



CATCHING THE KOREAN WAVE

MUSIC, CREATIVITY AND CULTURAL DIFFERENCES



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By Luisa Rolander

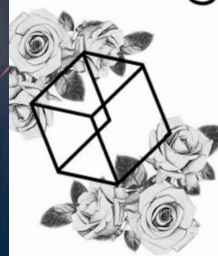
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We Are One

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- ❖ Max Ulver, GL Music
- ❖ Jacoby, C9 Entertainment
- ❖ P5: You know who you are 😊
- ❖ Louise
- ❖ Gitte
- ❖ Tasom
- ❖ Wonjun
- ❖ Seojeon
- ❖ Yuna

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Korean popular music has received increasing attention on Western markets in recent years. The Hallyu wave or Korean wave, which refers to an increasing interest in South Korean pop culture, is quickly becoming a global phenomenon, attracting fans and collaborators from all over the world. However, a closer look at Korean and European music industry show fundamental differences both regarding consumer behavior and the creative processes, which will naturally affect an artist's ability to navigate international markets. The aim in this thesis was therefore to explore these cultural differences and the opportunities and challenges they may bring by performing a comparative study of the Korean music industry, and the Danish music industry as a representation of Europe.

The thesis' theoretical framework included tools for analyzing the properties of creative industries and their ability to foster creativity through networks and manage complex tasks and heightened market uncertainty. Furthermore, it included theory on consumer behavior and experience goods, as well as fan communities and national cultural dimensions. Primary data was collected through in-depth interviews with industry professionals and music consumers in Denmark and Korea.

The findings implied contrasting industry structures, showing that Korean music companies tend to internalize operations, while Danish music companies rely on an external network. Moreover, these contrasts continued to show throughout the creative processes. Additionally, vast differences were also found regarding consumer behavior. It was discovered that Korean consumers value loyalty and community and has focus on the artist, while Danish consumers value individuality and personal preference and is more focused on music as a stand-alone product. These findings resulted in a discussion of a Korean artist's likely challenges on international markets, mentioning both cross-cultural songwriting and collaborations, as well as difficulties in reaching consumers of multiple cultures.

Furthermore, the case of an internationally successful K-Pop group was introduced to demonstrate the possibilities. This included companies taking advantage of cross-cultural knowledge sharing, in order to shape the creative processes and create unique, cultural hybrids that can help reach international markets. Furthermore, it also involved fostering loyal, online fan communities that will help lift the artist's career and spread international awareness.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 THE HALLYU WAVE

South Korean popular music, which usually goes by the name K-Pop, has seen incredible rise in recent years. It is a genre of music that incorporates elements of both pop, R&B, hip-hop and electronic music, but most importantly what defines the genre is that it comes from South Korea. As the second-largest music market in Asia, K-Pop has already been enjoyed by its neighboring countries for a long time (The Jakarta Post, 2016). However, in recent years K-Pop has also received increasing attention in the western part of the world, with numerous Korean artists including Psy, BTS and Girls Generation entering American and European music charts. The Hallyu wave, referring to the increasing interest in South Korean pop culture, is quickly becoming a global phenomenon as it has already swept across Asia and is now also starting to take the Western world by storm. Even though one will find that these K-Pop groups usually sing in Korean, it does not stop them from gaining a huge international following as well. Dedicated fans from all over the world enjoys both the groups' music as well as their beautifully produced music videos, and social media content. In fact, as of September 2017 it is the Korean K-Pop group BTS, that holds the world record for highest social media engagement by a music group on the global platform Twitter (Koreaboo, 2018).

1.2 PROBLEM AREA AND RESEARCH QUESTION

If one were to compare the Korean music industry with the European one, they would look rather similar from the outside. Both places you will find artists that release their music and perform concerts for their music-loving fans. Furthermore, both are creative industries with complex, creative processes, circulated around producing music. However, when looking closer one will discover that the process of creating and selling the finished product is, in certain ways, very different across music industries.

In Korea and a European country like Denmark, each music industry's structure differs from each other, as the record labels of Denmark and Entertainment companies of Korea are in fact very

different companies, even though both are music companies. Therefore, it is no surprise that the companies will also have different ways of dealing with the creative complexity of their product, as well as the music market. The differences are however not just limited to the creative processes of each industry. There are also great cultural differences to be found regarding consumption on each market and the general consumer behavior of Korean and Danish music fans.¹

These differences in industry dynamics and consumer behavior between national cultures will naturally affect an artist's ability to navigate global markets. This may in turn, possibly make it challenging to achieve international success, which is the problem area that this thesis will seek to investigate, using the following research question:

In today's global music markets, what role does cultural differences play and to which degree does it give opportunities and challenges for artists to have an international career?

This research question will be answered with starting point in K-Pop's increased popularity in the Western part of the world, such as America and Europe. Focus will therefore be put on the culturally embedded opportunities and challenges that Korean artists may face, as they are building their international career on the European market.

To explore this problem area, the thesis will therefore look into Korea's music industry structure and its creative processes, in order to get an understanding of the Korean approach to music and what kind of complexity they are dealing with as a creative industry. Additionally, Korean music consumers will also be analyzed, in order to shed light on what type of music market and consumer behavior Korea consists of.

Furthermore, the same components will be analyzed in Denmark, which as a European country, will function as a representation of the European music industry.

The result of this is a comparative analysis of Danish and Korean music industries' structure, creative processes and local music consumption patterns. The analysis should be able to shed light on the

¹ In this thesis the word 'fan' will be used broadly to describe all music consumers

differences between these two cultural industries and through those differences, explain the opportunities and challenges Korean artists may face in Europe.

In relation to this, the following three sub questions have been formulated in an effort to structure the thesis and answer the different components, that are relevant for eventually answering the main research question:

1: How does the music industry structure itself in respectively Denmark and Korea, and in what ways does that structure help industry professionals deal with the complexity that characterizes creative industries?

2: How does Koreans and Danes consume popular music and in what ways do the consumption patterns and industry structures relate to each other?

3: Taking starting point in the findings of Danish and Korean music industry and consumers, how may cultural and structural differences impact a Korean artist's ability to gain success on the European market?

1.3 DELIMITATION

In terms of cultural differences, this thesis will not make a comprehensive account, but will limit itself to rather go in-depth with the creative processes of Korean and Danish music industry as well as the consumer behavior of Korean and Danish music fans. However, of course there will most likely be numerous other cultural properties, such as language barriers, that may have an effect on an artist's ability to have an international career. However, they will not be accounted for in this research.

Furthermore, another delimitation of the research is related to music genre. Here, focus will exclusively be on commercial, popular music and in Korea specifically K-Pop. Having a clear delimit of genre helps in clarifying exactly what areas of the music industry the research will explore, since other music genres will have a slightly different approach to music creation and the fans will have different consumption patterns.

CHAPTER 2: METHODOLOGY

In order to answer this thesis' research question, information needs to be gathered on the music industry structure and consumer behavior in Denmark and Korea, in order to make a comparative analysis.

In this following chapter, the research approach and data collection methods of the study will be explained. Furthermore, insights into the data processing will be provided and the validity of the overall research will be evaluated.

2.1 RESEARCH METHODS

2.1.1 PRIMARY DATA: IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS

In order to obtain the necessary information for investigating the problem area and answering the research question, this thesis will make use of qualitative research methods.

This choice of approach stems from the qualitative method's ability to capture complexity and provide in-depth explanations of a behavior or process. An ability that is necessary for investigating the consumption patterns and music industry structures of Denmark and Korea, and in turn answering this thesis' research question (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008).

More specifically, in terms of primary data in-depth interviews have been conducted with three industry professionals in Seoul as well as three in Copenhagen, in order to gather extensive information about the structure of each market. Furthermore, three interviews were conducted with four consumers in Seoul, Korea and two consumer interviews were conducted in Copenhagen, Denmark in order to gather information on music consumption patterns in both countries.

In Korea, the industry professionals included Mr. Park, a Program Director at the entertainment and mass media company CJ ENM who, through his work, has touched base with many aspects of the Korean music industry. In his interview, he shared his knowledge about the overall structure and dynamics of the industry, as well as insights about the overall consumer behavior in Korea. Jacoby,

a producer and songwriter at C9 Entertainment explained the creative processes regarding music production for Korean artists. Finally, the owner of a Korean entertainment company, who is known to this researcher but will remain anonymous, gave valuable insights about the structure of Korean entertainment companies and their processes, as well as how they work with the Korean fan culture. Similarly, in Denmark Max Ulver, producer and songwriter at GL Music were interviewed about his creative work, producing music with Danish artists.

Additionally, Christian Skjølstrup, owner of Glass Management and Christian Svenningsen, Partner and Publishing Director at GL Music, each shared their knowledge about the Danish music industry and consumer behavior. Moreover, Christian Svenningsen, who has extensive experience working with East Asian markets, shared his reflections on the cultural and structural differences between Korean and Danish music industries.

Regarding the consumer interviews both in Denmark and Korea, all interviewees were students in their 20s, who shared information about their music consumption and purchases, as well as their knowledge and experience being a music fan.

Interviews

Name	Nationality	Occupation
P1: Christian Svenningsen	Danish	Partner & Publishing Director, GL Music
P2: Christian Skjølstrup	Danish	Owner, Glass Management
P3: Max Ulver	Danish	Songwriter and producer, GL Music
P4: Mr. Park	Korean	Program Director, Mnet
P5: Anonymous	Korean	Owner, Entertainment company
P6: Jacoby	Korean	Songwriter and producer, C9 Entertainment
C1: Louise	Danish	Student
C2: Gitte	Danish	Student
C3: Tasom	Korean	Student
C4: Wonjun & Seojeon	Korean	Student
C5: Yuna	Korean	Student

2.1.2 SECONDARY DATA

Secondary data included mostly data on the music environment, in order to supplement the primary interviews. Furthermore, this was especially centered around compiling thorough data on the Korean group, BTS and the company behind them, in order to use the group as a case study and discuss their approach to international markets. Luckily, as the group is gaining a lot of international attention, it was possible to find extensive information on various, major music-oriented websites, which was then combined to introduce the group and shed light on their approach.

Additionally, a great deal of secondary data stems from the Hofstede Research Centre. This includes measurements and comparisons of the characteristics of various national cultures, including Denmark and Korea. The cultural evaluations work as a supplement to Geert Hofstede's cultural framework, which will be introduced in the following chapter, and is a further development of the theory. By using the cultural evaluations as secondary data, this thesis is able to move beyond theoretical contemplations and actually investigate the cultural characteristics of Korea and Denmark, as they have been evaluated on the Hofstede Research Centre's website. All in all, this piece of secondary data plays an essential role in actually carrying out a comparative analysis of the cultural traits of Korea and Denmark. Moreover, its use and limitations will be discussed further in the following chapter, in connection with Hofstede's theoretical framework.

2.2 INTERVIEW DESIGN AND DATA COLLECTION

As mentioned, the primary information source of this thesis is the in-depth interviews with industry professionals and consumers in both Korea and Denmark. These interviews were carried out face to face and in a semi-structured way, in order to be able to react to the interviewees' answers and follow up with further questions when necessary.

Even though the interviews were supported by the interview guide enclosed in appendix I, they were generally designed to be open-ended and carried out as casual conversations. This means that the tone was conversational, and the interviewees were invited to talk about their favorite artists. The design was reflected in the interview settings as well, as they would take place at the respondent's choice of location and would typically involve food or other commodities. The

interviews were designed this way to make the respondents feel as comfortable as possible, in an effort to get honest and in-depth answers, that would not be affected by uncomfortable settings (Warren, 2012). This was especially important in Korea, as English proficiency seems to generally not be very high and many of the interviewees were not so comfortable speaking in English. So, by letting the interviewees choose the location and providing a positive atmosphere, the Korean respondents would be in an environment where they felt comfortable completing their interview in English, in turn positively affecting their answers.

