK

A. Theoretical Framework

1. Political Economy

The researcher used the Political Economy lens in analysing the research. In simple terms, it pertains to the study of the social relations, particularly the power relations that mutually constitute the production, distribution, and consumption of resources, including communication resources (Mosco, 1996).

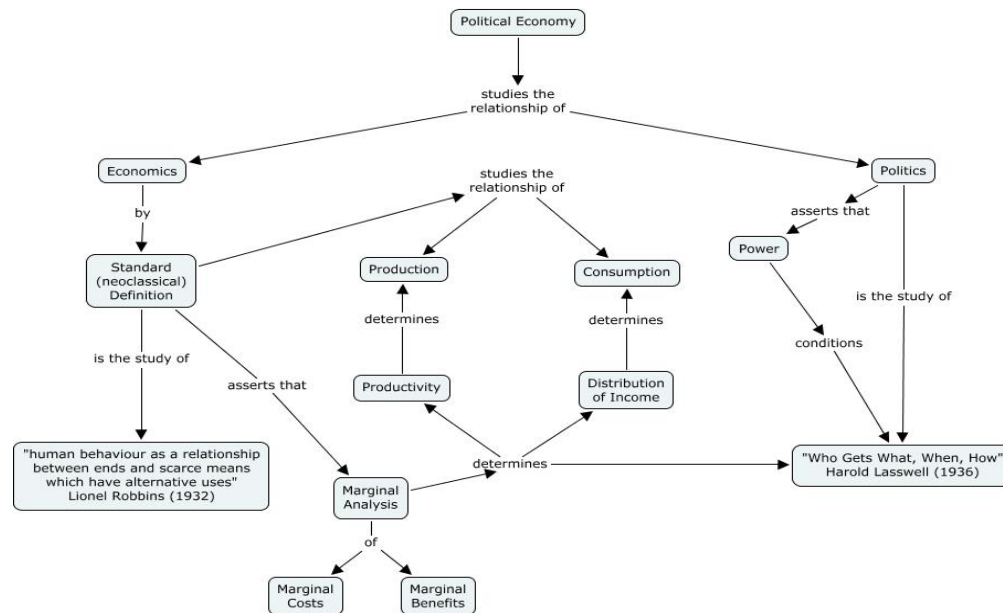


Figure 3. Concepts involved in Political Economy (cmapspublic3.ihmc.us, n.d.)

Mosco's book also stated how political economy has given priority to the understanding of social change and historical transformation. Classical thinkers, however, such as Adam Smith, John Stuart Mill, and David Ricardo studied it while trying to comprehend the great capitalist revolution and how this phenomenon was able to change

agricultural labor societies into industrial ones. On the other hand, Karl Marx continued the study of political economy by dwelling on the dynamic forces in capitalism. Robert Ely, meanwhile, asserts the central role of history in the mind of the political economist in his introduction to the 1923 edition of John Kells Ingram's "History of Political Economy."

According to the material "Fundamentals of Political Economy" edited by Wang (1977), political economy began to take shape in its modern and scientific form during the 18th century. Karl Marx transformed the discipline and made it into a highly scientific study as he comprehensively observed the relations of production and exchange of products under the capitalist system. By doing so, Marx was able to point out the growth and the inevitable collapse of capitalism.

However, the thesis drew upon Vincent Mosco's model of the Political Economy of Communication. In here, Mosco stated that there are three entry points in the model. First, there is *Commodification* wherein one takes a service as a tradable good. It is the process of transforming things valued for their use into marketable products that are valued for what they can bring in exchange. One example would be turning a poem that one has written into a song which will be released commercially.

For English economists, commodification means "anything necessary, useful or pleasant in life." Marx (1859) further adds on his "Critique of Political Economy" that the use-value as an aspect of the commodity coincides with the physical palpable existence of the commodity. A use-value has value only in use, and is realized only in the process of consumption. He then relates it to exchange-value, which he further describes:

Exchange-value seems at first to be a *quantitative relation*, the proportion in which use-values are exchanged for one another. In this relation they constitute equal exchangeable magnitudes. Thus one volume of Propertius and eight ounces of snuff may have the same exchange-value, despite the dissimilar use-values of snuff and elegies. Considered as exchange-value, one use-value is worth just as much as another, provided the two are available in the appropriate proportion. Use-values serve directly as means of existence. But, on the other hand, these means of existence are themselves the products of social activity, the result of expended human energy, *materialized labour*. As objectification of social labour, all commodities are crystallisations of the same substance. The specific character of this substance, i.e., of labour which is embodied in exchange-value, has now to be examined. (Marx, 1859, para. 4)

Mosco (1996) indicates the second entry point; *Spatialization* which is the process overcoming the constraints of geographical space with mass media and communication technologies. This can be manifested through the worldwide use of the internet. Due to this, it becomes easy to access markets and conduct information exchange from any part of the globe. The last entry point which is called *Structuration* pertains to the process of creating social relations, mainly organized around social class, gender, and race. This presents how Political Economy further discusses social inequality, may it be in terms of income or wealth, and how it influences the access to media and communication technologies.

The study employed commodification as an entry point in analysing the economic implications of BoA Kwon's experiences as a Korean Pop act based on the

analysed media texts. Commodities, for Marx, arise from the varied needs of people such as the physical, social and cultural needs. These are now exaggerated through the production of new products that stir false needs among the consumers. Nevertheless, these needs can only be acquired by having adequate resources.

Through the study of the Political Economy of communication it also becomes evident that in the realm of media, commodification happens in two ways. First, the commodification of media content produced to the audience and second, the commodification of audiences to the advertisers. Both mechanisms are geared in maximizing the profits of huge media conglomerates.

B. Conceptual Framework

Using the Political Economy framework, the researcher deduced how SM Entertainment's BoA Kwon had undergone the process of commodification as she was gaining popularity in the South Korean and International music scenes. Hence, the study pointed out the processes involved in how the artist was produced, distributed, and consumed by the audiences. Furthermore, the researcher also aimed to present the global trend in the music industry since the pop icon's debut in the year 2000 along with how she was presented to the public throughout her journey as a K-Pop act, and how these affected SM entertainment's overall performance in the market. I also tried to conclude on how was SM Entertainment's strategy reflective of the South Korean media landscape, and what can the other media industries take from it. The researcher took into consideration two audio visual materials and two online feature articles about the artist. These constituted the information analyzed in the study.

C. Operational Definition of Terms

1. *Korean Wave or Hallyu*

The fast-growing, wide reach of Korean culture across the globe measured by the popularity of Korean music and dramas in different countries.

2. *Commodification*

Pertains to how much the artist was marketed in different ways – from album releases, live concerts, advertisements, and exposure in different media platforms.

3. *Music Industry*

The production of music that eventually propels songs/albums as well as live concerts into commercial consumption. It also deals with how music is used to sell other commodities such as restaurants and clothes.

Aside from the ones listed above, I also found it essential to enumerate the technical definitions of the following terms used in my research:

4. *Culture Technology or CT*

Soo Man Lee, SM Entertainment's Chief Executive Officer, described Culture Technology as a system of producing global acts exclusively devised by SM Entertainment. CT deals with (1) casting; which is the process of discovering talents from different parts of the globe, (2) training; which pertains to the process that trainees' undergo in order to hone their talents in singing, dancing, and acting, (3) producing; which includes the company's establishment of global trends and (4) marketing or management; which is the development of partnerships with a wide range of domestic and international companies.

5. New Culture Technology or NCT

According to SM Entertainment's video conference held on January 2016, New Culture Technology is the newly developed system created by the agency which is an advanced version of its Culture Technology (CT). This pertains to the company's use of digital technology in order to expand their international influence even more. One aspect of NCT is the introduction of a new boyband that is launched based on major cities around the world.

