

World of k-pop essay



The K-Pop Fever and Its Asian American Victims ([http://www. mochimag. com/article/k-pop-fever-and-its-asian-american-victims](http://www.mochimag.com/article/k-pop-fever-and-its-asian-american-victims)) There's no doubt that Korean pop culture (affectionately called K-pop) has become an international phenomenon. It's gaining popularity in American pop culture, with enthusiastic fans such as Perez Hilton. For Asian American teens, the luring quality of K-pop runs a little deeper.

As Facebook and Twitter feeds run rampant with the latest buzz on SNSD, Big Bang or 2PM, Korean music and all the culture that accompanies it has travelled at lightning speed across the Pacific to influence both Korean and non-Korean American teens alike. The global interaction of K-pop has also become a way for Korean Americans to relate to Koreans from the “motherland” halfway across the world. Last year, when the news broke about K-pop boy band 2PM's loss of their lead singer, Asian American heartthrob Jay Park, girls in America and Korea alike mourned together through online forums and discussion groups.

Watching stars both on and off the stage through YouTube videos has also helped Korean American girls keep up with the latest fashion trends in Korea, be it thick winged eyeliner or the latest twist on fake glasses. This continued connection, something that is not so readily found with many other first-generation immigrants and their native countries, helps explain the fierce loyalty that many Korean American teens express to their native Korea. Despite the materialism of the Korean entertainment industry, K-pop's influence still produces a positive influence on teens.

For one, most Korean music has clean lyrics and positive messages—you are far less likely to find songs about partying, drinking or hook-ups. Both Lee and Lin agree that from an American teenager’s standpoint, Korean music videos and on-stage performances feature cleaner dance moves and less revealing clothing. Unlike American pop stars, K-pop stars are constantly promoting their music with frequent live stage TV performances, endorsements and interviews.

As a Chinese American teenager surrounded by K-pop obsesses but not entirely obsessed myself, I’ve been able to witness the passion that so many people have for music from a country across the world. This summer, when the Wonder Girls and 2PM came to San Francisco on tour, thousands of Asian American teens flocked to the concert, some waiting in line for hours just to take pictures with the stars. There are times where I complain that this entire K-pop craze can get annoying, but ultimately I think it is a positive, if unexpected, influence on the Asian American teens around me. That and the fact that the tunes are just so damn catchy.

Young people today have been going crazy over South Korean showbiz stars. I’m sure the above story does not only happen in Vietnam. For years, people’s huge interests in South Korean showbiz industry have created what some call Hallyu [the Korean cultural wave that’s making its way around the world]. This Hallyu trend not only gains popularity in Asian countries like Vietnam, Japan, China, and Thailand but also spreads to South America and Europe. It’s natural for South Korean people to be proud of Hallyu’s popularity overseas.

However, like other countries including Vietnam, we had got involved in heated discussions and arguments before reaching agreement in following the right policies to make Hallyu known to the rest of the world.

Approximately 20 years ago, we worried a lot about the potential effects of hip-hop music that came from Western countries on our teenagers as they tried to compete with one another in getting hair dyed or decorated themselves with weird jewellery pieces or clothes. We held a lot of seminars regarding this topic in which many questions were raised: Do young people deny tradition? Do they imitate western cultures?

Are youngsters no longer patriotic? However, last of all we realized the reason the youth became “ crazy fans” of western artists was partly that South Korean showbiz at that time was not fascinating enough to appeal them. Hence, we developed the policies that helped encourage changes to this field. Let me take an example from K-pop (the South Korean music industry) today. My generation and other older ones do not get accustomed to listening to this kind of music simply because western experts have been hired to teach local musicians, who are also encouraged to study music abroad in order to find a new trend for the K-pop development.

The local musicians studying abroad are required to compose songs as a mixture of traditionalism and modernism. As I know, a number of South Korean musicians have hired foreigners to offer professional advice for their works to ensure that both locals and foreigners like them. Along with musicians, film producers, choreographers, singers, among others have made great efforts for changes. For these reasons, Hallyu is the result of the change efforts jointly by the government and showbiz artists.

All arguments about the topic “ Crazy fans of western celebrities” ended after South Korean football team ranked fourth in the World Cup 2002. Millions of youngsters with red T-shirts stormed into the streets to shout glamorously the country’s name to express their support for the national football team. Greatly amazed by these patriotic images, local sociologists have concluded that dying hair or wearing bizarre hip-hop clothing like loose trousers or weird jewellery pieces among the youth is completely not a big deal.

Most importantly, they still show deep patriotism and pride for the country. From my story, I think Vietnamese people shouldn’t be too worried about “ crazy fans”. That is a temporary phenomenon occurring in a period of life when people are too young and ebullient. But you should not ignore it. Adults need to ask themselves questions like “ Why aren’t we able to make idols for the young? ” You should always raise such questions and try to answer them. If you could do so, the Vietnamese showbiz will keep up with its South Korean counterpart in the near future.