However, even with these efforts, the language barrier still had a great influence on the Korean interviews. First of all, it made it harder to truly conduct in-depth interviews as in many cases, the language had to be kept simple and somewhat superficial. This happened both as interviewer and interviewee, as the formulation of the questions had to be simple to ensure an understanding, while the answers to the questions would in some cases be quite simple due to language abilities. Furthermore, the timeframe of the interviews would typically not exceed 1-1,5 hours in order to not tire out the interviewees (Warren, 2012). However, the language barriers made the interviews slower paced, which would affect the depth of the interviews, due to the limited timeframe.

Secondly, there were cases where a translator was necessary in order to complete the interviews. This included the interview with the producer and songwriter, Jacoby as well as the anonymous interview with the owner of an entertainment company. Furthermore, the translations were provided by Korean acquaintances who were proficient in English, rather than a professional interpreter. The situation was similar during Tasom's interview. However, she would use an electronic translator instead. What could generally be observed with these interviews was that the respondents seemed to have a good understanding of English and would often not need to translate the questions. The language barrier would mostly show itself when the respondents had to answer, as they would not be comfortable enough in English and therefore provide answers in Korean. This has had huge effect on the interviews, as it means that a lot of data might have been lost in translation and that the answers given may have been slightly altered based on the translator's own interpretation and choice of words.

Additionally, the language complication also resulted in one interview being conducted with two respondents at once (Seojeon and Wonjun), in order to make them feel more comfortable speaking

in English. The constellation worked well, as it made the respondents more relaxed and able to supplement each other when answering the questions. However, it is important to note that the presence of two interviewees at once, who also know each other already, does present a risk of them possibly influencing each other's answers, making them less truthful (Warren, 2012).

Moreover, as a result of the language barriers and cultural differences present during the Korean interviews, the role as interviewer became more active. In a sense it means that interviewer and interviewee are constructing meaning collaboratively, as the language barriers and cultural differences results in the need to create common ground and meaning (Holstein & Gubrium, 2002).

Furthermore, there were no problems with language barriers during the Danish interviews, as they were carried out in Danish. However, parts of them have been translated after, when included in this research. Similar to the implications during the Korean interviews, translations are generally subject to interpretation. So, the risk of misinterpretations or culturally embedded meaning being lost in translation needs to be considered, as they possibly result in the respondents' accounts being altered.

2.3 DATA ANALYSIS METHOD

In order to process the research data, the interviews were all transcribed and then coded in two stages using Miles, Huberman & Saldaña's (2013) tools for qualitative data analysis. The final result of this can be seen in appendix II, which contains all the coded interviews.

During the first cycle, a combination of deductive and inductive coding was used, as the problem area and hypotheses of this thesis resulted in some pre-existing codes such as networks, creativity, fan behavior and music preferences. However, the pre-existing codes ended up more as overall themes for the interviews and data analysis to take starting point in, while the majority of the coding happened inductively by progressively creating codes as the data was processed. This approach to coding proved vital in obtaining an authentic image of the problem area, as only using deductive coding would probably have resulted in the data being molded to fit the codes. Furthermore, fundamental themes would have been lost, such as the focus on entertainment companies and visuals in Korea, as these elements were not discovered until the interviews were done.

For the first cycle, holistic coding was largely used, applying a code to relatively large amounts of data. This way, it was possible to get a sense of the overall themes of the content. Furthermore, it worked preparatory for a more detailed coding, where descriptive codes were used to assign labels to the data, describing the basic topic of a line or short paragraph such as *emotional connection*, *fan meetings* or *artist training*.

For the second cycle of coding, pattern codes were applied. This involved grouping together the codes from the first cycle, in order to categorize and explain tendencies. For example, as seen in figure 1, it meant that the codes; *artist loyalty* and *artist knowledge* were categorized under the code *artist dedication*, as they both helped illustrate the consumers' dedication to the artists they liked.

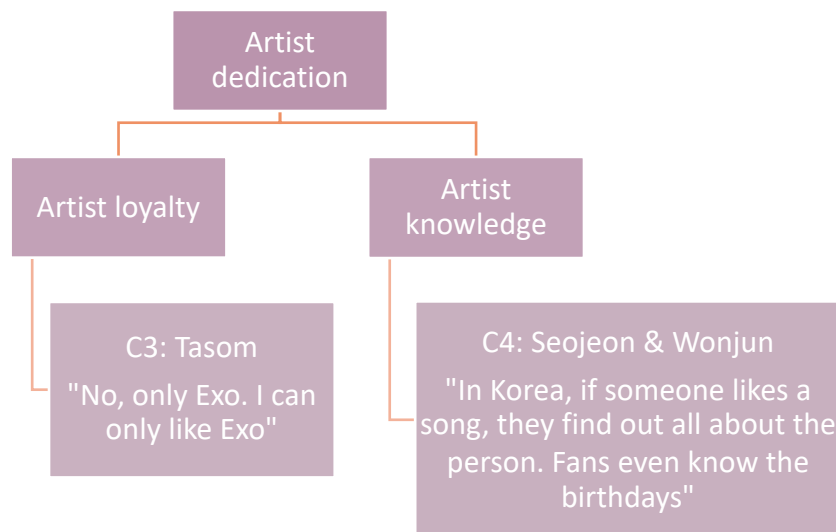


FIGURE 1

Additionally, this process often also included further categorizing the applied pattern codes. For example, the pattern codes; *artist dedication*, *artist interactions*, *artist relations* and *supporting* were further categorized under the code *artist focus*, as they helped demonstrate times when fans' music consumption was focused on the artist. This resulted in the model illustrated in appendix III, which shows how the codes are grouped together and categorized. This helped create an overall coherence and show how the codes relate to each other.

Furthermore, all codes used for processing the data were clearly defined, so that they could be applied consistently. This was also done in an effort to assure that the coding and following analysis is reliable, so that other researchers with the same data and code definitions can process the

interviews and arrive at the same conclusions. These code definitions have been enclosed in appendix IV.

By applying these first- and second cycle codes, it was possible to analyze and reflect on the data, essentially laying the groundwork for this thesis' actual analysis. Furthermore, the codes assisted in the comparative analysis of Korean and Danish music industry and consumers, since the overall themes that surfaced could easily be compared across interviews, using the codes. (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2013)

2.4 RESEARCH EVALUATION

Validity concerns whether a research's conclusions provide an accurate description of a problem area (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). As previously mentioned, the primary data has been gathered through interviews with music industry professionals as well as consumers of popular music in both Korea and Denmark. This way, the research data stems from direct representatives of this study's problem area, which works to ensure its validity. Additionally, the validity is further strengthened by the fact that the same interview guide was used for all interviews with industry professionals, and the same case for consumer interviews. This way, triangulation of data is essentially performed, making it possible to ensure reliable accounts of industry and market dynamics, as the descriptions could be confirmed through several interviews (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008).

Furthermore, reliability concerns a research's consistency and the extent to which a research can be repeated, yielding the same results (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). In an effort to make the results of this thesis reliable, the interviews have been directly transcribed and processed using acknowledged coding methods. Additionally, both interviews, code definitions and coding results have been enclosed, allowing the reader to follow the research process from beginning to end. Furthermore, the data has been processed and analyzed logically, with a critical standpoint, and with correct use of theoretical frameworks, all working towards creating consistent, reliable results.

In terms of limitations and margins of error, there were challenges regarding language barriers, when conducting interviews in Korea, as already mentioned. Moreover, as Warren (2012) explains, an advantage of repeated interviews is that further information or different perspectives may be brought to light. However, for this thesis it was not possible to repeat the interviews, so the results will not benefit from this method, even though it could have possibly minimized the challenges of language barriers, as it would have provided more time to go in-depth.

Additionally, the consumer interviews were all conducted with students in their 20s, which may have an effect on the image this thesis provides of music consumers. For a more varied image, it would have suited the research to include different ages and occupations. However, since the study provides a comparative analysis of the two consumer cultures, the results are still valid, as the Korean and Danish interviewees can be directly compared, due to their similar age and occupation.

Finally, even though the results are deemed reliable, the argument could have been further strengthened, if another researcher had been involved in the coding process in order to strengthen the code definitions and perform a reliability check through researcher triangulation (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008).

CHAPTER 3: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

This section will introduce the theoretical frameworks that are being applied throughout the thesis. The first part of the theoretical frameworks concerns outlining the structure and inspecting the creative processes of Korean and Danish music industry. Meanwhile, the second half concerns music consumption and cultural consumer behavior in Korea and Denmark. These theories will be used as tools to explain the findings of the empirical data and will in the end help answer the previously stated research question.

3.1 INDUSTRY STRUCTURE AND PROCESSES

In order to illustrate how the core music companies of Korean and Danish music industry operate, Porter's (1998) value chain is used. The value chain is a model used to map out the processes a company goes through in order to create and sell a product, usually with the purpose of identifying all production activities, consequently promoting improvements and creating competitive advantage. It divides a company's production into four support activities and five primary activities, of which four primary activities are used in this thesis, to shed light on Korean and Danish music companies. These include *inbound logistics*, *operations*, *outbound logistics*, and *marketing and sales*. *Inbound logistics* concern bringing materials into the company, which are then converted into products during *operations*, before being shipped out during *outbound logistics*. Lastly, *marketing and sales* then concerns marketing and selling the finished product to consumers. (Kotler, Keller, Brady, Goodman, & Hansen, 2012, pp. 88-90)

For this thesis, the value chain is used as a way of introducing the Korean and Danish music industry. This way, the reader is provided with an overview of the industry dynamics, as the music companies' value chain is introduced, but also the different suppliers and collaborators that take part in creating music.

Creative industries are defined by Caves as industries that are “*supplying goods and services that we broadly associate with cultural, artistic, or simply entertainment value*” (Caves, 2000, p. 1), and will typically have to deal with complexity in their process, due to the creative nature.

To further explain the structure of these creative processes that are identified in the value chain and how it affects the companies’ ability to manage complex tasks related to the music industry, Caves’ (2000) seven economic properties of creative industries are applied. These are developed especially for explaining the characteristic properties of creative industries such as the music industry. Furthermore, the purpose of using these properties is to explain why creative industries organize themselves as they do, by looking at how creative drive affects the processes.

Of the seven properties four proved to be essential in exploring the music industry’s creative processes and includes *nobody knows*, *art for art’s sake*, *motley crew* and *time flies*.

Firstly, the property *nobody knows* concerns the uncertainty related to producing creative products, as consumer reactions are highly unpredictable, making it difficult to know whether a product will be successful until the cost is sunk and the product is put on the market. So, due to the naturally high risk of production, this property argues the importance of allocating and sharing risk where it is possible.

Secondly, the property *art for art’s sake* concerns how the creator of a creative product typically cares deeply about the end result, emphasizing originality, display of skills and the overall artistic achievement, which does not always add value for the consumer. Coupling creatives with commerce can therefore result in complex processes, due to differences in priorities.

Furthermore, this property correlates with the property *motley crew*, which states that in creative production, specialized inputs are usually needed at different stages, and none of them can be substituted as each is vital for the creative output. These two properties correlate, since the specialized inputs will result in a *motley crew* of creative specialists who has to work together, often resulting in higher complexity. This is due to differences in artistic preferences and tastes and the artists having trouble compromising, as *art for art’s sake* implies.