6. Glocalization

Shim (2013) in the "Glocalization of hallyu" stated that this strategy leads to the localization of Korean Wave acts, ensuring that they are able to satisfy the consumer needs of the foreign target markets. Its manifestation would include the artists' song releases in the native languages of various nations.

CHAPTER IV. METHODOLOGY

A. Research Design

In order to attain the objectives of the study, the researcher employed a qualitative research. One of its advantages includes the complete description and analysis of a research subject, without limiting the scope of the research and the nature of participant's responses (Collis & Hussey, 2003). Furthermore, this type of research methodology is appropriate for small samples and is relatively rich in data which are less likely to be generalized.

The research is qualitative in nature and it aimed to analyze how the Korean Pop icon BoA Kwon had undergone the process of commodification based on Arirang TV's 2007 documentary "*Star Real Story: I AM...*" and on selected feature stories about her which include a Youtube interview and two other online published articles. The researcher used Political Economy in further realizing the study and it focused on the lens of commodification of communication and cultural products. Theoretically grounded questions were devised by the proponent and the queries were based on Vincent Mosco's 1996 work, "Political Economy of Communication".

Lastly, judgements were based on the analyzed media texts which are subjected to the questions constructed by the researcher. The answers established how BoA Kwon was presented as an artist since her debut up to her domestic and international expansion and how she was considered as a cultural product in the long run.

B. Units of Analysis

The unit of analysis used in the study would be audio visual as well as online print materials that present BoA's endeavours as a Korean Pop icon since her debut in the year 2000. These media texts also narrated how her popularity expanded in Asia and the rest of the globe.

C. Sampling

Amongst the wide range of materials about BoA Kwon produced by different media outlets, I selected texts that presented her rigorous training process and overall growth as an artist. I also took in consideration the texts' contribution in highlighting SM Entertainment's role in producing the pop icon.

It will include the February 2007 episode of Arirang TV documentary about BoA Kwon entitled "Star Real Story: I AM..." as well as the artist's Youtube interview with Ningin back in 2008. Furthermore, I also looked into two online feature articles about the Korean Pop star. The first would be allkpop.com's "Way Back Wednesday: BoA - From Princess to Queen" and Joongang Daily's "After 10 years, BoA still carves out her own path." Both articles narrated her growth as an artist after more than a decade of being in the industry.

D. Data Gathering Procedures

The researcher collected the data for this study by formulating a questionnaire with questions derived from Mosco (1996) in his "Political Economy of Communication" and in particular, the commodification of communication sources and cultural products. The questionnaire was divided into three parts: *pre-debut, during debut and establishing a career in the music industry*, and *SM Entertainment: Hallyu Superpower*. It was

comprised of 16 questions which aimed to point out how and up to what extent was BoA Kwon was commodified throughout her experiences as a Korean Pop act.

The set of questions included the following:

1. *Pre-Debut*

- a. What was the global trend in the music scene during the early 2000s? How about in South Korea?
- b. What was SM Entertainment's initial interest when BoA was about to debut?
- c. Was she intended for international consumption? How is this manifested?
- d. Why was Japan a target market for SM Entertainment in the beginning?

2. *During debut and after establishing a career in the music industry*

- e. What was the global trend in the music scene in the following years after BoA's debut? How about in South Korea?
- f. Why did SM entertainment decide to expand BoA's career to the Western market?
- g. How was she presented in the Korean music scene? How did she fair?
- h. How was she presented in the Japanese music scene? How did she fair?
- i. How was she presented in the American music scene? How did she fair?
- j. Were there differences in her promotions in Asia and in the United States?
- k. Did her releases contributed to the income generation of other commodities unrelated to music? What were these?

3. *SM Entertainment: Hallyu Superpower*

- l. How far did the agency go since BoA's debut in terms of (1) corporate concentration (2) generation of revenues?
- m. How did SM Entertainment keep the fans' interest towards the artist for the past decade? How did they keep the artist's so-called 'staying power'?

- n. In propelling BoA into the international market, did SM Entertainment establish collaboration with foreign artists and corporations?
- o. How was SM Entertainment's "glocalization" exhibited in BoA's establishment as an icon in the music industry?
- p. How did BoA's global popularity affect SM Entertainment's production of artists in the following years since her debut?

E. Data Analysis Procedure

The researcher charted the information from the analyzed media texts. It resembled the qualitative analytic method called *Thematic Analysis* which is used for analyzing and reporting patterns within a given set of data. This procedure also organizes the information gathered by the researcher and interprets various angles of the research topic (Braun and Clarke, 2006). However, since the study has Political Economy as its general theme, I already defined key themes to be observed in the texts. These include *Commodification, Spatialization, Consumerism, Cultural Imperialism, and Transmedia ownership*, alongside the overall state of the South Korean and International music industry. The aforementioned themes also served as guide concepts in the formulation of the questionnaire used in further realizing the research.

Afterwards, I made a conclusion on whether or not BoA Kwon was treated as a commodity throughout her experiences as a Korean Pop act based on the analyzed media texts and if so, how was the commodification process done? I also made several reflections on the current state of the South Korean society and how it should position itself in the Asian and Global sphere with its on-going Hallyu phenomenon that reinforces the commodification of its idols and culture.

CHAPTER V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The following table presents the answers to the questionnaire provided by the materials analysed; audio visual texts which include BoA's episode on Arirang TV's *Star Real Story "I AM..."* (2007), the pop icon's Youtube Interview with Ningin (2008) as well as two online published articles including allkpop.com's *Way Back Wednesday: BoA - From Princess to Queen* (2016) and Joongang Daily's *After 10 years, BoA still carves out her own path* (2010).

Each question is categorized under a key concept associated with the Political Economy of communication. After situating the trend in the South Korean and International music scenes, the researcher enumerated five themes including *commodification* which pertains to the artist's commercial expansion, *spatialization* that Mosco (1996) describes in terms of the institutional extension of corporate power in the communication industry, *consumerism* which entails the promotion of the consumers' interests, *cultural imperialism* that states how Western ideologies dominate the global media sphere, and lastly, *Transmedia Ownership* which describes how different media platforms contribute to the manufacturing of cultural products. The charting of information was done per analyzed text, starting from the audio video materials followed by the articles published online. The Arirang TV 2007 documentary "*Star Real Story I AM..."* was studied first, next came the artist's YouTube interview with Ningin, then allkpop's feature was read and the last one to be analyzed was Joongang Daily's article.

A. Audio Visual Media Texts

Table 1. *State of the South Korean and International Music Industry as seen on “Star Real Story I AM...”*

Key Theme with Corresponding Questions	Star Real Story “I AM...” (Arirang TV, 2007)
<p data-bbox="302 562 691 632"><i>State of the South Korean and International Music Industry</i></p> <ul data-bbox="354 678 841 1003" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="354 678 841 814">• What was the global trend in the music scene during the early 2000s? How about in South Korea? <li data-bbox="354 863 841 1003">• What was the global trend in the music scene in the following years after BoA's debut? How about in South Korea? 	<ul data-bbox="922 562 1414 1850" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="922 562 1414 852">• It was mentioned in the documentary that pop music was the most marketable in the international scene in the early 2000s. Pop acts such as Backstreet Boys, Westlife, and Britney Spears dominated the Western charts. <li data-bbox="922 900 1414 1367">• In South Korea, the first generation “idol groups” started to emerge – these include the boy group H.O.T. and their female counterpart, S.E.S. which are also managed by SM Entertainment. The two became popular with their upbeat dance tunes resembling the popular music that is starting to penetrate the Western scene during that time. The said groups also had huge fan bases in the entire South Korea. <li data-bbox="922 1415 1414 1850">• Pop music as well as R&B tunes had their staying power in the following years after BoA’s debut. This is manifested in the local and international music scenes. The documentary went on presenting the pop icon’s growth as an artist throughout her releases. She continued having dance songs that stayed at the top of the charts such as “No. 1” (2002) and “Atlantis Princess” (2003).

