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# Comparing Western and South Korean Celebrity Twitter Strategies

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Comparing Western and South Korean Celebrity Twitter Strategies

By

Tara G. Siano

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for Honors in the Discipline in  
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Comparing Western and South Korean Celebrity Twitter Strategies

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**Abstract**

In 2017, South Korean idol group, Bangtan Sonyeondan (BTS), became the first Korean pop group to win a Billboard Music Award for Top Social Artist. This award is fan voted and indicates strong audience engagement and a skillful use of social media. K-Pop is becoming more and more popular due to an effective use of social media for global music distribution, and identifying the Twitter strategies of Korean idol groups has applications beyond the music industry. Comparing how Western and South Korean Artists use Twitter will bring to light new strategies for both organizations and businesses on the platform. This study will investigate the differences in Twitter strategies between Western and South Korean artists. Data will be collected from a constructed week sample, and the content and response for each tweet will be analyzed.

## **Introduction**

The purpose of this study is to determine the differences between Western and South Korean Twitter strategies. While Western music has long been distributed to Asian countries, Korean pop music has only recently found its way onto U.S. radio stations. With millions of followers and posts with hundreds of thousands of likes, South Korean celebrities have a successful social media presence worth analyzing. This study used a constructed week sample to analyze both Western and South Korean Twitter accounts. Tweets were evaluated based on their content and follower response.

However, while celebrity Twitter accounts may only seem pertinent to verified account holders and their fans, Twitter's reach extends far beyond celebrity culture. Twitter strategies have implications that affect politics, journalism, business and healthcare. Understanding the use of social media cross-culturally is necessary for any person or organization looking to make global connections. Observing the difference in Western and South Korean Twitter strategies can help identify useful social media tactics for many different industries.

## **Literature Review**

### **Use of Twitter in United States**

Twitter is a micro-blogging platform that places post restrictions on character-count (Croxall, 2014). In September 2017, Twitter announced plans to increase this character limit to 280 characters for languages "impacted by cramming" (which is all except Japanese, Chinese, and Korean) (Rosen & Ihara, 2017). This change was made because character languages, like Japanese, are able to convey more information in a smaller number of characters than letter-based languages, like English. For example, Japanese tweets average 15 characters, while English tweets average 34 (Rosen & Ihara, 2017). Regardless of length, these short snippets of

information are intended for viral distribution (Lasorsa, Lewis, & Holton, 2012). While short, posts on Twitter can contain several different media types, such as photos and videos (Schmierbach & Oeldorf-Hirsch, 2012). Users' posts range from casual, interpersonal communication to informative, newsworthy material (Vis, 2013). With diverse communications options despite the limited character count, Twitter is becoming an increasingly valid form of communication.

For example, Twitter has become progressively important for politicians. Citizens can now communicate with their politicians directly; this allows for a symmetrical relationship between politician and citizen, which has been found crucial for campaigning politicians (Zamora-Medina & Zurutuza-Muñoz, 2014). Twitter makes it possible for politicians to make succinct, explicit statements of their values. For example, President Trump uses Twitter to make bold, polarizing statements: a popular strategy for right-wing politicians (Kreis, 2017).

Additionally, Twitter offers journalists a unique platform to share breaking news and hold two-way communication with their audience (Bruns & Hanusch, 2016). Journalists are able to follow news, collect information, contact sources, and engage their audience, as well as maintain personal interactions (Barnard, 2016). News stations use Twitter mostly for information sharing rather than personal promotion (Meyer & Tang, 2015). However, news on Twitter often takes a different tone than it does in other news outlets. For example, during the Ebola crisis in 2014, newspapers focused on conflict, responsibility, and consequences of Ebola, while Twitter was used to share updates and scientific research (Zhang, Bie, & Billings, 2017). This specific case study shows that Twitter can be used for more than just news sharing.

There are even health applications as users increasingly post their experiences with illness and treatments. Additionally, organizations like the American Heart Association and

American Diabetes Association use Twitter to share information, albeit more often about organizational information than personal health information (Park, Reber, & Chon, 2016). In fact, the United States government has created a “customer centric” digital communication strategy applied to US Federal Health organizations (Bhattacharya, Srinivasan, & Polgreen, 2014). With so much interest focused on Twitter and social media strategies, finding fresh new ideas to promote audience engagement is necessary on the commercial and political level.