Lastly, the property *time flies* concerns how time is of the essence in creative industries, since many creative products are quite costly to produce especially due to sunk cost. It makes it costly to withhold projects both due to the money at stake and the effect time may have on the product’s value. (Caves, 2000, pp. 2-10)

In terms of the analysis of Danish and Korean music companies, applying these properties assists in explaining why the companies are structuring their activities in certain ways, as it becomes possible to determine the complexities they are dealing with and how.

Furthermore, these properties are supplemented by Boschma (2005) on proximity and knowledge sharing and Godart & Mears (2009) on uncertainty and networks.

Godart & Mears (2009) article explains how creatives will navigate the industry uncertainty by collaborating and looking to each other for inspiration. This is exemplified with a case from the fashion industry, that shows how social connections are used to share opinions and inputs in order to make decisions regarding the creative product, in this case the runway shows.

Additionally, Boschma (2005) deals with five dimensions on proximity, of which this thesis will focus on cognitive proximity, relating it to knowledge sharing in the music industry. With cognitive proximity, Boschma argues that while innovation and learning depend on heterogeneous agents and complementary capabilities, effective knowledge-sharing also requires that there is not too big of a cognitive distance between the parties involved. Ultimately, this means that in order to effectively gain the benefits of knowledge sharing, cognitive proximity needs to be balanced. Essentially, the agents need to be cognitively close enough to understand and process the new knowledge, but still be distant enough for a learning potential to be present. This way, knowledge sharing is effectively utilized and also avoids cognitive lock-in, where too much proximity results in a lack of flexibility and openness towards new inputs, which in turn has a negative effect on innovation. Even though Godart & Mears (2009) article is not directly applied on music industry, the overall concept, along with Boschma (2005) on cognitive proximity, proved useful for explaining the role of networks and knowledge sharing during the creative processes in the music industry. This is due to fashion design and music both being part of the creative industries, therefore sharing similar characteristics regarding uncertainty and complexity, as explained by Caves' (2000) properties.

3.2 MUSIC CONSUMPTION

For this part of the analysis, concerning music consumption and consumer behavior, Holbrook & Hirschman's (1982) explanation of experiential buying behavior will be used. This perspective on buying behavior explains how consumers are buying experiences rather than simple objects. Focus

is on symbolic meanings and intangible, subconscious processes such as emotions. Additionally, consumption is explained as being successful on the basis of gratifications such as amusement, arousal and sensory stimulation. Art and entertainment are used as examples of areas, where the influence of these elements is especially strong, and the product is appreciated for its own sake rather than for the practical function. Furthermore, this view on consumption as an experience matches Caves' (2000) explanation of creative products as experience goods and proves useful to explain the consumers' highly emotional motivation for listening to music, as discovered in the empirical data.

Moreover, this perspective on consumer behavior will be supplemented by Herskovitz & Crystal's (2010) and Escalas' (2004) explanation of the emotional effects of storytelling on consumption. Herskovitz and Crystal (2010) explains storytelling from a branding perspective, as a way of creating emotional connections between consumer and brand, in turn resulting in consumer loyalty and trust over time. Moreover, persona-based storytelling using archetypal personas is emphasized as a tool for awakening consumer emotions through the comfort of recognition. (Herskovitz & Crystal, 2010) This perspective on storytelling is used as a way of explaining the emotional connections and relation that develops between fans and artist and is additionally elaborated by including Escalas' (2004) explanation of storytelling and self-brand connections. Here, self-brand connections are explained as how the consumer can construct and express self-identity through brand choices. Essentially it means that consumers will base consumption on a consistency between brand-user associations and self-image associations, which storytelling becomes an essential tool for orchestrating. This is due to consumers comparing the storytelling's narration to personal experiences and own their similar stories, in turn building self-brand connections. (Escalas, 2004) For the purpose of this thesis, storytelling is used to explain the emotional connection fans tend to build with artists. The articles take starting point in brands as subject to storytelling, but the concepts will here be applied to artists. So, while the works are not directly applicable, they still work as strong tools for explaining the consumers' emotional connections, when regarding the artist as part of the music product and the personality and life stories he shares with consumers as part of the brand.

Additionally, the works of Guo (Guo, 2018) and Schau, Muñiz Jr. & Arnould (2009) regarding community practices will be used to elucidate social aspects of consumption.

Guo's (Guo, 2018) defines fandoms as communities of dedicated fans who organize activities circulated around an artist, essentially making consumption a hobby for them, compared to other casual fans. Furthermore, fan identification is explained based on social identity theory, stating that each individual will have both a personal and a social identity. According to Guo (Guo, 2018), this social identity is formed by group engagements. Meanwhile an individual will be more likely to identify with a group if its traits match the person's self-concepts, which also correlates to Escalas' (2004) thoughts on self-brand connections being built based on relatable storytelling.

Additionally, fan motivations are being explained by the psychological and sociological benefits the individual achieves through their engagement. Psychologically, engagement and the individual's effect on the community provides a sense of mission and of being needed, which closely relates to self-esteem. Meanwhile sociologically, the shared interest creates a connection between fans, helping them build social ties with like-minded people.

Guo's (Guo, 2018) work further builds on these dynamics, by also investigating fandoms in the digital age and how social media is affecting this. However, for the purpose of this thesis the article will mainly be used to define fandoms and look into their general motivations and social dynamics. This way, explaining the communities that evolve around music and specifically artists, as well as the music consumers' buying behavior. (Guo, 2018)

Furthermore, the work of Schau, Muñiz Jr. & Arnould (2009) will build on this exploration of fandoms, by looking into how these types of communities essentially become brand ambassadors for the artist. For this purpose, one of Schau, Muñiz Jr. & Arnould's (2009) practices for creating value in brand communities, namely *impression management* will be used. Overall the article investigates the collective value creation that takes place within brand communities and divides the activities into four categories. One of these is *impression management*, which concerns activities with an external focus that creates positive impressions of the brand through enthusiasm and the inviting community. Essentially, these actions create value as they help expand the community and spread brand awareness outside of the community. For this thesis, these activities will be compared to those of the music fandoms in order to explore the degree to which fans can be regarded as brand

ambassadors. Again, as this framework also takes starting point in a brand, the artist will be regarded as part of the music product and representing the brand that the community revolves around, in order to apply the theory and make the comparison.

The final theory being used in this thesis is Hofstede's six cultural dimensions (Browaeys & Price, 2015). This cultural theory will be used to analyze Korean and Danish music industry and consumer behavior from a cultural perspective and shed light on differences between the two. For this, both Hofstede's cultural dimensions as well as the further development of these, done by Hofstede Centre, are used.

Hofstede has developed this framework to compare national cultures on six cultural dimensions. Of the six dimensions, three are deemed significant for this thesis and will be discussed. It includes the dimensions regarding high- and low power distance, individuality and collectivism, and indulgence and restraint.

Firstly, the dimension regarding collectivism and individuality concerns the relationship between individuals and groups, and the value a culture puts on individuality versus social relationships. Collective societies tend to value social relations and the individuals build self-identity based on their social groups. Emphasis is put on building relationships and loyalty and rather than focusing on one's individual goal, collective achievements are in focus.

In contrast, individualistic societies emphasize individuality and personal achievements. Tasks will typically be prioritized over relationships and the individual's personal needs are in focus, rather than the group.

Secondly, the dimension regarding power distance concerns how a culture relates to authority and its tendency to accept unequal distribution of power within a society. Cultures with low power distance will typically be centered around horizontal structures, where superiors are accessible, and everyone is involved in any decision-making. On the other hand, high power distance cultures will typically be built on hierarchies. Here, people are more likely to be measured on their status and subordinates are dependent on their superiors, who are generally less accessible and typically in charge of decision-making. (Browaeys & Price, 2015)

Finally, the dimension concerning indulgence and restraint deals with a culture's tendency to either perform high control of their desires and impulses through restraint or perform low control by

indulging and fulfilling them. Indulging cultures generally show a willingness to realize their impulses and place importance on leisure time. In contrast, restraining cultures will control gratification of their desires and do not focus as much on leisure time. (Hofstede Centre, 2018)

Originally, the dimensions were created to explain national cultural differences in working environments, functioning as a form of management tool (Browaeys & Price, 2015). In this thesis, they are however used beyond working environments, as it is not only used to explain cultural tendencies regarding company structures, but also regarding consumer behavior, such as the emphasis being put on communities and the tendency to idolize artists. Using the framework to explain dynamics beyond working environments, does allow for uncertainties regarding the outcome of the analysis. However, since the dimensions are built on national culture, it is a reasonable to assume that the traits will show throughout a person's behavior, which is why they will also be applied on consumers. Furthermore, the benefit of using the framework is that it provides an opportunity to compare cultural traits overall, which is perfect for this comparative study. However, a general precaution to take is that defining a culture on just six dimensions provides a very simplified picture. The score of 1-100 given by Hofstede Centre on each dimension adds to the simplicity and can result in wrong conclusions, as two cultures with the same score on a dimension may prove to be very different in reality, due to other cultural influences. So, all in all this framework should ideally not be used to define a culture alone but can be used to provide an overall picture of the traits of a national culture.

3.3 SUBSET ON THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

The theories that have been introduced in this chapter comprise the tools that will be used to analyze the empirical findings of the thesis. Each framework contributes with different components for understanding either the structure and processes of the music industry, or the consumers' behavior and motivations for music consumption. Furthermore, the perspectives introduced by each framework harmonize overall with each other and makes it possible to obtain an in-depth, nuanced understanding of each country's industry dynamics, its consumers and not least, how these two interrelate, which will become evident in the following analysis.

CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS

This following chapter will present and analyze the findings of the gathered qualitative data, which consists of in-depth interviews, as previously mentioned. The analysis will be structured, using the two first sub questions that were formulated:

1: How does the music industry structure itself in respectively Denmark and Korea, and in what ways does that structure help industry professionals deal with the complexity that characterizes creative industries?

2: How does Koreans and Danes consume pop music and in what ways do the consumption patterns and industry structures relate to each other?

The first half of the analysis will seek to answer the first sub question. This question deals with the overall structure of the music industry in Korea and Denmark, as well as more in-depth with the creative processes of the companies that create music and artists. It seeks to explore, how each industry is organized and why that structure is helping companies deal with the complexity of the music industry. In order to answer this question, the interviews with industry professionals in both countries will be used, so the industry analysis will be based on the insights these interviewees shared.

The second half of the analysis will then seek to answer the second sub question. The purpose of this question is to investigate the differences between music consumers in Korea and Denmark and whether there is any relation between the consumption patterns and the way the industry has chosen to structure itself. In order to investigate the differences in music consumption, the consumer interviews with Danish and Korean students will be used and at times, supplemented with the insights from the interviews with the music professionals. Furthermore, the analysis will lastly draw parallels between the industry structures and consumer behavior, in order to show the correlation between these two components that makes up the music market.

4.1 THE MUSIC INDUSTRY

With the first sub question, the thesis aims to gain a fundamental understanding of how the music industry is structured; what types of companies it entails and what kind of processes that takes place when creating music. Secondly, the aim is to understand why the structure and processes help the companies manage the risks and complexity related to producing a creative product, such as music. The list of company types in the music industry is not exhaustive but will include those that are relevant to the creation of music and therefore, also relevant to the purpose of this thesis.

To answer this sub question, first the structure of the music industry in Denmark and Korea will be accounted for. For this purpose, Porter's (1998) value chain will be used, in order to identify how the core music companies in the music industries structure their activities (Kotler, Keller, Brady, Goodman, & Hansen, 2012, pp. 88-89).