The table shows up to what extent the documentary presented the local and global trends in the music industry throughout the years. Generally, pop music had the most followers which was evident in BoA's hit releases that fall under this genre.

Table 2. *Commodification as seen on "Star Real Story I AM..."*

Key Theme with Corresponding Questions	Star Real Story "I AM..." (Arirang TV, 2007)
<p><i>Commodification</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What was SM Entertainment's initial interest when BoA was about to debut? • Was she intended for international consumption? How is this manifested? • Did her releases contributed to the income generation of other commodities unrelated to music? What were these? • Why was Japan a target market for SM Entertainment in the beginning? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As seen in the documentary, SM Entertainment wanted a strong female pop icon that it can present in the local and international music industries. • Aside from her rigorous training in singing and dancing, she was tasked to learn Japanese and English. At this point, SM decided that they could penetrate the Asian and Western music scenes with this budding talent. • The BoA Kwon episode of Star Real Story "I AM..." presented the icon's other endeavours aside from releasing songs and albums. In here, she was seen shooting a commercial during her early years as an entertainer. • The documentary did not state why it was strategic to saturate the Japanese market. It established from the very beginning of the material that Japan was a target market for SM Entertainment.

In this chart, it was revealed that BoA Kwon went through the process of commodification and that she was ultimately intended for international consumption. These two were manifested by her rigorous trainings as well as her overseas expansion.

Table 3. *Spatialization as seen on “Star Real Story I AM...”*

Key Theme with Corresponding Questions	Star Real Story “I AM...” (Arirang TV, 2007)
<p><i>Spatialization</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How far did the agency go since BoA's debut in terms of (1) corporate concentration (2) generation of revenues? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There were not any specific details mentioned in the documentary which included SM Entertainment’s corporate concentration and income generation. However, BoA Kwon’s album sales in her various releases was narrated by Arirang TV.

The documentary did not present the specifics of SM Entertainment’s corporate concentration and revenue generation since BoA’s debut.

Table 4. *Consumerism as seen on “Star Real Story I AM...”*

Key Theme with Corresponding Questions	Star Real Story “I AM...” (Arirang TV, 2007)
<p><i>Consumerism</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did SM Entertainment keep the fans' interest towards the artist for the past decade? How did they keep the artist's so-called 'staying power'? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SM Entertainment exhausted different means in presenting the pop icon to the audiences. Aside from her album releases, there had been live performances and even “guerilla concerts” which provided an avenue for the fans to watch the artist. Furthermore, BoA’s team experimented with her image in her

	<p>releases. For an instance, she was first projected as an androgynous young female who exhibited powerful dance moves in “<i>Id; Peace B</i>” (2000) and a sweet pop singer in “<i>Atlantis Princess</i>” (2003).</p>
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The information above presents SM Entertainment’s ability to sustain the fans’ interest towards the pop idol. The label did this by using various forms of promotions such as concerts and music videos.

Table 5. *Cultural Imperialism as seen in “Star Real Story I AM...”*

<p>Key Theme with Corresponding Questions</p>	<p>Star Real Story “I AM...” (Arirang TV, 2007)</p>
<p><i>Cultural Imperialism</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How was she presented in the South Korean music scene? How did she fair? • How was she presented in the Japanese music scene? How did she fair? • How was she presented in the American music scene? How did she fair? • Why did SM entertainment decide to expand BoA's career up to the Western market? • Were there differences in her promotions in Asia and in the United States? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the South Korean scene, she was presented in different ways which reinforced her versatility as an artist. SM Entertainment stuck with showcasing her powerful dance moves in every album release. • BoA was presented in Japan as if she was a Japanese native. The pop sensation spoke in fluent Japanese and released albums which had songs that sounded like Japanese Pop (J-Pop) tracks. • There were no particular details mentioned in the documentary which pertained to BoA Kwon’s Western debut since it only featured her experiences and releases until the year 2005.

The documentary presented how BoA was localized in the foreign market. As an example, she exhibited a Japanese-like persona during her promotions in Japan.

Table 6. *Transmedia Ownership as seen in “Star Real Story I AM...”*

Key Theme with Corresponding Questions	Star Real Story “I AM...” (Arirang TV, 2007)
<p><i>Transmedia Ownership</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In propelling BoA into the international market, did SM Entertainment establish collaboration with foreign artists and corporations? • How was SM Entertainment's "glocalization" exhibited in BoA's establishment as an icon in the music industry? • How did BoA's global popularity affected SM Entertainment's production of artists in the following years since her debut? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hallyu glocalization was strong during the artist’s Japanese expansion. Her looks, overall physical appearance, and materials released were made to suit the taste of the Japanese music goers.

The table above describes how strong “glocalization” as a mechanism used by SM Entertainment. However, the material lacked information with regards to the agency’s joint ventures with other countries.

1. Arirang TV: Star Real Story “I AM...” (2007)

Arirang TV is a public service agency that spreads the uniqueness of Korea to the world through broadcast mediums. Its objective is to burnish Korea's image in international communities and to improve relationships with foreign countries through close cooperation with broadcasting companies overseas. The company’s core business is

to deliver programs worldwide via satellite 24 hours a day in order to improve the image of Korea (Arirang TV, 2017)

Its former program “STAR Real Story I AM...” featured Korean celebrities and presented their life before and during their successes as Hallyu stars. The show kicked-off with BoA Kwon’s episode on February 10, 2007 and it narrated the artist’s trainee days up to her expansion in Japan and the rest of the Asia.

As seen in the information provided in the tables above, it became evident that SM Entertainment had more than domestic popularity in mind. BoA’s expansion in Japan was a strong example of “glocalization” wherein she identified herself as a Japanese singer rather than a mere Korean Pop idol releasing local materials in a foreign market. This is a part of SM Entertainment’s Culture Technology, a clear manifestation of commodification. In this mechanism, as the artists train in singing, dancing, and acting they are also marketed in different parts of the world as localized Korean products. As a matter of fact, the opening narration of documentary already established BoA Kwon’s superstar status not only in South Korea but in the entire Asia; regarding her as “the little giant who ruled the Asian market.” Pointing out that the act has “ruled the market” meant that she was seen as a strong cultural product in the Asian music industry.

Through the documentary, it was made known that SM Entertainment let the 13-year old BoA Kwon learn the Japanese and English languages before she was even taught how to sing and dance. Ultimately, they are preparing the young artist for international stardom. The 20-minute material included clips from her trainee days in the SM Entertainment headquarters along with

exclusive interviews by the program's production team. Music video releases and clips from her local and international concert performances were also presented in the documentary. Furthermore, special never-before-seen clips of the artist during her shoots both in South Korea and Japan were shown to the delight of her fans.



Figure 4. BoA training inside the SM Entertainment practice area (Arirang TV, 2007)

It was also seen in the material that as BoA's song releases got popular, she was able to clinch several advertisements from different countries. This would now be a manifestation of Beaster-Jones' (2016) observation in his study "Music Commodities, Markets, and Values: Music as Merchandise" wherein music is able to accumulate profit even further by using it in selling other unrelated commodities such as cars and restaurants. In this case, BoA was able to obtain an endorsement deal with a drinking company.