### **Use of Twitter in South Korea**

As of 2016, Pew Research Center reports that 94 percent of South Korean adults have regular access to the Internet. This is much higher than other Eastern Asian countries such as Japan and China, where respectively only 69 and 65 percent of the population have reliable Internet access (Pew Research Center, 2016). Even in the United States, only 89 percent of adults have access to the Internet. South Korea’s population is also reported to have the highest ownership of smartphones. Eighty-eight percent of South Koreans own smartphones compared to 72 percent in the United States, 58 percent in China, and 39 percent in Japan (Pew Research Center, 2016).

South Koreans are typically quick to adopt new technologies, as well as new communication strategies. The South Korean mobile messaging app, KaKao Talk, quickly beat out the world’s first mobile messengers –GoogleTalk and Whats App- partially due to the culture’s eager acceptance of new communication tools (Choi, 2013). The younger generation is the most adaptive to new technologies. South Korean teenagers are usually willing to buy newly designed devices for consumer testing (Jin, Chee & Kim, 2013). In 2002, South Korea became the first country to elect an official largely due to social-media activism, an effort lead mostly by young people (Shapiro, 2015). This shows that the older generation is not far behind, as South

Korean politicians quickly looked to Twitter as a communications tool (Chien-leng & Park, 2011). Korean Assembly members have been using the micro-blogging site due to how quickly and cheaply they can reach a large audience (Shapiro, 2015). The South Korean government also uses Twitter for news sharing by clustering accounts. South Korean ministries retweet and share information from each other, so citizens only need to follow one South Korean government Twitter account to get important updates and information (Khan, Yoon, & Park, 2014).

In addition to using Twitter for government purposes, South Korea also uses Twitter for news. Twelve of South Korea's top fifteen daily newspapers, all three news networks, and both of South Korea's cable news channels have Twitter accounts (Hahn, Ryu, & Park, 2015). Journalists in South Korea mainly tweet about news events instead of personal affairs. However, more than half of South Korean journalists' tweets are replies and retweets, showing that Twitter in South Korea is strongly considered to be a form of two-way communication (Lee, Kim, & Kim, 2016). This two-way, relationship-based use of Twitter is also seen via South Korea's government's use of the site. South Korean government Twitter accounts more actively seek reciprocity with their followers compared to the United States. While only approximately four percent of all United States government Twitter relationships are mutual, approximately 81 percent of South Korean government Twitter relationships are mutual (Khan, Yoon, & Park, 2014).

Of course, while in the United States it is commonplace to turn to Twitter or Facebook for information sharing, the most popular social networking site in South Korea is inarguably Kakao Talk (Mac, 2014). Ninety percent of Korean smartphone owners use the app, and KaKao Talk has seventy million registered users worldwide. In South Korea instead of "text me" or "message me," it is more common to say, "Katakalk me" (Choi, 2013). Three fourths of South



Korea's population uses KaKao Talk monthly, and another 10.8 million people use the platform globally. South Koreans use KaKao on average for 33 minutes per day (Mac & Kim, 2015).

Kakao also hosts more services than Twitter. South Koreans use Kakao to stay in touch with friends and family, set up business meetings, save money with coupons, keep up with trends in music and fashion, and get from one place to the next with trains, planes, and automobiles (Choi, 2013). Therefore, it is important to consider that while Twitter is used by 5.13 million users in South Korea, it is not South Korea's first choice when it comes to social networking (Statista, 2016).

### **Celebrities and Social Networking**

According to recent news, South Korean celebrities are particularly effective social media users. On May 22, 2017, 방탄소년단 (Bangtan Sonyeondan) (BTS) became the first Korean Pop (K-Pop) group to win a Billboard Music Award. The boy band competed against six-time winner Justin Bieber for the Top Social Artist award. This fan-voted award is dedicated to artists with a strong social media strategy. BTS fans voted on Twitter over 300 million times, indicating strong audience engagement and a skillful use of social media on BTS's part, especially to beat out big name Western nominees such as Justin Bieber, Selena Gomez, and Ariana Grande (Liu, 2017). Because of this, Time magazine listed BTS as one of the 25 most influential people on the Internet in 2017.