Furthermore, Caves' (2000) seven economic properties of creative industries will be applied, in order to explain the companies' creative processes and why they are organized this way. In relation to this, the explanation will be supplemented by Boschma (2005) and Godart & Mears (2009) about the role of networks and knowledge sharing in creative processes.

4.1.1 DANISH MUSIC INDUSTRY STRUCTURE

Looking at the Danish music industry, record labels are arguably at the core of the industry, as it is these companies that artists typically sign contracts with to create and release music (P1: 9). Furthermore, as this is where the music is being released, it is through the record labels that the music becomes available to the public, which makes them B2C types of companies.

Taking a closer look at a record label's value chain, the first step of *inbound logistics*, where resources are brought into the business' operations, include songwriting and acquiring music rights as well as signing contracts for record deals with new artists.

For these activities, the record label is highly dependent on collaborations with other actors within the industry. In terms of music, the record label will typically acquire this material from the signed artists in collaboration with publishing companies, which is another type of company that is part of the creative core.

Besides managing royalties and working with synchronizing music, the publishing companies are entities that assign producers and songwriters to create songs for the record labels' artists, who will then record and release the music through the label (P1: 9). According to the interviewee, Max Ulver, who is a producer and songwriter at GL Music Publishing, this process of songwriting and creating music is either done for the artist, meaning that the record label will buy a finished master, or alternatively the song is created in collaboration with the artist (P3: 11). In contrast to record labels, publishing companies do not sell their products to the public but instead to the record labels, making them a B2B company and a supplier to the first step of the record label's value chain.

In terms of signing record deals with new talents, naturally the independent artist becomes the supplier by entering into exclusive contracts with the record label. Furthermore, management companies, who administrates the artist's economics and schedule, and function as the artist's advisor, can also be a supplier (P1:9). Management companies will typically also be looking for artists to represent and can therefore help discover new talent, hereby providing artists for the record labels to sign record deals with (P2: 10). Additionally, other record labels can also function as a supplier by selling the artists in their catalog, as is the case of GL Music, who will typically sell their artist to major labels as he becomes successful enough (P1: 1). As a result, the record labels' *inbound logistics* are dependent on the contracts and partnerships they enter into with the other industry actors, who will supply the needed resources. Furthermore, it becomes evident that it is in this first activity of the value chain that the creative processes mainly take place, as this is where creativity is harnessed and takes form as songs and artistry, which is then put into the label's operations.

The label's *operations* include converting the resources from *inbound logistics* into a finished product, in this case using the songs and artists. In practice this involves product management, such as aiding in- and strategizing for an artist's creative identity and their future music releases. In turn, it entails fulfilling this strategy by having artists record the right songs, ultimately creating a finished product in the form of a single, EP or album ready for release. This process will typically involve a mix of internal employees and external partnerships. The record label's A&R department (artist and repertoire) will be in charge of the processes but will require the aid of recording studios in order to

record the music, and work in cooperation with the artist and the management company that represents him (Klein, 2003). Furthermore, the role of management may vary according to Christian Skjølstrup, who is owner and head of the management company Glass Management. He explains that it varies whether these companies will take part in the creative processes and to what extent they will do so. The primary task of management companies is to administrate the business aspect of an artist's career, such as scheduling, economy and strategy (P2: 1). This potentially puts management companies in more of a supporting role to the creation of music, depending on the scope of the individual company.

This constellation is more complex than the classic, tangible conversion of a resource to product. In this case, the artist provides his artistry as a resource and becomes the product, but in the end is also a living being and collaborator of the label, who will therefore have a voice in how the operations proceed. As a result, the company's *operations* are mainly run by the internal A&R team in collaboration with the contracted artist and his management team.

When the music is finished, the label will then typically hand over the single, EP or album to a distribution company, who will handle *outbound logistics*, making the music available to the public through retailers (McDonald, 2018).

In terms of *Marketing and sales*, it includes all activities related to marketing of the artist and his music to the public, based on what has been strategized during *operations*. The activities typically involve promotion in the media, as well as online and on the radio. Depending on the size of the record label, these marketing activities may be taken on by an internal marketing and promotion team (Klein, 2003). In other cases, external PR and promotion companies that specializes in these activities may take on the responsibility.

Music sales will happen through retailers and typically take a digital form, with approximately 89% of the Danish music industry's revenues made from digital channels in 2016 (IFPI Denmark). Furthermore, other sales relating to promotion of the artist and his music may include merchandise and concert tickets.

Although the company types described above as suppliers for the record label's value chain can be regarded as making up the general structure of the Danish music industry, the different company

roles are not set in stone. Many variants and hybrids of these companies can be found, such as Glass Management that, as a management company, are also engaging in the process of creating music and has their own recording studio (P2: 1). Another example is GL music that contains both management, a record label, and publishing (GL Music Entertainment, 2018).

The Danish record label's value chain and suppliers or collaborators are summed up in the following figure 2.

The value chain of Danish record labels

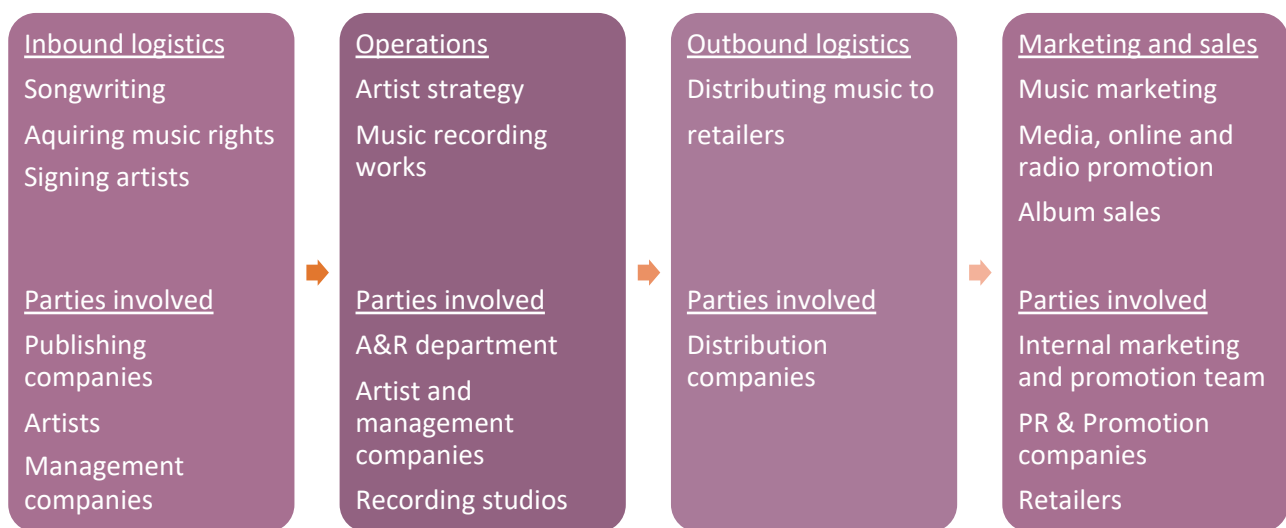


FIGURE 2

4.1.2 KOREAN MUSIC INDUSTRY STRUCTURE

Turning the focus to the Korean music industry, everything seems to be centered around what are known in Korea as entertainment companies. This is the equivalent of a Danish record label, as the Korean entertainment company is also concerned with discovering artists and releasing music. Furthermore, from the interviews with Mr. Park, who is a Program Director at CJ ENM and interviewee P5, who is the owner of a Korean entertainment company, it becomes clear that the value chain is overall similar to that of the Danish record labels. However, there are big differences to be found in the scope of these companies. Interviewee P5 explains that rather than using external business partners for the value chain activities, the processes are mostly internalized in the Korean entertainment companies (P5: 1).

Looking at *inbound logistics*, the resources that goes into the companies' operations include songwriting, acquiring music rights and signing artists. Artists are discovered through auditions and enter the company as trainees rather than fully developed artists (P5: 3).

In terms of songwriting, either in-house producers and songwriters will create songs specifically for the company's artists, or finished songs will be acquired from external producers and songwriters and brought into the entertainment company's *operations*, similarly to Danish record labels (P1: 10).

The company's *operations* will then include converting the resources, which in this case first means working with the trainees and developing them into artists through years of training (P4: 2). This process is run by an extensive A&R team, which in Korea also includes in-house artist management, choreographers, vocal coaches and in some cases producers and songwriters (P5: 1). During the process of artist development, the company's A&R team will shape the artist and either assign songs acquired through *inbound logistics*, or have producers create songs specifically for the artist, based on the identity and theme the A&R team decide on (P6: 1-2). As Interviewee P5 explains, the company is in charge of all the decisions (P5: 4). This puts the artist in the role of employee within the company, who does not have power over the creative input, but fulfills the role of performer of the A&R team's creative vision.

Furthermore, Korean producer and songwriter Jacoby, explains that when writing music for an entertainment company, marketing plays a big role and typically shapes the process (P6: 2). This indicates that the A&R team and marketing team work closely together during the company's *operations* and ultimately shape the input from *inbound logistics*, rather than choosing between finished music.

Additionally, *operations* also include a video team that documents all the artist's activities for monitoring or content creation and adds to the scope of the entertainment company's operations (P2: 4). The finished product will therefore also take shapes other than a single, EP or album, such as visual products like DVDs or online video content. The product is handed over to distribution companies, who handle *outbound logistics* and make the product available to the public (P4: 8).

In terms of *Marketing and sales*, marketing has already been planned extensively during *operations* and will here include all the strategized activities related to marketing the artist to the public. These

activities are coordinated by the entertainment company's two marketing teams; one for mass marketing and one especially targeting the fandom surrounding the artist (P4: 2).

Music sales will happen through retailers and in Korea focus is both on digital and physical sales, with 55% of the market's revenue coming from digital channels in 2012 (IFPI, 2013). Furthermore, merchandise sales are also an essential part of the *marketing and sales* activities, as merchandise plays a significant role for the artist's fandom, according to interviewee P5 (P5: 3).

This constitutes the Korean entertainment company's value chain which is summed up below, in figure 3.

The value chain of Korean entertainment companies

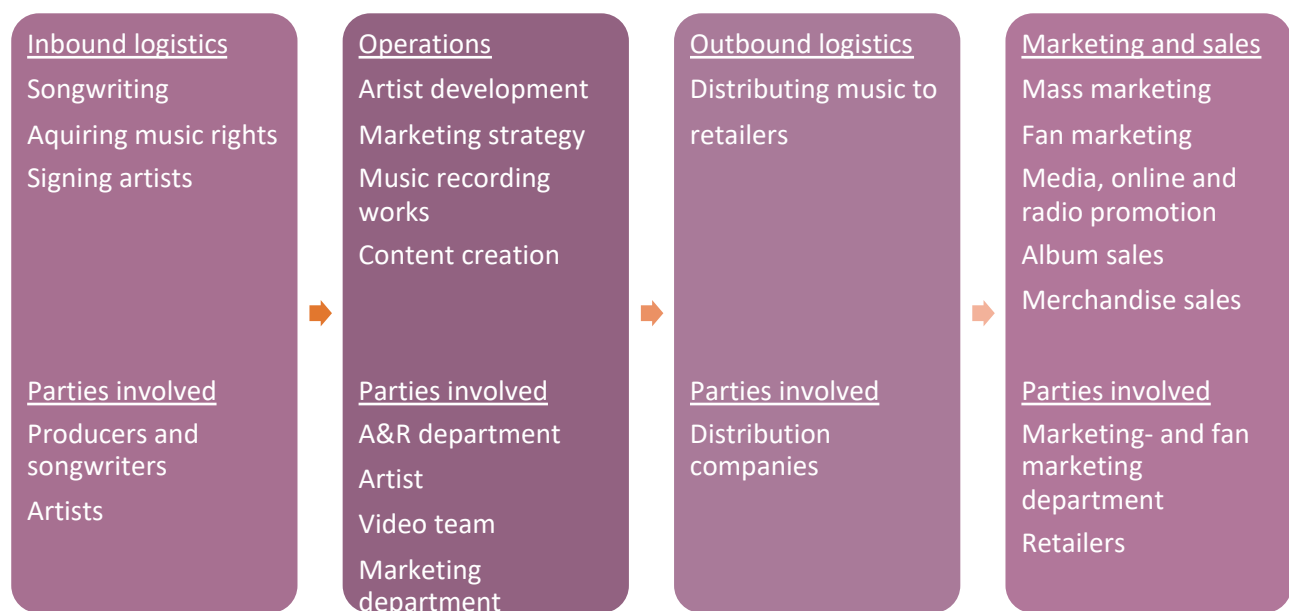


FIGURE 3

4.1.3 THE OVERALL STRUCTURE IN COMPARISON

This following section will now compare the value chains of Danish record labels and Korean entertainment companies, in order to show the differences in how they organize themselves. Furthermore, the creative processes of the value chain; creating music and discovering and developing artists will be compared in more detail. Additionally, Caves' (2000) properties will be applied, to discover in what ways the companies' structure help them manage the complexity generally related to the music industry.