Table 7. *State of the South Korean and International Music Industry as seen on the Ningin Interview (2008)*

Key Theme with Corresponding Questions	Youtube Interview (Ningin, 2008)
<p><i>State of the South Korean and International Music Industry</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What was the global trend in the music scene during the early 2000s? How about in South Korea? • What was the global trend in the music scene in the following years after BoA's debut? How about in South Korea? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was no mention of the trends in the South Korean and International music industries during the early 2000s. • Furthermore, no particular details about the development of the music industry in the local (South Korean) and International music scenes years after BoA's debut were mentioned. However, the Asian sensation was asked about her American inspirations and influences. She answered the likes of Michael Jackson and Justin Timberlake.

The interview merely focused on the pop icon's American debut. Instead of establishing the local and international music trends, BoA was asked about her foreign inspirations. There was no mention of her experiences during the first few years of her debut in South Korea.

Table 8. *Commodification as seen on the Ningin Interview (2008)*

Key Theme with Corresponding Questions	Youtube Interview (Ningin, 2008)
<p><i>Commodification</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What was SM Entertainment's initial interest when BoA was about to debut? • Was she intended for international consumption? How is this manifested? • Did her releases contributed to the income generation of other commodities unrelated to music? What were these? • Why was Japan a target market for SM Entertainment in the beginning? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Since the material focused on BoA's promotions in the United States, the interview merely dealt with her activities during her American expansion on 2008. The entire Youtube video showed how SM Entertainment planned to market her in the West.

The interview did not discuss the detailed processes that she went through during her South Korean and Japanese expansions. It only showed her plans and experiences in the West. These include BoA's thoughts on her live performances done in America and her feelings towards the American producers she worked with.

Table 9. *Spatialization as seen on the Ningin Interview (2008)*

Key Theme with Corresponding Questions	Youtube Interview (Ningin, 2008)
<p><i>Spatialization</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How far did the agency go since BoA's debut in terms of (1) corporate concentration (2) generation of revenues? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There were not any specific details mentioned in the interview which pertained to SM Entertainment's corporate concentration and income generation.

The text lacked information about SM Entertainment's corporate concentration and generation of revenues. However, it emphasized on how popular BoA was in Asia which aided her to debut in the West.

Table 10. *Consumerism as seen on the Ningin Interview (2008)*

Key Theme with Corresponding Questions	Youtube Interview (Ningin, 2008)
<p><i>Consumerism</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did SM Entertainment keep the fans' interest towards the artist for the past decade? How did they keep the artist's so-called 'staying power'? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In terms of keeping the fans interested in her American debut, SM Entertainment exhausted different media platforms in presenting BoA Kwon to the Western audiences – there had been radio guestings, live performances, and the utilization of online Youtube interview.

The interview showed that aside from the traditional concerts and music videos, the agency utilized the use of online media in promoting BoA in America.

Table 11. *Cultural Imperialism as seen on the Ningin Interview (2008)*

Key Theme with Corresponding Questions	Youtube Interview (Ningin, 2008)
<p><i>Cultural Imperialism</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How was she presented in the South Korean music scene? How did she fair? • How was she presented in the Japanese music scene? How did she fair? • How was she presented in the American music scene? How did she fair? • Why did SM entertainment decide to expand BoA's career up to the Western market? • Were there differences in her promotions in Asia and in the United States? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Youtube video did not show the pop sensation's South Korean and Japanese endeavours. In the American market, however, she released songs which sounded like that of American Hip-Hop acts. Furthermore, BoA herself stated that she has already taken on a lot of challenges in the Asian music industry and the American expansion has always been her aspiration. When asked about the differences in her promotions, she said that the mechanisms used in marketing her music in the two continents almost stayed the same – there were radio guestings, live performances, interviews, and music video shoots.

The information above gives us the impression that the strategies SM Entertainment used in promoting the icon in Asia and in the West were almost the same. In the interview, BoA also mentioned that she has had a lot of endeavours in Asia and back in 2008 was the time for her to test the American waters.

Table 12. *Transmedia Ownership seen on the Ningin Interview (2008)*

Key Theme with Corresponding Questions	Youtube Interview (Ningin, 2008)
<p><i>Transmedia Ownership</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In propelling BoA into the international market, did SM Entertainment establish collaboration with foreign artists and corporations? • How was SM Entertainment's "glocalization" exhibited in BoA's establishment as an icon in the music industry? • How did BoA's global popularity affected SM Entertainment's production of artists in the following years since her debut? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The interview included BoA's mentioning of the collaborations SM Entertainment had with several foreign artists and music producers during her American debut. • Glocalization became more evident as BoA was packaged as a performer who had materials closely resembling an American singer's. She released tracks with strong reverse beats such as "<i>Eat You Up</i>" which is also sung in the English language. Furthermore, her music videos had American people starring in them. • The interview did not include details about SM Entertainment's artist production after BoA's debut.

According to the information above, "glocalization" or Hallyu localization manifested more during BoA's overseas debut. It was also mentioned that SM entertainment had collaborations with foreign artists and producers. Aside from singing in English and presenting dance moves choreographed by Western performers, foreigners also starred in her music videos during that time.

2. Ningin: Youtube Interview (2008)



Figure 5. BoA Kwon's Youtube Interview with Ningin (2008)

The interview was done by Ningin, which is another site that features Korean Pop culture. This material came about during the time when BoA was preparing for her American debut. The interview focused on her then 8-year old career in the music industry and how she decided to jump into the competitive Western market. According to BoA herself, she felt it was the right time to test the American waters because Asian music is already starting to influence Western music. Nevertheless, unlike her South Korean and Japanese character, BoA Kwon's United States debut presented her stronger and almost androgynous persona. By this time, the popstar already deviated from her light and bubbly image and released electro-pop tracks with reverse beats such as "*Eat You Up*" which was also played in the interview. For this particular interview, it is important to note that BoA herself expressed her opinion about performing and releasing songs in Asia and in America. According to her, there is not much of a difference in

terms of her activities such as live performances and even music video shoots. This is reminiscent of Sablayan (2012) and her implications in the study “Oppa has no style: On K-pop, the culture industry, and the illusion of style.” The author concluded that more than the South Korean or the Western standards, its culture of capital that controls the content. In here, the commodification process that the artist had undergone both in the Asian and Western music industries remains the same (e.g. the production of songs and music videos to be released commercially).

B. Articles Published Online

Table 13. *State of the South Korean and International Music Industry according to “Way Back Wednesday: BoA - From Princess to Queen”*

Key Theme with Corresponding Question	“Way Back Wednesday: BoA - From Princess to Queen” (Allkpop.com, 2016)
<p><i>State of the South Korean and International Music Industry</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What was the global trend in the music scene during the early 2000s? How about in South Korea? • What was the global trend in the music scene in the following years after BoA's debut? How about in South Korea? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There were no specific details mentioned about the global music trend in the early 2000s and in the following years. Nevertheless, the author pointed out that during BoA’s debut, the Korean Pop scene was dominated by huge pop groups such as H.O.T, S.E.S, and G.O. D. After proving herself to the Korean audiences, the solo pop sensation was able to bag the “<i>Rookie of the Year</i>” award in several award-giving bodies.

The article gave an emphasis on the emergence of local pop idol groups during the early 2000s. However, there was no mention of the global music trend throughout the decade.