Celebrity influence is apparent across social networking sites. For example, in the United States, celebrities use Twitter as a personal, direct, interactive method to share political views with young voters. In fact, celebrities typically respond to important issues on social media faster than most leading politicians. An overwhelming presence on social media paired with young impressionable fans has given celebrities a high degree of influence (Nisbett & DeWalt, 2016).

For this reason, politicians seek celebrity endorsement from politically outspoken celebrities, such as Russell Brand, Bono, and Angelina Jolie (Loader, Vromen, & Xenos, 2016).

According to Nisbett and Dewalt, “Social media as a platform provides an immediacy and intimacy in a young person’s interactions with a celebrity” (2016, p. 153). Celebrities and their assistants therefore make a large effort to engage with fans online and provide public content on sites like Twitter and Facebook (Loader, Vromen, & Xenos, 2016). Platforms like Twitter provide instant access to a celebrity’s entire fan base. While this can be seen as a positive, it is not without its limitations. Problematic tweets —be it an accidental gesture or social faux pas— can be “easily witnessed, preserved, and ultimately exposed in a smaller amount of time” (Colapinto & Benecchi, 2014, p. 224). For example, when 2010 Olympic Gold figure skater, Evan Lysacek, tweeted a derogatory comment about rival skater Johnny Weir’s gender, the consequences held a heavier weight than they would offline. Even dedicated fans were outraged, and despite an effort to delete the offensive tweet, conversation and evidence surrounding the statement remained (Colapinto & Benecchi, 2014).

However, social networking is seen as a necessity. South Korean artists heavily rely on social networking sites to globally distribute their music. For example, many credit the success of Psy’s “Gangnam Style” to its distribution on YouTube. Currently, the top three Korean music production companies —JYP Entertainment, SM Entertainment, and YG Entertainment— all rely on YouTube for distribution (Park, 2013). Therefore, maintaining a positive online presence is especially important for K-Pop artists. This is especially true considering the visual aspect of K-Pop. Each K-Pop title track (or single) is paired with intricate choreography. Social networking sites make it possible for international fans not only to stream music but also enjoy

K-Pop choreography without attending a concert overseas. Social media and K-Pop go hand in hand (Oh & Lee, 2013).

### **Methodology**

The purpose of this thesis is to compare Twitter strategies between Western and South Korean celebrities. Several research questions will be explored to best compare the two cultures' use of social media:

RQ 1: What type of content are Western and Korean artists posting on their Twitter accounts?

RQ 2: Which artists —Korean or Western— post the most content on Twitter?

RQ 3: What kind of posts on Twitter do followers respond to the most?

RQ 4: Which artists —Korean or Western— have more interaction with their followers on Twitter?

Comparisons were made based on the popularity of each user and profile activity. Popularity was measured by the celebrity account's Twitter following/follower ratio. Higher Twitter following/follower ratios indicate a higher social popularity (Borgmann et al., 2016). Response was measured by Twitter responses, retweets, and favorites. The number of tweets per day and the content of each tweet were counted to measure profile activity.

Content was measured by first counting the physical content produced, such as mentions, photographs, videos, hash tags, and links to personal content and other users' content. The purpose of each tweet was additionally classified into one of the following categories: personal, promotional, social, gratitude, fan engagement, or other. Content was qualified by its production value and categorized as either having a low production value (such as photos and videos taken

with a phone camera or credited to the celebrity) or high production value (such as videos with multiple camera angles or photographs from posed, organized photo-shoots).