When comparing the structure of the Danish record label and Korean entertainment company, it is evident that overall, the same core components are present throughout the value chains, i.e. artistry is developed and managed, songs are written, and everything is combined to a music product. However, the way these components have been structured as well as where focus lies is different. In Denmark, the industry is very dependent on a network of different companies, each with their own expertise. A single company is typically not able to facilitate all the different processes, which are necessary for creating the finished product. On the contrary, these companies are all contributing to the product's supply chain, pitching in with their expertise during different stages of the product creation. An example of how every company supplies at different stages could start at a publishing company, where a song is being produced. The finished song is then handed over to a record label that will adapt and record the song with their artist. The artist's management company could then be included to work on scheduling the artist's release and performances of the song with a marketing department. Finally, this plan could then be handed over to a PR and promotion company, which would work on promoting the release and activities surrounding the song.

In Korea however, the different stages of the entertainment company's value chain are vertically integrated, as nearly everything is internalized in the entertainment company. This means that rather than different companies contributing with their expertise, much of the expertise will come from a variety of teams or departments, which are all part of the same entertainment company. According to Caves' (2000) property of *nobody knows*, where demand is very uncertain, it becomes important to allocate risk. This is exactly what is achieved with the Danish industry structure, as different suppliers bring their expertise to the production. Through this work process, the risk is being shared between each of the companies involved in the project. For example, the risks of an unsuccessful artist might be allocated between the record label and management company, which invested in the artist and the publishing company, which supplied a song that may not earn the expected royalties. Additionally, this structure may also reduce risks by providing the actors within the industry with a network for knowledge sharing as the companies work together.

With the Korean structure however, the risk is placed entirely on the entertainment company, as the full production takes place within the company. Furthermore, this structure also entails that

Korean entertainment companies do not have the same external network at hand as Danish companies do. This is due to the fact that the other actors in the Korean music industry mainly will be other entertainment companies, which can be considered direct competitors, making knowledge sharing limited. However, the different teams within an entertainment company are still able to share knowledge internally. Relating to Boschma's (2005) ideas about proximity, the knowledge sharing process may even be easier to facilitate. This is due to coworkers most likely being in cognitive proximity with each other, as they are from the same company and cooperate daily, making it easier to understand and absorb any knowledge that may be shared between them. Furthermore, the process of knowledge sharing can easily be more formally incorporated into the daily work of the company's employees.

In turn, when the creative processes stay in the company, it also lessens the complexity related to *art for art's sake*, which explains that creative individuals will care deeply about the originality of the product and are often unwilling to compromise. The *motley crew* property as well, where different tastes and contradicting inputs from diversely skilled creatives, who all has a vital role in the process, can complicate the work processes. As the processes are kept internal in Korean companies, it will make it easier for a superior to make a quick decision, overrule and move forward. This, rather than having to spend time working out compromises with different external cooperators, who has their own set of tastes and risks connected to a given project.

However, there is also a disadvantage of keeping the processes internal, related to *motley crew*. It explains how a motley crew of different capabilities and specialized knowledge is necessary for a successful production. Yet to a large extend, Korean processes involves work in in-house, fixed teams. This fixed structure means that there is a greater risk of experiencing too much proximity and the negative effects it has on creative processes. Boschma (2005) explains this as a state of lock-in, where the lack of openness and flexibility has a negative effect on innovation. Ultimately, this means that the Korean entertainment companies may end up consisting of less of a motley crew, as the teams will start to think alike. Through this, they risk becoming generalists rather than specialists, due to too much cognitive proximity.

The Danish music companies on the other hand, are less likely to experience this negative effect of proximity, as Publishing Director of GL Music, Christian Svenningsen explains that work is typically

project based and will always involve people from their network (P1: 4). These external collaborators will likely bring new perspectives and different ways of thinking, hereby stimulating innovation and avoiding lock-in.

As a final point about the overall structure it is pointed out with *time flies*, that time is of the essence in creative industries, as it is costly to withhold projects. This is seen in the music industry, where music trends can make the timing of a song release important. By keeping operations internal, Korean entertainment companies are shortening their own reaction time, which means that they will be able to work fast, ultimately making it easier to follow the development in market trends. This speediness of the Korean companies' internal processes is evident when looking at album releases of big Korean artists such as Exo, BTS or Red Velvet, who all have at least one album release every year (Spotify: Exo, 2018; Spotify: BTS, 2018; Spotify: Red Velvet, 2018).

In comparison, reaction time will very likely be prolonged in the Danish industry, due to the many parties involved, who needs to be aligned and in agreement on how to proceed. Again, this shows in the general number of album releases, as producer Max Ulver points out that releasing a new album around every two years is a normal timeframe for many big artists (P3: 10).

4.1.4 DISCOVERING AND DEVELOPING ARTISTS

It is not only this overall structure that is different for the two industries. Looking closer at the creative processes that takes place in each industry, there are also variations to be found here, both concerning the companies' work with artist development as well as the creation of music.

In regard to the processes of finding and developing artists, In Denmark, the management company and record label are described as business partners to the artist. According to Christian Skjølstrup, management work as advisor for the artist and does not have power to make the artists do anything they do not want to. Rather, strategic decisions are made through dialog and teamwork (P2: 3).

Additionally, Christian Svenningsen of GL Music explains: *"We will not be dictating, and neither will she [the artist]. We are not here to change who she is, but of course we have an opinion on how to sell and market her. If we can reach an agreement in these regards, we will sign her [to the record label]."* (P1: 3). Taking the generally large supply of artists into account, as well as the relatively little

share of those artists that are offered a record deal, it is very unlikely that the bargaining power of artist and record label will be completely balanced at the beginning of the artist's career. However, with Christian Svenningsen's statement, the record label does reflect the role of an equal business partner rather than superior. Furthermore, GL Music's reluctance to make changes to the artist shows that the company takes starting point in the artist's music and identity. In fact, Christian Svenningsen explains that their engagement with an artist is based on the music they have already created (P1: 2). Additionally, according to Christian Skjølstrup, Glass Management takes an interest in artists, who are already creating and has started to gain a following from it. He looks for what he explains as the PTP factor, which consists of personality, talent and potential (P2: 5).

A pattern reveals itself in which the creativity and authenticity of the artist is very much in focus and becomes the deciding factor for industry professionals, when evaluating whether to work with the artist. It is evident that companies seek to sign artists that have already found their "creative voice" and in a sense, has proved their artistry and potential for success by gaining a following on their own. This means that in the case of Danish record labels, the creative processes will mainly take place during and even before *inbound logistics*, where the artist is developing his artistic identity and creating music. After engaging, Christian Skjølstrup explains that together the company and artist will then plan what kind of music should be released, and which traits about the artist should be highlighted, again taking starting point in the artist's authenticity. He also notes that the first release of a creative product will usually happen 6-12 months later (P2: 4).

In Korea however, the process of finding and developing artists is different. In contrast to Danish companies that resemble a business partner, in Korea the entertainment company is in charge of decision making, as previously mentioned. Entertainment companies usually have their own auditioning system and promising candidates may also be spotted on the street or at art academies² and invited to audition (P5: 3). Interviewee P5 further explains that what is being valued at these auditions is a person's visuals and ability to sing or dance (P5: 4). This process shows how Korean

² Academies: In Korea, academies are institutes that provide supplementary education. Art academies will be after-school institutions that teach students in the arts; such as singing, dancing and acting.

entertainment companies' have a more methodical approach to discovering artists. Through the auditions, the candidates are most likely being evaluated and compared to each other, based on skill levels and levels of beauty and charisma, as described by interviewee P5. This makes the artist's abilities more measurable and tangible, compared to the Danish approach, where the PTP factor can contain a number of different traits and Christian Svenningsen vaguely describes that finding new artists is about a gut feeling (P1: 3).

The effort to make the evaluation of talent more tangible, reflects the Korean entertainment companies' attempt to work around the uncertainty that is ever-present in the industry and lessen the risk related to *nobody knows*. By setting a standard for skill levels and appearances based on their professional knowledge of what works, they are attempting to optimize the chances of signing a successful artist. Danish companies seem to be employing this strategy to a certain extend as well, by looking for artists who already have a following. This is also a more tangible way of measuring the artists as it can easily be measured through for example concert sizes, or number of Instagram- or Soundcloud followers. Furthermore, it is also a way of optimizing chances of success, as the artist has already established a fanbase, who will most likely buy the music. However, this extend of measurability is still less than the Korean method of auditions and evaluation of skill-levels and does to a high degree still depend on intangibles such as gut feeling.

These differences in the discovery of artists are closely linked with the process of artist development. If passing the auditions, the Korean artists will become trainees at the entertainment company. According to Mr. Park, trainees are often taken in around the age of 13-14 and will be training daily at the company in disciplines such as dancing, acting, singing and general behavior on TV. This training lasts anywhere between 3-7 years. The company's A&R team then decides on what kind of group the company will create and pick among the trainees to form the group (P4: 2).

This approach stands in complete contrast to the Danish one. Where Danish companies seem to mostly have opinions about the marketing and music strategy of the artist, the Korean companies take complete control of the artist's creative development as well. In Denmark, the responsibility of artist development is put in the hands of the artist herself, even before she becomes a resource for *inbound logistics*. This is for example shown by Christian Svenningsen telling an artist with potential to be signed, that she first needed to work on her vocal technique and on, which artistic direction

she wanted to go with her music (P1: 3). In contrast, in Korea this responsibility will be taken on by the entertainment company. It invests a lot of time and money in training the artist and takes control of the creative process, by creating musical groups and assigning the trainees to them. This means, that the creative processes concerning songwriting and artist development does not just take place independently during *inbound logistics*. It becomes an incorporated part of the entertainment company's *operations*, as the company shapes the output of these processes to a high degree. This stands in contrast to Danish record labels, where *operations* to a larger degree involves work with the output of the creative processes taking place in or before *inbound logistics*.

The methods for artist discovery and development again comes down to the attempt to work around the industry uncertainty. As already explained, in an effort to increase the chances of success, the Korean companies has developed a methodical approach to discovering artists through their skill level. This approach is then carried on into the process of artist development as well, by further perfecting the skills they have been evaluated on, through years of training at the company. Additionally, by having full control of the creative development and group creation, the company can easily work towards what it believes to be a successful creative product. In a sense, the company is able to lessen the complications of *art for art's sake*, as it does not have to work around the artist's artistic expression, the same way Danish companies have to. Instead, it can shape the artist completely, to make them fit the company's vision of a commercially viable product.