Table 14. *Commodification according to “Way Back Wednesday: BoA - From Princess to Queen”*

Key Theme with Corresponding Question	“Way Back Wednesday: BoA - From Princess to Queen” (Allkpop.com, 2016)
<p><i>Commodification</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What was SM Entertainment's initial interest when BoA was about to debut? • Was she intended for international consumption? How is this manifested? • Did her releases contributed to the income generation of other commodities unrelated to music? What were these? • Why was Japan a target market for SM Entertainment in the beginning? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SM Entertainment wanted to enter the music market with a new force, something different from its huge pop groups – H.O.T. and S.E.S. After two years of rigorous training, BoA Kwon debuted with powerful songs and dance moves. • The article mentioned one huge motivation why SM Entertainment wanted to establish their newest sensation in Japan – it is the second largest music market in the world after the United States. The author further added, “BoA was accruing enough success by 2001 that her company felt they could expand upon her potential. Reaching out to Japanese label Avex Trax, SM Entertainment arranged to launch her Japanese career with their aid.” Hence, this online article also established that she was intended for international consumption. • As her popularity in Japan grew, the Japanese audiences grew fond of BoA Kwon. Eventually, her music was also used for anime Original Sound Tracks such as “<i>Every Heart</i>” (2002) which became a “RIAJ million bestseller”

The feature presented SM Entertainment's plans since BoA became one of their trainees. It also expounded on how did Japan became a target market for the agency.

Table 15. *Spatialization according to "Way Back Wednesday: BoA - From Princess to Queen"*

Key Theme with Corresponding Question	"Way Back Wednesday: BoA - From Princess to Queen" (Allkpop.com, 2016)
<p><i>Spatialization</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How far did the agency go since BoA's debut in terms of (1) corporate concentration (2) generation of revenues? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There were not any details mentioned about SM Entertainment's expansion in terms of corporate concentration aside from their partnership with AVEX TRAX, a Japanese entertainment label. Nevertheless, it was mentioned that her records sold a considerable amount of copies during her first year alone and hence, the company continued to expand the artist's marketability in different countries such as Japan.

The table shows that SM Entertainment worked with a Japanese label to ensure BoA's Japanese endeavours. It also narrated BoA's huge success in Japan.

Table 16. *Consumerism according to "Way Back Wednesday: BoA - From Princess to Queen"*

Key Theme with Corresponding Question	"Way Back Wednesday: BoA - From Princess to Queen" (Allkpop.com, 2016)
<p><i>Consumerism</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How did SM Entertainment keep the fans' interest towards the artist for the past decade? How did they 	<p>Allkpop mentioned how BoA ventured into other projects other than releasing albums and singles. During her American expansion, she also took part in a Hollywood film</p>

<p>keep the artist's so-called 'staying power'?</p>	<p>entitled “Make Your Move 3D”. However, unlike the other articles I analysed, this one presented a case wherein BoA Kwon was put into bad light – it was during the time when she was reported to date a member of a Japanese group. The pop icon garnered haters at this point but her solid supporters stuck with her all the way. The author stated the following, “Still, many sympathized with the star over the senseless media frenzy. Ironically, it did BoA some good, as it warmed her image more to those who thought she was a little cold.”</p>
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The table above presented how she was able to maintain her popularity in different continents. She even starred in a hollywood movie which, unfortunately, did not do well in the box office.

Table 17. *Cultural Imperialism according to “Way Back Wednesday: BoA - From Princess to Queen”*

<p>Key Theme with Corresponding Question</p>	<p>“Way Back Wednesday: BoA - From Princess to Queen” (Allkpop.com, 2016)</p>
<p><i>Cultural Imperialism</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How was she presented in the South Korean music scene? How did she fair? • How was she presented in the Japanese music scene? How did she fair? • How was she presented in the American music scene? How did she fair? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both in South Korea and in Japan, BoA Kwon was presented as the passionate performer who definitely had the charisma, talent, and stage presence. Her early South Korean releases debuted in the “Top 10” of the Korean Pop music charts while her four of her albums in Japan debuted at the top spot of the Oricon charts – the Japanese counterpart of the international Billboard charts.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why did SM entertainment decide to expand BoA's career up to the Western market? <p>Were there differences in her promotions in Asia and in the United States?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After penetrating the Asian market with record-braking album sales and numerous awards, SM Entertainment finally decided that it was time for the pop icon to test the American waters. However, during her promotions in the United States, the audiences saw a strong performer with songs resembling that of American Pop/Hip-Hop acts. It was in contrast with the artist's bubbly, easy going image seen in some of her South Korean and Japanese releases. Furthermore, unlike her Asian endeavours, the artist was not successful in establishing a career in the West. <p>BoA's promotions in Asia and in the United States were almost alike – she had appearances at different music programs and she had music videos accompanying her songs. However, it differed in some aspects such as having a movie stint in America which she had never done before in Asia. Unfortunately, the film where she starred in which was entitled “<i>Make Your Move 3D</i>” did poorly in the box office.</p>
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The information above shows how BoA adapted to different markets throughout her experiences as a performer. It was also seen that she had similar activities in Asia and in the West – there were music video shoots and interviews, among others.

Table 18. *Transmedia Ownership according to “Way Back Wednesday: BoA - From Princess to Queen”*

Key Theme with Corresponding Question	“Way Back Wednesday: BoA - From Princess to Queen” (Allkpop.com, 2016)
<p><i>Transmedia Ownership</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In propelling BoA into the international market, did SM Entertainment establish collaboration with foreign artists and corporations? • How was SM Entertainment's "glocalization" exhibited in BoA's establishment as an icon in the music industry? <p>How did BoA's global popularity affected SM Entertainment's production of artists in the following years since her debut?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allkpop.com mentioned SM Entertainment’s collaboration with international artists and music producers which included the Japanese label, AVEX TRAX. All of these contributed to her superstardom in Asia and being able to release singles in America. • Because of SM Entertainment’s “glocalization” strategy, the singer was able to attract fans in different cultures and thus, she made a mark as an artist not only in her home country. • The article did not include specific details about how SM Entertainment planned the management of their artists after BoA Kwon. However, the author gave the readers a glimpse of the artist’s impact to South Korean idols who debuted after her. It was mentioned that she has been the personal role model of many other idol stars as she pioneered the way for Korean artists to make their way in Japan and in the rest of the globe.

The article mentioned how BoA was able to inspire other Korean Wave stars as she was one of the first artists who expanded her activities up to the neighbouring countries and the rest of the world.

3. Online Feature Article: *Way Back Wednesday: BoA - From Princess to Queen* (allkpop, 2016)

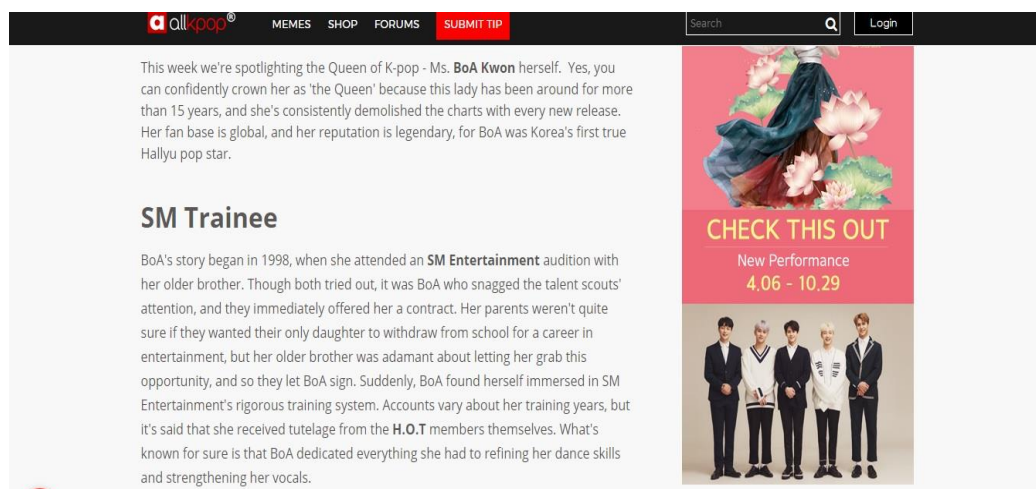


Figure 6. *Way Back Wednesday: BoA - From Princess to Queen* article screenshot (allkpop.com, 2016)

The first feature article that I analyzed was allkpop.com's (2016) "*Way Back Wednesday: BoA - From Princess to Queen*" that discussed BoA's development as a performer since her trainee days in SM Entertainment until she decided to break into the American music scene. Its author put an emphasis on how she was considered as one of the top icons in the Asian music industry and how she managed to maintain her popularity for more than a decade. Nevertheless, unlike other articles discussing BoA's career, allkpop managed to share a negative experience of the artist. It was during the time when she was involved in a dating scandal with a Japanese singer. The writer, however, pointed out that negative write-ups about the Asian star only made her stronger and that it aided her in terms of portraying a lesser cold image to the public. The feature also put an emphasis on how the pop icon became an inspiration to the Korean Wave acts who had risen into popularity after her.