Data was collected via a constructed week sample from 2017. Random dates were selected as a way to prevent skewed study results. At least five weeks were selected in order to have a large enough sample for meaningful results (Hester & Dougall, 2007). While traditional print media requires only two weeks to represent a year for a constructed week sample, online media requires a larger sample size (Connolly-Ahern, Ahern, & Bortree, 2009). The dates include the week of April 23<sup>rd</sup> to April 29<sup>th</sup>, June 11<sup>th</sup> to June 17<sup>th</sup>, September 24<sup>th</sup> to September 30<sup>th</sup>, November 12<sup>th</sup> to November 18<sup>th</sup>, and December 3<sup>rd</sup> to December 9<sup>th</sup>.

The four North American 2017 nominees for Billboard's Top Social Artist award represented Western artists: Shawn Mendes, Ariana Grande, Justin Bieber, and Selena Gomez. Korean artists were represented by BTS as well as the nominees for the 2016 MNet Asian Music Awards' (MAMAs') Artist of the Year: EXO, Twice, and Gfriend. There is not an equivalent to the Billboard Top Social Artist award at any major Asian music award ceremony, so the MAMAs' Artist of the Year—chosen based on overall excellence in the music industry—served as a substitute. Taeyon, another 2016 MAMAs' Artist of the Year nominee, was eliminated from the study as she is a solo artist who shares a Twitter account with another idol group, Girls' Generation, who was not nominated for the award.

It is anticipated that Korean artists will not only be more active on Twitter, but also have more photos, videos, and links to personal content. This is mainly due to the number of people active on each K-Pop group Twitter account. For example, BTS has seven members on their twitter account. EXO and Twice each have nine contributing members, and GFriend has six. Additionally, South Korean artists also seem to see the value in consistently posting to social

media. BTS especially values showing real life content via Twitter and YouTube. According to BTS's leader, Kim Namjoon, "We always try to show what we're feeling, what we're eating, what we're making... Continuously for four or five years" (Marano, 2017). This represents the consistent use of social media many K-Pop idols have adapted to, and supports the idea that Korean artists show more personal, real-life content than Western artists.

### **Results**

Table 1 represents a descriptive profile for the kind of content Korean and Western artists posted on Twitter during a five-week period in 2017. In addition to the typed content posted, photos and videos were also measured in terms of quality of production and the purpose for production. South Korean artists produced more photos and videos of low production value: 68% compared to 16% of high quality content. Meanwhile, Western artists tweeted high quality photos and videos 68% of the time and personally created low-quality photos and videos only 9% of the time.

In terms of the amount of personal content Korean artists produced, as seen in Table 1, 26% of Korean tweets were created to share personal information, 52 of 205 total tweets. Meanwhile, Western artists tweeted personal information only 5% of the time. In general, Korean artists posted more personal photos, videos, and text posts than Western artists. This evidence supports the idea that Korean artists use Twitter to create more personal relationships with their followers than Western artists.

Table 1 also indicates that Western artists engage with fans on Twitter far more often than South Korean idols. Fan engagement accounted for 41% of all tweets posted by Western artists. Fan engagement only accounted for 9% of South Korean artists' tweets. Gratitude aimed at fans was similar for both Korean and Western artists, South Korean

artists posting ‘thank you’ tweets 12% of the time and Western artists posting 10% of the time.

**Table 1: Type of Content Posted**

	Quality	Total Photos/Videos	Percentage	Purpose	Total Tweets	Percentage
Korean Artists	High Production Value	30	16	Personal	52	26
	Low Production Value	127	68	Promotional	69	34
	Combination of High and Low Production Value	29	16	Social	0	0
				Gratitude	25	12
				Fan Engagement	17	8
				Other	1	1
				Combination of Personal and Promotional	22	11
				Combination of Promotional and Gratitude	17	8
Western Artists	High Production Value	15	68	Personal	4	5
	Low Production Value	2	9	Promotional	23	28
	Combination of High and Low Production Value	5	23	Social	2	3
				Gratitude	8	10
				Fan Engagement	33	41
				Other	8	10
				Combination of Personal and Promotional	3	4
				Combination of Promotional and Gratitude	0	0

Table 2 shows the activity of South Korean and Western artists during the constructed five-week sample. Not only did South Korean artists tweet nearly twice as often as Western artists, but their average amount of tweets per week was also higher: 41

tweets compared to 16. South Korean artists also posted more photos and videos than Western artists.