Danish companies on the other hand, puts emphasis on the artist having worked on his own artistic development prior to signing and therefore do not interfere to the same extend. Instead, they will wait and sign a more fully developed artist, who already has a creative direction with his music. The artist will therefore not undergo formal training but can more or less immediately start releasing music. Since the artist has been in charge of his or her own creative development, the Danish company will have much less control of the finished product, making the uncertainty greater than with the Korean model. However, again this uncertainty is lessened by signing artists, who has already proven a level of success by gaining a fanbase on their own. Additionally, Christian Svenningsen explains that most big record labels will only commit to releasing one or two singles, and then let go of the artist if the singles are not successful (P1: 3). With this approach, it actually

becomes possible for the Danish companies to depend on the more intangible ways of evaluating an artist. If it turns out the gut feeling was wrong, there is much less at stake due to the small commitment. The company can more easily cut their losses and pursue a different artist. Additionally, the company will be able to pursue many different artists at a time in order to find out what is successful, as the investment in each artist is relatively small.

With the Korean model however, the investment in each artist is huge as they spent lots of time and money on training and artist development. Consequently, the losses related to unsuccessful artists will be just as huge. However, Korean companies compensate by being able to control the creative processes to a higher degree, as they are in charge of the entire development of the artists and their music.

Danish record labels	Korean entertainment companies
<u>Company role</u> Advisor and business partner with the artist. Decisions are made through dialog and teamwork.	<u>Company role</u> Companies employ the artist. Decisions are made by the company.
<u>Artist discovery</u> New artists are signed based on the talent they have developed themselves and the music they have already created. Value is put on personality, talent & potential. Artists are discovered by keeping track of upcoming creators on social media etc.	<u>Artist discovery</u> New artists are signed based on skills showcased at auditions. Value is put on visuals and singing and dancing skills. New talent can be spotted on the street or at art academies and invited to audition.
<u>Artist development</u> Companies engage with artists who has already developed their creative direction and has created music themselves. Continuously skill development can take place, taught by hired consultants based on the momentary needs of the artist. Together, artist and company strategize. From engaging with an artist to the first release of a creative product, usually 6 months to a year pass.	<u>Artist development</u> After passing auditions, artists are taken in as trainees and receives daily training at the company in dancing, acting, singing and general behavior on TV. The company strategize and creates an artist group based on the trainees available. Training lasts between 3-7 years, before the artist debut.

Ultimately, this means that the role of Korean and Danish music companies, in relation to the artist, is very different and proposes two different ways of handling the risks related to signing new talent. Firstly, they will enter the process at different stages. In Korea, the company enters at an early stage by making the process part of their *operations*. The company is involved in the artist's development through training and by assigning the artist to a musical group. In Denmark, this development will typically take place in or before *inbound logistics*, so the company will usually not have a big role until the later stages, when it is time to strategize and start releasing music.

Secondly, the companies' responsibility is different. In Korea, the company puts itself in charge of the artist's development, which leaves less room for the artist's personal, creative freedom. However, it gives the company room to strategize from very early stages, in an effort to work around the risks of uncertainty and adapt the artist's talents to the company's needs. With this model, the role of the artist resembles a company employee. The creativity belongs to the company and the artist takes part in this by filling out a role and performing the given task.

In Denmark on the other hand, the company expects the artist to have a creative output and have taken charge of his own creative development prior to the company contract. This leaves more room for the artist's personal, creative freedom and puts the company in a position where they need to strategize in collaboration with the artist, based on the artistic development that has already taken place. With this model, the company is working around the risks of uncertainty, by engaging in short-term commitments and only signing artists, who have already proven likely to succeed. The relationship between artist and company resembles that of a partnership, where the creativity belongs to the independent artist and the company is there to utilize and market it.

The process of artist development in Denmark and Korea, as well as the stage in which the company enters is illustrated in the following figures 4 and 5.

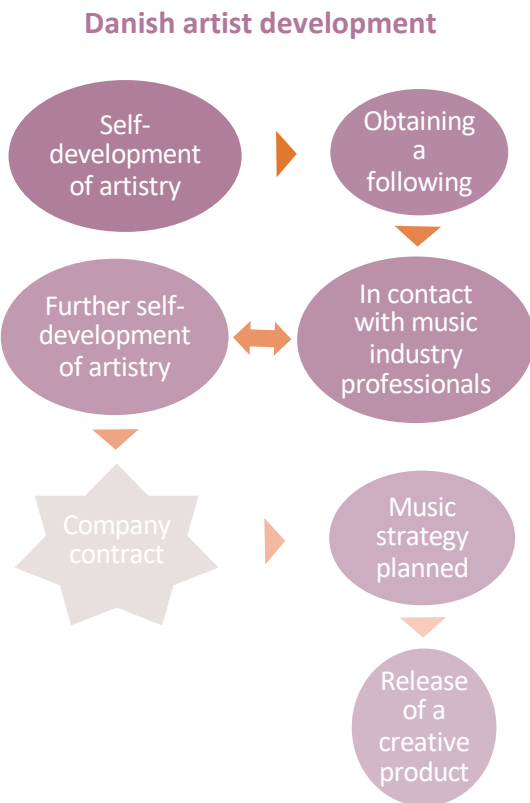


FIGURE 4

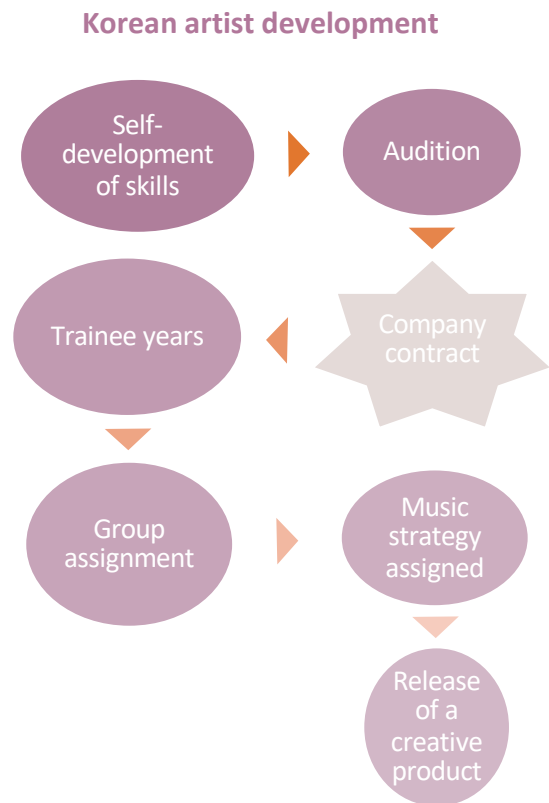


FIGURE 5

4.1.5 CREATING MUSIC

The creative responsibility that is being put on artists in the Danish music industry is also expressed in the way artists are included in the process of creating music. Looking at the overall frame for creating music in Denmark, songs are usually created through what are known as “sessions”. These sessions entail a small team, including a producer, songwriter and artist, who spends a whole day together and should by the end of that day, have written a song (P3: 4). Max Ulver explains his role as producer and songwriter as being an aid for the artist in creating the artist’s own music. Depending on the capabilities of the artist, Max Ulver is there to offer his expertise and take on the tasks that the artist needs him to, in order to successfully make a song (P3: 2). His approach to creating music is as stated: *“We are here to help you [the artist] make your songs. This entails making sure, what you want to express is done in the best way possible”* (P3: 1). Similar to the artist’s development, where the responsibility and creativity belongs to the artist, the Danish approach to creating music also typically puts the artist at the center of the process. Including the artist in the songwriting process shows the emphasis the industry puts on the artist’s own creativity. The artist

is the one, who is ultimately expressing himself and taking ownership of the song. Max Ulver does however explain that in some cases, the artist may take a song that is already written, if it suits him (P3: 11). In other cases, the A&R team of the record label may have reservations or opinions about the music, which will put a limit on the artistic freedom (P3: 7). This is however to be expected of the record label as a business partner, which needs to strategize and be able to sell the final product. Furthermore, the approach still generally puts artists in charge of their own creative output, as they are the ones who, in the end, will say yes or no to the song (P3: 1).

The format of this process, where the artist will meet with different producers and songwriters and they create music together, is a way of dealing with the uncertainty of the industry or *nobody knows* property. As Godart and Mears (2009) explains, creative industries will navigate this uncertainty by looking to each other for inspiration and share information within the network (Godart & Mears, 2009, p. 671). Similarly, this is what takes place in the Danish music industry, where creatives meet up for sessions, in order to share their knowledge and ideas in relation to songwriting. Through this process of knowledge sharing with other successful industry creatives, they can create music together, based on each creative's knowledge of what has proven to be popular music. According to Max Ulver, this constellation makes it very important to have a network at your disposal and puts pressure on him and other creatives to perform well, in order to actually get access to the network in the first place (P3: 6). This means, that a successful song will increase the odds of being able to keep producing popular music, since that first success will open up the doors to an exclusive network. Much like the Godart and Mears' study, where fashion industry professionals would look to each other and provide each other with a little certainty, resulting in a small pool of models being chosen by everyone and walking more than 20 shows each (Godart & Mears, 2009, p. 675). The same tendency is seen in the Danish music industry, where the music creatives will look to each other and create music together, in order to navigate the industry uncertainty and optimize their chances of success. As a result, the music sessions are held, typically involving a producer, songwriter and artist.

With this approach, Max Ulver stresses the importance of not having too many people involved in the process: *"It is too much to have three people at the computer at one time, when every idea takes a few minutes to get out. Or if too many people are making up peculiar melodies or saying, 'it*

shouldn't sound like this'. Often it ends up in a strange compromise that does not work" (P3: 4). He explains that more than three people will often mean that too many ideas are on the table at one time, making the process of reaching a finished product that everyone can agree on, a difficult and often unsuccessful one. This statement clearly shows the issues related to *art for art's sake* and *motley crew* that can occur in the songwriting process. As many creative individuals are involved, who all have different preferences and care personally about the creative output, it complicates the process and potentially compromises the finished product. By only involving three people in the sessions, the benefits of knowledge sharing are still obtained, and the creatives can look to each other for a little certainty, but the process becomes less complex, as only three people's ideas need to be combined.

Looking at the Korean process of creating music, the format is very similar according to Jacoby (P6: 2). In Korea, the process is usually also limited to a small number of creatives and similarly, Jacoby recognizes the benefits of creating together (P6: 1). However, while the artist's own creativity is being given great importance in the Danish music industry, the dynamic of the Korean industry is different. Jacoby explains that when creating Korean pop music for an artist, typically the artist will not be involved in the process. Rather, Jacoby will get instructions from the entertainment company and deliver the finished song to the artist (P6: 1-2). This process has the same characteristics as the process of finding and developing artists in Korea. Rather than the artist's personal creativity being in focus during songwriting, the company is in charge of the creativity and will set the preconditions for the producers and songwriters who deliver the songs. In contrast to the Danish structure, where the artist is ultimately the one saying yes or no and taking ownership of the song, in Korea this responsibility is taken on by the company. Again, the Korean artist resembles an employee in the entertainment company, who will take on the role of performing the finished product.