In the chart above, it is noticed that the feature had an almost complete set of answers to the given questions. This is a manifestation of how commodification and other concepts related it became present in BoA Kwon’s journey as a Korean Pop icon. The article also explicitly mentioned that SM Entertainment knew the potential of the Japanese market since it is the second largest music market in the world after the United States. Furthermore, Allkpop showed an exposition of BoA’s American endeavours and how it did not work towards the artist and her agency’s interest.

Table 19. *State of the South Korean and International Music Industry according to the feature “After 10 years, BoA still carves out her own path”*

Key Theme with Corresponding Question	“After 10 years, BoA still carves out her own path” (Joongang Daily, 2010)
<p><i>State of the South Korean and International Music Industry</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What was the global trend in the music scene during the early 2000s? How about in South Korea? • What was the global trend in the music scene in the following years after BoA's debut? How about in South Korea? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No specific details about the International music scene during the early 2000s were mentioned. However, the first paragraph narrated CNN’s comparison of BoA to Britney Spears. • It was mentioned in the article that in South Korea, first generation idol groups which were also managed by SM Entertainment such as H.O.T. and Shinhwa had a huge following. • No specific details about the overall trend in the local and international music scenes years after BoA’s debut were mentioned. However, the article listed a timeline of her releases. One turning point would be the pop icon’s 2005 release entitled “Girls on Top” – which, according to Joongang Daily, “showed the

	<p>singer's evolution from a cute, teen star into a more mature, confident artist with lyrics addressing issues like male chauvinism." The album received mediocre success as it was only the 14th best-selling album in South Korea during the year 2005.</p>
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Just like allkpop.com's article, this feature mentioned the domination of local idol groups in the Korean music industry during BoA's debut. In here, she was also compared to a Western act.

Table 20. *Commodification according to the feature "After 10 years, BoA still carves out her own path"*

Key Theme with Corresponding Question	"After 10 years, BoA still carves out her own path" (Joongang Daily, 2010)
<p><i>Commodification</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What was SM Entertainment's initial interest when BoA was about to debut? • Was she intended for international consumption? How is this manifested? • Did her releases contributed to the income generation of other commodities unrelated to music? What were these? • Why was Japan a target market for SM Entertainment in the beginning? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • According to the article, SM Entertainment had planned her international debut even before her domestic activities took place. The author added, "<i>Besides English and Japanese lessons, she lived with an NHN announcer when she first moved there so that she could perfect her Japanese pronunciation.</i>" • There were not any details mentioned about her releases' contribution to the income generation of other commodities. • The article, as a matter of fact, had paragraphs narrating the pop sensation's breakthroughs in the Japanese music industry. Nevertheless, when asked about

	<p>her Japanese endeavours she answered,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“I think a lot of it was good luck. When I went to Japan for the first time, Japan and Korea were preparing to jointly host the World Cup in 2002 so there was a lot of cultural exchange going on,” she said. “Also at the time, solo artists were all the rage and I was fortunate enough to have good songs.”</i>
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The feature also established SM Entertainment’s plans for the soloist. It also gave details on why her cross in Japan became effective especially during the early 2000s.

Table 21. *Spatialization according to the feature “After 10 years, BoA still carves out her own path”*

Key Theme with Corresponding Question	“After 10 years, BoA still carves out her own path” (Joongang Daily, 2010)
<p><i>Spatialization</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How far did the agency go since BoA's debut in terms of (1) corporate concentration (2) generation of revenues? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There were not any details mentioned about SM Entertainment’s expansion in terms of corporate concentration. However, her album sales from the year 2000-2010 were discussed in the timeline provided.

The article did not give concrete details on the agency’s corporate concentration and revenue generation. Nevertheless, it enumerated the artist’s album sales since *Id; Peace B* was released.

Table 22. *Consumerism according to the feature “After 10 years, BoA still carves out her own path”*

Key Theme with Corresponding Question	“After 10 years, BoA still carves out her own path” (Joongang Daily, 2010)
<p><i>Consumerism</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did SM Entertainment keep the fans' interest towards the artist for the past decade? How did they keep the artist's so-called 'staying power'? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the article, it was mentioned that her releases and huge live performances continued throughout the decade. SM Entertainment also aimed to show BoA's versatility in every material they promote.

The article showed how the artist continued to leave a mark to her fans. SM Entertainment aided her in releasing different materials every now and then.

Table 23. *Cultural Imperialism according to the feature “After 10 years, BoA still carves out her own path”*

Key Theme with Corresponding Question	“After 10 years, BoA still carves out her own path” (Joongang Daily, 2010)
<p><i>Cultural Imperialism</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How was she presented in the South Korean music scene? How did she fair? • How was she presented in the Japanese music scene? How did she fair? • How was she presented in the American music scene? How did she fair? • Why did SM entertainment decide to expand BoA's career up to the Western market? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joongang described BoA Kwon's South Korean presence in the following terms - <i>“If Spears had her Catholic schoolgirl uniform, BoA's claim to fame was her high-powered dance moves, which differed from the cutesy, flirtatious choreography of other female stars at the time. In contrast to the willowy ingenues and eyelash-blinking girl groups back then, BoA's forthcoming lyrics about personal independence and her androgynous style made for an unfamiliar breed among Korean teeny-boppers at the time.”</i>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Were there differences in her promotions in Asia and in the United States? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Like how it was narrated in the three other media texts I analysed, BoA was presented in the Japanese music industry as a performer who captured the attention of Japanese music goers by releasing materials that, first and foremost, were articulated in the Japanese language. Furthermore, her stylists made her more Japanese-like in terms of physical appearance. • In the article, BoA Kwon’s venture into the American market was only discussed through the manifestation of SM Entertainment’s plans. They mentioned that <i>“The biggest announcement by BoA in 2008 came in September, when SM Entertainment said the singer was preparing for her American debut the following year. BoA’s first single in the U.S., “Eat You Up,” was released online in October and offline in November.</i> <p>Adding to this, BoA released her first studio album, “BoA,” in the U.S. in March under the new label SM Entertainment. As a matter of fact, it made its way into the Billboard 200 as it debuted in No. 127.</p>
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The overall tone of the feature gave off the impression on how BoA is comparable to other American entertainers such as Britney Spears.