Individually, BTS tweeted the most out of any group with 104 tweets, 109 photos, and 30 videos. Meanwhile, top selling boy group EXO only tweeted 9 times, indicating there is diversity between South Korean artists as a group. Meanwhile, Arianna Grande tweeted 43 times; however, 17 of these tweets were in one day while she replied to her fans' questions and comments. It is also important to note that these 17 tweets accounted for half of the fan engagement on behalf of Western artists. Justin Bieber, the six-time recipient of the Top Social Artist award, only tweeted four times during the five-week sample. Therefore, there is also diversity between Top Social Artist nominees.

**Table 2: Amount of Content Posted**

		Total Tweets	Total Photos	Total Videos
<b>Korean Artists</b>	BTS	104	109	30
	EXO	9	7	2
	GFriend	42	35	2
	Twice	50	19	0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>205</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>34</b>
	<b>Average per Week</b>	41	34	6.8
<b>Western Artists</b>	Ariana Grande	43	1	2
	Justin Bieber	4	0	1
	Selena Gomez	6	6	8
	Shawn Mendez	25	4	6
	<b>Total</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>17</b>
	<b>Average per Week</b>	15.6	2.2	3.4

Table 3 describes the response followers had to photos and videos of different quality. Response was measured by replies, retweets, and likes. Interestingly, it appears as though followers responded to high production value content from Western artists far

more than they responded to high production value content from South Korean artists. On average, high production value content from Westerners received approximately 188,000 actions per photo or video, while South Koreans averaged only approximately 51,000 actions.

Additionally, Table 3 shows the difference between follower responses to low production value content between South Korean and Western artists. Korean artists' low production value content received on average approximately 563,000 actions, while personally created content from Western artists only received 120,000 actions. This may be an indication as to why South Korean Twitter accounts have more low quality, personal content and why Western artists post more high quality content.

**Table 3: Response to Different Quality Content**

	Quality	Average Replies (k)	Average Retweets (k)	Average Likes (k)	Average Total Actions (k)
Korean	High Production Value	2.67	12.79	35.40	50.86
	Low Production Value	16.98	138.97	407.15	563.10
	Combination of Low and High Production Value	9.93	83.39	205.37	298.70
Western	High Production Value	41.58	36.05	110.33	187.96
	Low Production Value	7.7	21.95	90.5	120.15
	Combination of High and Low Production Value	0.46	4.2	14.8	19.46

Table 4, meanwhile, shows how followers respond to content created for different purposes. Unsurprisingly, followers responded far more often to South Korean personal tweets –averaging approximately 707,000 actions per tweet— than to Western personal tweets, which only averaged about 79,000 actions. Therefore, not only do South Korean



artists post more personal content, but their followers also respond more positively to personal content.

Additionally, Table 4 shows that South Korean celebrities had more response from their followers in general. On average, South Korean tweets received approximately 374,000 actions per post, while Western tweets only received approximately 82,000 actions per post.

**Table 4: Response to Content Created for Different Purposes**

	Purpose	Average Replies (k)	Average Retweets (k)	Average Likes (k)	Average Actions Total (k)
<b>Korean</b>	<b>Personal</b>	20.93	191.07	494.67	706.68
	<b>Promotional</b>	3.62	3.62	115.88	123.13
	<b>Social</b>	0	0	0	0
	<b>Gratitude</b>	30.24	276.32	654.84	961.40
	<b>Fan Engagement</b>	18.44	180.48	430.12	629.04
	<b>Other</b>	3.70	66	84	153.70
	<b>Combination of Personal and Promotional</b>	3.05	36.07	84.91	124.04
	<b>Combination of Promotional and Gratitude</b>	5.37	75.24	215.38	295.97
<b>Western</b>	<b>Personal</b>	3.83	12.28	62.50	78.60
	<b>Promotional</b>	26.55	19.17	55.69	101.41
	<b>Social</b>	2.33	2.33	54	58.66
	<b>Gratitude</b>	5.59	5.59	132.13	143.30
	<b>Fan Engagement</b>	3.85	13.97	48.99	66.81
	<b>Other</b>	6.68	16.25	127.50	150.39
	<b>Combination of Personal and Promotional</b>	3.50	9.90	44.33	57.73
	<b>Combination of Promotional and Gratitude</b>	0	0	0	0

This response to South Korean artists' tweets is surprising, considering Korean artists have a much smaller following compared to Western artists, as seen in Table 5.