Another difference between the Korean and Danish process is the role of marketing. Christian Svenningsen mentions that in the Danish industry, marketing plays a role after the song is made (P1: 5). In Korea however, marketing plays a role much earlier in the process. as Jacoby mentions that

focus is very much on concepts³ and marketing (P6: 2). He further explains: *“For idols, the concept is very important, so usually I will get a few keywords. Like for example “red flavor” for Red Velvet and create songs based on this. For other artists, a concept may not be necessary, but sometimes they still do it, because of marketing benefits. It will be easier to promote themselves”* (P6: 2). It is evident that in contrast to Denmark, marketing plays an important role in the creative process of making music in Korea, as it sets the parameters prior to songwriting. Jacoby even explains that since singer-songwriters are a big trend in Korea nowadays, many artists are starting to participate in the creative process: *“The fans love it when the artists create their own music and will usually listen even more to it. Usually it includes lyrics, or maybe they [the artists] give me a melody and then I create the music around it”* (P6: 2). Rather than this showing an emphasis on the artist’s own creativity, it reflects the Korean entertainment companies’ focus on marketing and adaptability to the music market. The artist is being included in the song writing process to accommodate the consumer needs. Essentially, by having the market trends set the parameters for the creative process, Korean companies are navigating the uncertainty of the music industry. As they build the creative product on the basis of consumer preferences, they are optimizing the chances of creating a successful product.

4.1.6 SUBSET: RESOURCE-BASED AND MARKET-BASED STRUCTURES

This following section will now sum up the analysis of Korean and Danish music industry and draw final conclusions, effectively answering the first sub question:

1: How does the music industry structure itself in respectively Denmark and Korea, and in what ways does that structure help industry professionals deal with the complexity that characterizes creative industries?

³ Concepts: In relation to Korean pop music, often a music release will employ a “concept” or theme, that dictates the style and feeling of the music. This concept will typically be executed throughout both the songs, music videos and performances. Furthermore, a concept can also be applied as a whole, to express the artist’s identity.

Looking overall at the way the two music industries structure themselves it is evident, that the two cultures of Denmark and Korea has found different solutions to dealing with the complexity of the music industry.

The structure of the Danish music industry includes many different companies who are dependent on each other's expertise and do project-based work together in a network. This structure helps Danish music companies navigate the risk of uncertainty, as risks are allocated between all business partners involved in the creative processes. Furthermore, using this network of business partners for knowledge sharing optimizes the chances of success.

The Korean solution on the other hand, is to place the entire production within a single company, hereby being able to micro-manage all creative processes as well as the overall creative direction. Through this structure, Korean companies are lessening the complexity of working with creative individuals, who bring contradicting inputs and may have difficulty compromising. It allows the company to make a quick decision internally, which in turn also makes the company's reaction time more effective.

The solution of the Danish music industry to lower risk by creating a structure that divides it, also moves over into the process of artist development. The Danish solution typically involves short-term commitments and with artists, who have already developed a creative direction and gained a following.

For Korean companies, again this means gathering the risk in one place by entering into long-term commitments with few artists and then fully and effectively control the artist's development and skills as part of the production.

Meanwhile, the process of songwriting is in many ways similar in Korea and Denmark. Networks are being used to navigate the uncertainty and the number of creatives involved is limited, in order to manage idea generation and stay effective. The difference is however, that similar to the Korean approach to artists, Korean companies are also controlling the creative process of songwriting and will in many cases not include the artist until the song is finished. This stands in contrast to Denmark, where the artist is typically in the center of the process, expressing himself and taking ownership of the song. Furthermore, a vital difference can be found in the role of marketing, as this discipline does not come into play until the music is done in Denmark. Meanwhile marketing sets the

parameters for songwriting in Korea, allowing Korean companies to build the creative product based on consumer preferences to a greater extent.

A pattern reveals itself in which Danish music companies take on the traditional resource-based view of creative industries. Creativity and the artists' individual needs to express themselves are at the center of product development. Companies engage with artists who have already developed a creative direction and songwriting is also in the hands of the artist, who will say the final yes or no. When the creative product is done, the music company will then use tools such as marketing in order to strategize and exploit the capabilities of an artist or a song.

Of course, this should not be considered a complete resource-based view with no regards for the market. Danish music companies can choose to work with artists, whose music style match the trends. Furthermore, the company can attempt to influence the artist. However, as Christian Svenningsen states about the creative processes, *"It starts and finishes with the music"* (P1: 3).

Looking at the Korean music industry on the other hand, this industry entails a different type of company that takes on a market-based view. These companies will look at the market conditions and strategize based on this. For example, by having artists start writing music in order to accommodate consumer preferences. The entertainment companies will employ extensive marketing teams, including fan marketing and video teams, and strategizing starts as far back as artist development, where they work to shape the artist's creative direction, in order to accommodate the market. For example, according to interviewee P5, companies may even choose to add foreign members to a group, or members with foreign language abilities, in order to cater to international fans (P2: 4).

This strategizing goes on through music production as well, where prerequisites are set for the creative process. Rather than marketing being a tool for selling the final product, it is incorporated into all the creative processes of the Korean entertainment companies.

Danish music companies end up taking on a more traditional role of gatekeeper for the artist. The artist is in charge of his or her own artistry and the Danish record companies will, as gatekeepers, decide if the artist's creative output is worth investing in and distribute to final buyers (Caves, 2000,

p. 19). If the company becomes an artist's gatekeeper, that company will help facilitate the artist's creativity and make the creativity flourish, for example by connecting the artist with producers and songwriters, they can make music with.

In Korea though, the classic understanding of a gatekeeper does not apply in the same way, as it is less clear who the artist with the creative output actually is. As previously mentioned, Korean artists who pass auditions are typically evaluated on looks and skill levels, rather than their creative output and accomplishments as an artist. This is due to the fact that creativity is not put in the hands of the individual artist, but rather in the company as a whole. In a sense, the Korean entertainment company has the creative output, while the artist personifies the output on the company's behalf.

It is because the company as an entity becomes in charge of the creative output, that this market-based view is possible to take on. With this structure, the needs of a single person are not in focus. Rather, everyone acts as employees according to the vision of the company, including the artist. Therefore, the complexity of *art for art's sake* and *a motley crew* become more obsolete. Of course, it is inevitable that even the creative people working at a Korean entertainment company will have their own creative visions and preferences, so that complexity is not completely gone. However, it becomes easier to manage as the company dictates the creative processes to a great extent.

In the Danish music industry this market-based view can however not work, as the creative output are in the hand of individual artists, rather than the company. Furthermore, the relationship of music companies and artists are that of gatekeeper and creative rather than employer and employee. With this individualistic approach to creativity, the artist's personal taste and vision for the creative output becomes a central part of the process and does not allow for a market-based view to be taken on.

4.2 CONSUMER BEHAVIOR

Now that the industry's structure and processes have been analyzed, focus will be turned to the second sub question and hereby the people who consume music. Therefore, this next paragraph will investigate how Danish and Korean music fans consume music and shed light on any differences between the two consumption patterns. This will include looking into how consumers use music, what their motivations are for consuming, and what their buying behavior look like. Furthermore, their consumption will be put into a cultural perspective. Finally, the consumer behavior will be put in relation to how the Danish and Korean music industries organize themselves, in order to investigate how consumers may have an impact on this.

For this purpose, Holbrook and Hirschman's (1982) description of experiential buying behavior will be used to explain the consumers' motivation for listening to music. Additionally, it will be supplemented by looking into the effects of storytelling, using the works of Escalas (2004) and Herskovitz & Crystal (2010). Furthermore, articles from Guo (Guo, 2018) and Schau, Muñiz Jr. & Arnould (2009) about community practices and fandoms will be used to investigate the social aspects of consumption. Moreover, the consumer behavior will be explained from a cultural perspective, investigating the cultural dimensions of Denmark and Korea. For this, the framework of Hofstede (Browaeys & Price, 2015) as well as the further research done by Hofstede Centre (Hofstede Centre, 2018) will be used.

4.2.1 DANISH MUSIC CONSUMERS

These first following sections will now explore the behavior and motivations of Danish consumers for listening to music. The findings will be based off of the two Danish interviews.

4.2.1A MOOD AND EMOTIONAL CONNECTIONS

Looking at the Danish music consumers, interviews were conducted with two interviewees, who both describe music as taking up a big portion of their day, especially at times they are alone. Usually they will be listening to music as they are commuting, or during daily activities such as cooking, working or training at the gym (C1: 1, C2: 1). Furthermore, an overall theme throughout both interviews were how music relates very much to the mood of the interviewees. Gitte explains how

different tempos can help her adjust her mood: *"If I'm going to a party, I will often listen to something kind of upbeat. But today, I could feel that I shouldn't stress, because I have been stressing a lot, so I thought I would put on more calm music and that actually relaxed me even though I was kind of in a hurry."* (C2: 1). The same tendency applies to Louise, who talks about mood as what she deems important about music: *"[...] you put [music] on according to your mood, or to help lift you up if you are feeling a little down."* (C1: 2),

The tendency shows that music consumption is dependent on the consumer's mood and emotional state. Furthermore, this relation also means that an emotional connection becomes important in order for music to affect the consumer. Gitte has a hard time describing this connection and simply puts it as music that moves her, for a reason she cannot explain (C2: 7). Meanwhile, it is also hard for Louise to explain the connection, although she does recognize that it is an emotional one: *"It [music] captures me. But why does it capture? I think maybe it is an emotional 'thing'"* (C1: 2). Furthermore, both interviewees cannot put their finger on a single component of a song as being more important but describes what captures them, as being a combination of lyrics, melody and beat (C1: 2, C2: 3).

This tendency of consumption being centered around mood and emotional connections can be explained with an experiential perspective on buying behavior, in which consumers are buying experiences rather than simple objects or services. Holbrook & Hirschman (1982) describes the experiential perspective as focusing on the more subconscious processes related to consumption, and also identifies emotions as an important aspect. In this case, it explains why the emotional connection plays such an important role for the Danish consumer, when listening to music. Similarly, the fact that Louise and Gitte have a hard time explaining why they like a certain piece of music indicates that the processes related to their decision-making goes on subconsciously and is also dependent on personal taste, which is hard for them to explain.

Furthermore, with the way the interviewees describe their music consumption, it seems that the act of enjoying a piece of music is not a stand-alone activity. Rather, music is used to affect or enhance one's current state of mind, in turn enhancing the other activities the consumers are engaging in, such as party-preparations or working out. Ultimately meaning that music help creating an experience for the consumer.

4.2.1B SONGS AS STAND-ALONE PRODUCTS

When moving on to discussing artists, both interviewees seem generally to not be paying a great deal of attention to the artists behind the music they enjoy. Louise has almost an exclusive focus on songs as a stand-alone product, rather than including the artists behind. This becomes evident, as she generally cannot name the artists behind the music she listens to, and even has to stop and think for 8 seconds before she is able to remember the names of her favorite artists (C1: 3). Unsurprisingly this also means that she does not have any further knowledge about the artist either, in this case The Chainsmokers: *“I know that they are two guys. I don’t know what their names are, or where they are from. I don’t know how old they are. I don’t know if they have girlfriends. I don’t know if they have children. I don’t know anything. It’s not interesting to me. Only that they make music that I like to listen to.”* (C1: 3).

Meanwhile, Gitte who is also generally not very occupied with getting to know the artists, does take a bit more interest in her favorite artist Beyoncé, compared to Louise: *“I know that she has 3 children, right? And a husband named Jay Z. That’s it. And I know she was in that Destiny’s child group. It’s not like I idolize her. I follow her on Instagram. I think mostly I’m stunned by how beautiful she is [...] But you mean if I know anything about them? Like, when is their birthdays and what was their last vacation or something like that? I don’t really care a lot about that.”* (C2: 4).