Table 24. *Transmedia Ownership according to the feature “After 10 years, BoA still carves out her own path”*

Key Theme with Corresponding Question	“After 10 years, BoA still carves out her own path” (Joongang Daily, 2010)
<p data-bbox="280 359 586 394"><i>Transmedia Ownership</i></p> <ul data-bbox="334 436 854 982" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="334 436 854 615">• In propelling BoA into the international market, did SM Entertainment establish collaboration with foreign artists and corporations? <li data-bbox="334 657 854 800">• How was SM Entertainment's "glocalization" exhibited in BoA's establishment as an icon in the music industry? <li data-bbox="334 842 854 982">• How did BoA's global popularity affected SM Entertainment's production of artists in the following years since her debut? 	<ul data-bbox="932 363 1435 1115" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="932 363 1435 632">• The article included several collaborations with Western acts. World-renowned producers such as Sean Garrett, Brian Kennedy, Bloodshy & Avant who also worked with the likes of Beyonce and Chris Brown was mentioned. <li data-bbox="932 674 1435 1115">• SM Entertainment made the popstar more “adaptable” to the market she serves. For an instance, when she started releasing materials in Japan and in the United States, her music as well as her physical appearance became more like that of a Japanese and an American performer. She further adds, “<i>Throughout my singing career, I’ve never focused on just one particular country.</i>”

For the last category, the feature made it evident once again how “glocalization” became a profiteering tool for SM Entertainment. She was presented in the American music scene as a strong Hip-Hop artist which is reminiscent of the popular acts dominating the American mainstream music during the time she had her United States expansion.

4. *Online Feature Article: After 10 years, BoA still carves out her own path (Joongang Daily, 2010)*

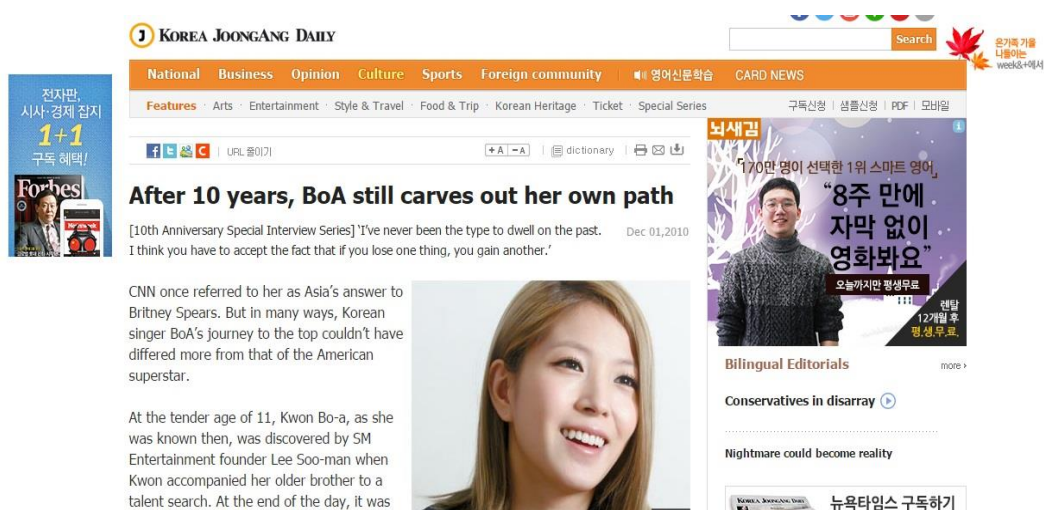


Figure 7. After 10 years, BoA still carves out her own path article screenshot (Joongang Daily, 2010)

Joongang Daily's article is similar to allkpop's feature in several ways. Both showed a timeline of her releases since her debut. This particular article also gave an estimate on her album sales and it reiterated how her 2005 South Korean album, *"Girls On Top"* marked her way to numerous major music awards by the end of that year although it relatively sold less than her previous materials. At that time, she started singing songs with lyrics that told the listeners about different issues such as male chauvinism. The feature also discussed how she and SM Entertainment really wanted to take over the American market and up to what extent did the pop icon adjusted her music in order to get the attention of the American pop music lovers.

Based on the information in the table above, we could see how the author immediately compared the pop sensation to a Western artist. The article also gave an emphasis on “glocalization” which was done during her Japanese and American debut.

CHAPTER VI. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

A. Summary

The media texts provided key information about BoA Kwon's local and international expansion. Nevertheless, it is evident that the two audio visual materials gave an emphasis on the artist's international activities. Both the Arirang TV documentary *Star Real Story "I AM..."* (2007) and the artist's Youtube Interview with Ningin (2008) exhibited Pop music as a genre with a strong marketability in the Asian and Western music scenes. Under the commodification category, the documentary and the Youtube interview justified how BoA had undergone the process of commodification by narrating her training in singing, dancing, and foreign language speaking before she expanded her horizons into the Japanese and American music markets. For spatialization, the two texts did not include any details on SM Entertainment's corporate concentration and income generation. However, it presented BoA Kwon's album sales from time to time and the Youtube interview in particular gave the impression of how big the pop icon is in the Asian arena. Furthermore, consumerism was shown in the two materials in terms of SM Entertainment's exhaustion of different kinds of promotions in a wide range of media platforms. There were BoA's "guerilla concerts" in Japan alongside radio guestings and live performances which she also did during her United States debut. Now, when Cultural Imperialism is being talked about, it was presented in the two audio visual texts that BoA released materials similar to that of a Japanese and an American singer during her promotions in the two countries. She sang songs in their native languages and her physical appearance resembled how the homegrown acts of these two nations looked. The singer also added that she did not notice any difference in

her Asian and Western promotions, creating an even bigger blur between the differences of the music industries in both cultures. Lastly, the strength of transmedia ownership was shown in the analysed audio visual materials through the narration of the pop icon's collaborations with international artists as well as SM Entertainment's joint ventures with foreign companies and music producers.

The two online published articles, allkpop.com's (2016) "*Way Back Wednesday: BoA - From Princess to Queen*" and Joongang Daily's (2010) "*After 10 years, BoA still carves out her own path*" presented detailed answers to the research queries. Both stated how the South Korean music industry was dominated by pop idol groups such as H.O.T. and S.E.S. during the time of BoA's domestic debut. Nevertheless, the two did not point out any specific details about the development of the trends in the music industry at the international level. Joongang Daily's feature, however, started off its paragraph with the comparison of BoA Kwon to the Western Pop icon, Britney Spears. It is also important to note that these texts presented a timeline of her releases since "*Id; Peace B*" in the year 2000 until she returned to South Korea with "*Hurricane Venus*" in 2010. Hence, it was seen how her music evolved throughout the years – having pop as the most-selling genre based on her album sales. Answering the questions under the commodification category reiterated how the artist went through the said process. Similar to how it was manifested in the audio visual texts, the articles stated how SM Entertainment trained the then 11-year old girl in singing, dancing, and foreign language speaking. The two also emphasized why the Japanese music market was a goal for SM Entertainment – first, it was the next largest market after the United States and second, it was strategic since Japan and Korea were preparing to host the World Cup in 2002. Thus, it became evident

that BoA was indeed manufactured by her entertainment label for international consumption both in Asia and in the rest of the world. In terms of spatialization, there were not any details mentioned about SM Entertainment's expansion in terms of corporate concentration aside from its venture with AVEX TRAX, a Japanese entertainment label and its collaborations with American music producers during the pop sensation's United States expansion. Her album sales since 2000-2010 were also discussed in the articles. Meanwhile, consumerism was further realized when the analysed texts narrated how BoA did other projects aside from releasing albums in order to keep the fans' interest. One example would be her stint in the movie industry with "*Make Your Move 3D*" (2013) alongside her continuous music promotions. The articles also forwarded implications of Cultural Imperialism during the narration of her Japanese and American expansion. BoA presented herself in the two music scenes in a manner that resembled a local performer in Japan and the United States – from her physical appearance to the materials she released. Transmedia ownership's contribution in propelling BoA to superstardom was also clearly manifested by the two articles as these narrated SM Entertainment's partnerships with foreign companies and producers such as AVEX TRAX in Japan, Sean Garrett in America and the establishment of its subsidiary company in the West – SM Entertainment USA.

B. Conclusion

Having Political Economy as the main theoretical framework employed in the study, I have presented its development as a discipline alongside the rise of the Political Economy of Communication. Based on Mosco's work in 1996, it dealt with the analysis

of social relations and power relations that is involved in the production, distribution, and consumption of resources, including the ones in the field of communication.