Korean artists have fewer followers and a higher response. This may indicate that Korean artist Twitter strategy may be more successful than that of Western artists or that there may be a cultural difference between artists. However, Korean follower/following ratio is higher than Western artists, indicating higher popularity.

**Table 5: Followers/Following Ratio**

Artist	Following	Followers (Millions)	Ratio (Followers/Following)
<b>BTS</b>	113	13,700,000	121,239
<b>EXO</b>	1	2,700,000	2,700,000
<b>GFriend</b>	6	686,000	114,333
<b>Twice</b>	42	2,280,000	54,286
<b>Ariana Grande</b>	64,500	56,800,000	881
<b>Justin Bieber</b>	315,000	106,000,000	337
<b>Selena Gomez</b>	1,254	56,200,000	44,817
<b>Shawn Mendes</b>	60,400	18,300,000	303

## Discussion

### Content

As anticipated, South Korean artists were not only more active on Twitter, but they also posted more photos and videos. Furthermore, South Korean artists posted far more personal information than Western artists. Sharing personal information via social networking is a way to create intimacy and approachability between fans and celebrities, even those that live overseas (Nisbett & DeWalt, 2016). Meanwhile, Western artists connect with their fan base on Twitter by engaging them. By using mentions or addressing fans directly, fan engagement accounted for 41% of their tweets. This aligns with prior research. Loader, Vromen, and Xenos surveyed 107 college students to determine how fans viewed politicians' and celebrities' use of social media (2016). Participants explained in open-ended questions that they felt celebrities use Twitter as a way to engage with their

fans directly (Loader, Vromen, & Xenos, 2016). Followers responded positively to Western fan engagement, with an average of 66 thousand replies, retweets, and likes per tweet.

This study also found a difference in the use of hashtags between South Korean and Western artists. South Korean artists used more hashtags than Westerners. On average, South Korean artists used approximately two hashtags per tweet, while Western artists used zero. Hashtags are used to sort and select “thematically related information from a torrent of messages within the context of social media platforms” (van der Berg, 2014, p. 4). The use of hashtags can increase the likelihood that a tweet is recognized (Calvin, Bellmore, Xu, & Zhu, 2015). However, South Korean tweets frequently used hashtags to identify the writer, as multiple group members had access to the same account. For example, seven members of BTS have access to @BTS\_twt, and Park Jimin often signed his tweets with #JIMIN to show his authorship.

Both South Korean and Western artists mainly used links to connect followers to their personal content. According to Vaughan, the more links are shared to specific web content, the more visible that content becomes (2016). Websites that are linked to on social media are more visible to the general web and vice versa (Vaughan, 2016). This may account for why the Twitter accounts observed in this study linked to the same websites multiple times. For example, GFriend would link their new VLive video multiple times throughout each week. Hyperlinks are mainly used on Twitter to direct followers to other photo sharing or video sharing websites (Choi & Park, 2015). Artists in this study had similar usage, linking mainly to YouTube, VLive, and Instagram.

Western celebrities did not share personal information or opinions frequently on Twitter. This is interesting, considering U.S. journalists share personal information and

opinions regularly on Twitter. According to Lasorsa, Lewis, and Holton, 61% of journalists' tweets share personal opinion (2012). Additionally, journalists share extraneous information outside of the news, such as personal tweets about their jobs or days (Lasorsa, Lewis, & Holton, 2012). Many journalists mix personal and professional content on Twitter (Bruns & Hanusch, 2016). While Western journalists—who are supposed to remain completely objective—are using Twitter to share personal information and opinion, Western celebrities—who have no obligation to stay credible or impartial—are reserved on Twitter, posting personal content only 5% of the time.

Meanwhile, in Western sports, athletes even share contested political opinions, using Twitter as a place to hold conversations that “challenge group norms and values” (Sanderson, Frederick, & Stocz, 2016, p. 319). Twitter is a good way for athletes to engage with fans (Yoon et al., 2014). Some athletes additionally engage in activism and advocacy. Social media such as Twitter provides an opportunity to discuss political and social issues with sports fans (Sanderson, Ferederick, & Stocz, 2016, p. 318).

Western politicians also share personal information and opinions. President Donald Trump's “unfiltered” use of Twitter received far more engagement than Hillary Clinton's tweets (Johnson, 2018). These politicians engage with citizens on a regular basis with mentions and reciprocal communication; although, United States politicians engage with citizens less than politicians from the United Kingdom and the Netherlands (Tromble, 2016).

In terms of fan engagement, while South Korean artists did use mentions to speak to fellow band members through their personal accounts, only Western artists used mentions to talk to fans, friends, or other celebrities. Out of 205 tweets, Korean artists only

mentioned other accounts a total of four times. Meanwhile, 42 of 78 Western tweets contained mentions. Interactivity is measured by mentions. The more mentions, the higher the interactivity of an online Twitter community (Kwan Hui & Datta, 2016). The lack of mentions from South Korean artists indicates low interactivity. Mentions on Twitter can also indicate friendships, allowing for bilateral social interaction (Shin, Singh, Cho, & Everett, 2015). Therefore, by mentioning and replying to fans, celebrities can create more intimacy with their fan base. This is a concept most clearly grasped by Ariana Grande, who mentioned 17 fans over the course of one day.

### **Further Research**

As an area for future research, this study found a shocking difference between responses for female and male artists. On average, tweets made by female artists received approximately 37,300 total actions (replies, retweets, and likes) per tweet. Meanwhile, male artists received on average 697,800 total actions per tweet. This is surprising, since females tend to care more about creating a positive image on social media than males (Kuo, Tseng, Tseng, & Lin, 2013). Females are also typically more likely to care about what their followers think about their social media posts and become depressed if they are unpopular online (Nesi, Prinstein, & Prinstein, 2015). Additionally, females use social networking sites more often than males (Shaojing, Xitao, & Jianxia, 2016, p. 72). Females are also more likely to compare themselves to each other online (Nesi, Prinstein, & Prinstein, 2015).

With all of the time and care spent crafting each post, the female tweets still received less feedback than the male tweets. This may be due to the negative view of women shared on social media. According to Rightler-McDaniels and Hendrickson, women are consistently “identified by demeaning and demoralizing terms” on Twitter (2014, p.

186). Rightler-McDaniels and Hendrickson also claim that Twitter is male-dominated and used to push patriarchal ideas (2014). Men are more likely to cyberbully than females, especially in Asian cultures where a collectivist mindset—which is more likely to discourage bullying—is enforced and “could be more deep-rooted in Asian females than males” (Shaojing, Xitao, & Jianxia, 2016, p. 72). Additionally, according to Yoon et al., women have very different motivations while using Twitter. While studying sports fandom on Twitter, research found that women are more likely to engage with athletes and teams for enjoyment or as a pastime than for informational or fan purposes (Yoon et al., 2014). Further research of this topic is needed to determine the difference in response on Twitter between genders.

### **Conclusion**

It is clear that while both Western and South Korean artists have a large following on social media, there is still potential for greater success. Western and South Korean artists have varying strategies, and adopting some of these different cultural approaches could result in greater success on Twitter. For example, considering the positive feedback South Korean artists receive on their personal posts, Western artists might attempt something similar to create intimacy with their fan base.

Meanwhile, South Korean artists might become more successful on Twitter by replying to their fans directly. Evidence suggests that mentions connote friendship on Twitter (Shin, Singh, Cho, & Everett, 2015). Therefore, South Korean artists may be able to strengthen the illusion of intimacy with their fan base by replying to fans on social media. Even simply following fans back would be a step towards engaging their fan base on a deeper level. South Korean artists have a lot to learn from Western Twitter accounts about

how to directly engage fans on social media; however, Western artists can learn a lot about using personal content to create intimacy from South Korean Twitter accounts.

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