One of its key entry points – commodification, has been the interest of the study. This process pertains to the transformation of goods and services into products with economic values. Moreover, American media critic Herbert Schiller (1996) adds to the discourse as he states the following in his “Information Inequality: The Deepening Social Crisis in America”:

The spectacularly improved means of producing, organizing, and disseminating information has transformed industrial, political, and cultural practices and processes. Manufacturing, elections, and creative efforts are increasingly dependent on informational inputs. This has conferred great value on some categories of information. The production and sale of information have become major sites of profit making. What had been in large measure a social good has been transformed into a commodity for sale. (p. 46)

The research sought to know if the Asian pop icon BoA Kwon had undergone the process of commodification throughout her experiences as a performer and if so, how did it take place? Furthermore, it aimed to analyze the motivations of her talent agency, SM Entertainment in producing and presenting the pop sensation to the audiences worldwide.

Analysing the results of the study, we can conclude that BoA’s continued expansion from the domestic to the international music market showed how her label wanted to accumulate more profit by releasing a wide range of materials – whether it is an album, a music video, or a live concert performance. It is also important to consider that SM Entertainment carefully planned her overseas debut, one thing nobody did in the

South Korean entertainment industry during the early 2000s. According to Siegel and Chu (2010) in “The Globalization of East Asian Pop Music”, SM Entertainment invested \$ 3 Million for BoA’s debut, most of it coming from the company’s revenues from the success of H.O.T. The label continued to hope that it can be able to attract international music listeners with its newest female soloist. Soo Man Lee, SM Entertainment’s Chief Executive Officer, stated in a special documentary aired by the Seoul Broadcasting System that it was necessary to put the concentration on the teenage market as it expands and in order to do that, SM Entertainment needs a fresh female face. It was due to the difficulty faced in approaching the local and foreign music markets with male singers during that time. Thus, from the foreign language acquisition to closely working foreign music producers in order to look and sound more Japanese and Western, everything has been a part of the BoA Kwon’s manufacturing. With this, it becomes evident that her artistic value has been transformed into a commodity which her company was heavily invested in.

As a matter of fact, we can relate this phenomenon to SM entertainment’s *Culture Technology*, the business model that the company has been using in its production of talents which is also a clear manifestation of commodification. It consists of four key stages which were the pop icon went through herself. First, BoA Kwon had undergone the process of casting wherein she was selected by the SM management among thousands of hopefuls, including her own brother who now works as a director in South Korea. Next, she had years of rigorous training in singing and dancing alongside her Japanese and English lessons. Arirang TV’s documentary even showed clips of the young BoA practicing her dance moves in New York City during the year 1998. She was then made

to formally debut through SM Entertainment's internal management mechanism wherein they aimed to establish global trends as BoA released new albums and held numerous live performances. The last stage is where the marketing of the artists comes in. In here, SM Entertainment ensures that its talents are able to saturate different media contents as it works with various companies for omnidirectional promotions. This strategy lets the artists become known to the public by having them placed in advertisements, magazines, and even television dramas.

Furthermore, another huge take away from the study would be the use of *glocalization* or Hallyu localization during BoA Kwon's promotions. Derived from the terms "globalization" and "localization", this mechanism aims to localize Korean Wave stars in order to cater to the needs of the foreign market they target (Siegel and Chu, 2010). Shim (2013) of "The Korea Times" further adds the need for South Korean entertainment companies to adopt marketing measures fit for local consumers of foreign markets and part of this would include the need to study the consumer habits in that particular region. This encompasses their manner of selecting and purchasing goods and thus, the use of *glocalization* is one of the reasons why BoA Kwon released materials both in Japanese and in English aside from her native language which is Korean.

After saturating the domestic market, SM then expands their talents' exposure and enables them to debut in other Asian countries until they are well-equipped for Western release. As a result of maximizing these strategies, SM entertainment made its mark as one of the biggest companies in South Korea that earns revenues through their artists' global expansion - a manifestation of the extent in which BoA Kwon was commodified, along with other artists under the aforementioned label. The website *seoulspace.co.kr*

ranked the most earning South Korean Entertainment labels for the year 2015 and SM Entertainment topped the chart. In 2015 alone, it had estimated sales of \$280 Million USD and a Net Income of \$15.3 Million USD. Forbes Asia also reported that during the year 2013, SM held a market capitalization of \$660 Million USD. Hence, the label made it into *The Best 200 listed companies in the Asia-Pacific region with an annual revenue of under \$1 Billion USD* for the year 2013.

Moreover, as a result of BoA's market success through Culture Technology, SM Entertainment continued its use which also produced TVXQ, Girls' Generation, Super Junior, and EXO who became multi-million selling acts in Asia.

Now, as Hallyu continues to persevere in this manner, the number of "manufactured idols" continues to grow. After examining the materials, I have come to formulate several questions – is it really impossible to preserve one's artistic value in the current landscape of the South Korean music industry? I came to the conclusion that as long as the system is commercialized and profit will be at the center of the company's objectives, the status quo will remain.

With all these in mind, this study now makes it clear that the political economic implications and the commodification of artists in particular become prevalent especially with the continuous development of mass media.

CHAPTER VII: IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Theoretical Issues

Political Economy has been used in a wide range of studies, including the ones concerning mass media. It has become a powerful framework that is able to reveal how institutional pressures and relations of power contribute in the production, distribution, and consumption of media content. Nevertheless, for a study on commodification such as this one, having other guide theories can be useful in achieving a full, detailed study that could further explain Hallyu's strength in the context of globalization. While Political Economy would still be relevant, other researchers may opt to include a Critical Discourse Analysis or even a Semiotics framework. By using the two, the study can position itself more as it reveals the underlying structures of power in the materials analysed and it takes on the interpretation of the signs seen in the texts on a higher level.

Aside from these, perhaps other researchers can look into how much labor one K-Pop talent puts in just to follow their companies' desires.

Furthermore, with the growing followers of K-Pop here in the Philippines, what would be in store for them? As they continue to aspire to be just like their idols, what measures can the Filipino entertainment industry take in order to avoid the production of manufactured idols? Why did the past attempts such as the one made by VIVA entertainment failed?

B. Methodological Issues

One of the most challenging phases of realizing this study is selecting the media texts that will be analysed. Ultimately, there are many available materials related to BoA Kwon's rise in the international music scene along with SM Entertainment's two-decade success in the entertainment industry. Hence, I recommend for future researchers to select more materials that include BoA Kwon's full training program as well as her milestones in the South Korean, Japanese, and American music industry. They can also opt to study SM Entertainment's newest mechanism, "*New Culture Technology*" which Soo Man Lee boasts as the full realization of Hallyu localization. He mentions in a conference that it is the final stage of the so-called "three stages of Hallyu" the first two being the export of South Korean cultural products and the expansion of market by working with local companies and artists, respectively. Moreover, future researchers may look into other groups spearheading the Korean Wave in recent years.

C. Practical Issues

In order to attain the objectives of a study such as this one, the researcher needs to be able to read a lot and know more about the export of Asian cultural products from its continent up to the Western part of the globe. It is important to note how far these products reach and up to what extent are they welcomed by the media consumers from other countries. Later on, the researcher should be wary about its effects in the local media landscape in Asia. Since commodification can be studied in different ways, the author should also be critical in applying theories and methods in order to achieve the best results for the study. He/she should weigh the different analytical procedures that can be used in the study. Lastly, the proponent should always bear in mind to whom the study

should cater for – it should always serve the best interests of the people in the society, making them more knowledgeable about the media they consume which greatly affect their lifestyle and decision-making.

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