While Gitte does have a bit more interest in the artist compared to Louise, and has some knowledge about her favorite artists, there generally seems to be a lack of interest in the artist beyond his craft. Both interviewees explicitly state that they do not care much about the artist’s personal life. Although Gitte does seem to be increasingly excited at times when she talks about Beyoncé, in general both her and Louise relate idolizing to their teenage years, and as something they do not engage in anymore (C1: 6, C2: 8).

However, even if focus is not very much on the artist, the emotional connection they need to have with the music does seem to apply to artists as well, to some extent. As Herskovitz and Crystal (2010) explains, storytelling and archetype brand personas can help create or strengthen emotional connections to a brand. To an extent, this is what has happened to Gitte, who shows increased excitement as she talks about her favorite artist, Beyoncé. During the interview she mentions Beyoncé as a talented, beautiful, role model with a perfect life, whom she looks up to (C2: 4). It

seems that Beyoncé's personal storytelling portrays her as an archetype for beauty and talent in the eyes of Gitte, which creates an emotional connection both to Beyoncé's music and herself as an artist. Furthermore, Escalas (2004) elaborates on a brand's storytelling as a way for the consumer to build on their self-identity or self-brand connections. In relation to this, Gitte's emotional connection may be strengthened by Beyoncé being someone she relates to and aspires to be like. As she mentions herself: *"At one point I compared it [Beyoncé and her music] to my own life and it just made so much sense."* (C2: 4). Ultimately Gitte makes a direct comparison between Beyoncé's storytelling and her own life and finds a relation and possibly a goal to strive for, which builds on her self-brand connections and creates a strong emotional connection to the artist.

In Louise's case, the relation is a lot less explicit, as she does not seem to build relations to artists easily. However, she mentions that she is listening a lot to Avicii's music due to his recent death (C1: 1). Similar to Gitte's connection to Beyoncé, it is possible that the tragic circumstances of his death are adding to his storytelling as an artist, resulting in an emotional connection for Louise, who starts listening more to his music.

With that being said, the emotional connection is not important enough to affect their purchasing patterns beyond streaming the artist's music. Both Louise and Gitte would never buy products or merchandise only because of the artist. For both of them, buying merchandise comes down to their personal taste and aesthetic regardless of who made it (C1: 5, C2: 7). When asked about supporting artists through purchases in general, the answer was that it is not something they engage in beyond streaming music, which Gitte did actually not even realize supported the artist (C2: 5). Ultimately it is not something that is a conscious decision, but merely happens as a result of music streaming for their own enjoyment. Their consumption pattern shows no sign of artist awareness in regard to supporting the music they love but is focused solely on their own needs and enjoyment. This becomes evident, firstly through their attitude towards merchandise, as mentioned. Additionally, it shows in the personal playlists they create on Spotify to accompany their specific musical tastes, as well as the fact that they do not buy CD's due to the lack of a CD player, even though CD sales are typically more lucrative for the artist than streams are (C1: 4, C2: 7). They have no problem switching between artists and all in all, there is no evidence of them paying attention to how they possibly support the artist, as they consume. This consumption pattern is also confirmed by producer and songwriter Max Ulver who, when asked about fan loyalty, explains the average consumer of popular

music as indifferent to the artist (P3: 14). The starting point of consumption is their own personal needs, rather than a need to support the art they love, and any action they take in terms of consumption is for their own enjoyment. This indicates that beyond choosing which songs to put on their playlist, any emotional connection to the music or artist is not strong enough to radically change their consumption behavior to include a concern for the artist.

This enhances music consumption as being a personal experience centered around the consumer's own needs and enjoyment, not including any significant relationship or engagements with the artist or communities surrounding him after their teenage years.

Even though it has been established that consumption is highly personal and mainly done alone, social relations still play an essential role in certain aspects of consumption. Gitte explains that she and her friends will recommend music to each other or even occasionally talk about the artist (C2: 3). The situations where music consumption truly becomes a social act however involve concerts. Both interviewees will not attend concerts alone, but rather enjoy them with their friends. Furthermore, they explain attending concerts as providing an emotional connection and feeling of collectivism with both the audience and artist, as they all have the music in common in that moment. Louise describes the experience as creating a connection that makes her feel part of a group: *"[The kind of connection] Feeling part of something. Somehow be part of a group"* (C1: 7). Additionally, Gitte describes how her, and a group of friends will specifically meet to go to Eminem concerts together (C2: 9). This indicates that sharing music can actually help build social relations, as it gives a feeling of unity at concerts and in Gitte's case, provides common ground with people she would otherwise not see. This social aspect is however situational as it mainly happens at concerts. Additionally, the social aspect is limited to people they already know, as both interviewees will attend concerts with people who are already their friends, and none of them have stories of the collectivism at concerts resulting in lasting friendships.

4.2.1c CULTURAL CONSUMPTION

The consumption patterns can largely be explained from a cultural perspective. In relation to Hofstede's (Browaeys & Price, 2015) cultural dimensions, Denmark scores 74/100 on individualism, which indicates that it is an individualistic society with a loosely-knit social structure, according to

Hofstede insights (Hofstede Centre, 2018). This essentially means that Danes' self-image will be defined by an individualistic "I" rather than a collective "we" (Browaeys & Price, 2015, p. 34). The tendency is reflected in how Danes consume music as well. As previously mentioned, Danish consumption is highly personal and does typically not include any concerns for artist loyalty and support, or engagement in communities surrounding the artist. The starting point of consumption is their own personal needs due to the individualistic nature of Danish culture. Similarly, it does not come naturally to develop close ties to fan communities or the artist himself, due to the nature of their relationships, which are also developed on the notion that people only take care of themselves and their closest family (Hofstede Centre, 2018). This cultural dimension ultimately results in individualistic consumption, where it is easy to switch between artists due to the lack of loyalty and social ties.

Additionally, it is heightened by a high score of 70/100 in indulgence as well (Hofstede Centre, 2018). This means that Danish consumers are very likely to realize their impulses and desires, which also correlates to the experiential approach to consumption as mentioned, where Danish consumers are focused on their emotions and desires. An individualistic focus combined with high indulgence and an experiential approach, means that Danes are likely to consume based on changing impulses and desires, while the lack of social ties makes it even easier to follow those impulses. Furthermore, as consumption largely relies only on personal tastes and the depth of the emotional connection towards the artist, consumption will vary from consumer to consumer. A tendency that is also evident in the consumer interviews. At one end of the spectrum, Louise treats each piece of music as a stand-alone product with no regards for artists. Meanwhile, Gitte is a bit more aware of the artists and has a few favorites that she relates to and engage with more than others. Furthermore, it can be speculated if additional consumer interviews may reveal consumers who are even more engaged than Gitte, which would more clearly show the degree of heterogeneity present, concerning music consumption among Danes.

Finally, the low score of 18/100 on power distance can explain, why there is little tendency to idolize the artists among Danish consumers (Hofstede Centre, 2018). When idolizing, the fans are essentially heightening the social status of an artist, creating an imbalanced power relationship. However, with low power distance, Danish people are more used to horizontal structures in society, where people are regarded more as equals (Browaeys & Price, 2015, p. 33). In terms of consumption,

this means that Danes will be less likely to engage in idolizing, as it would put themselves in an inferior position to the artist and would feel unnatural, as the artist is culturally regarded as an equal.

All in all, Danish consumers turn out to be highly individualistic in their consumption of music, which is driven by impulses stemming from personal taste, images of self-identity and emotional connections. Furthermore, a lot of the music consumption takes place alone and typically helps enhance other activities, hereby creating an experience for the listener, rather than just being a simple product. Due to the individualistic focus and low power distance in Denmark, the typical Danish consumers do not engage in idolizing and generally have very little regards for the artist in terms of loyalty and support. The depth of relations the consumers feel towards artists do however vary and to some extent, seems to be dependent on the consumer's ability to relate to the artist's storytelling. So even though Danish consumers seem to be relatively detached to the artist and do not engage in idolizing, consumption does prove to be heterogeneous as the consumers' individuality and personal relations towards the music and artist will determine their approach. Finally, in terms of purchases, since they purchase solely for personal enjoyment rather than as a way of engaging with the artist, they have a fairly simple purchasing pattern, centered around streaming.

4.2.2 KOREAN CONSUMERS

This next paragraph will now examine the traits of Korean music consumers and will throughout the analysis, compare the findings to that of the Danish consumers, which were described in the previous section.

4.2.2A FOCUS ON ARTISTS

Turning focus to Korea, similarly to Danes the Korean consumers describe listening to music as something they mostly do alone and usually during other activities such as commuting or working (C3: 1, C4: 1, C5: 1). However, while Danish consumption turned out to be especially dependent on an emotional connection to the song, in Korea, consumption seems to be more dependent on a connection to the artist rather than the song itself. This becomes evident from Wonjun's explanation of how he will immediately wonder about the artist when hearing a song: *"If I hear a*

new song, I will get curious: 'whose song is that', so I'll search the Internet." (C4: 2). Additionally, Seojeon further supports the tendency by stating that the artist is typically the focus of her conversations, rather than the songs, which stands in contrast to Danish consumers, where Gitte explained that she and her friends will talk about songs in their group chats (C4: 2, C2: 3).

It is not that the songs do not play a role for Korean consumers. When Seojeon is describing the group she likes, she talks about the songs being trendy and relatable (C4: 2). Furthermore, as is also evident from Wonjun's earlier explanation of his interest in the artist, the song is the starting point of Korean consumers' interest.

However, while Danish consumers keep their interest centered around the song and show little interest towards the artist beyond his craft, Koreans seem to be actively seeking out the artist. Yuna explains how she will go to Internet communities centered around the artists, where it is possible to find pictures and information about them (C5: 2). Furthermore, the information they seek out is not only limited to the artist's work. Rather, it includes personal information about the artist. For example, when Tasom was asked to tell about the group she likes, she gave an extensive explanation of the members: *"[showing a photo of all the members of Exo]: This is Chanyeol, Baekhyun, Kyungsoo or D.O., Xiumin, Chen, Lay - he is Chinese, Kai, Sehun, Suho.*

Chanyeol is tall and handsome. His sister is an announcer on TV and they are close friends. His personality is like a puppy and he plays piano. He makes his own personal music too and I can listen to it on his Instagram. I follow all of their Instagrams. Every member has different personalities. Baekhyun is also called the father of the group. He is the main vocal but he's also a good actor. He does dramas. The drama wasn't interesting to me. I just looked for the scenes he played and skipped the other scenes. He's very outgoing and artistic. He plays battleground at home. Sometimes I hear him sing on Instalive." (C3: 2). From Tasom's explanation it is evident that she also holds personal information about the artists that has nothing to do with their music, such as their personality, family relations and leisure activities.

Generally, it seems that it is very important for the Korean consumers to know about the artists they like and, in a sense, form a relationship with them. This is expressed in the way they interact with the artist on social media by commenting on their posts or engage in livestreams on platforms

such as V live, which are designed for fans to watch video content from their idols. For example, Seojeon and Wonjun explain how they will watch the artist's livestreams and write comments such as: "[you're] so cute" or "I love you" (C4: 7). As their comments insinuate, the interactions are not centered around the music, but rather the artist as a person. This makes storytelling become even more important in Korea than in Denmark.

Korean consumers take a big interest in the artist's personality and story, which not only shows from Tasom's description of EXO, but also from Yuna's description of Red Velvet: *"The oldest one is 27 years. I think she had 7-8 years of training. Her name is Irene. The names of all of them are Irene, Seulgi, Yeri, Wendy, Joy. Wendy lived her childhood in America and she is very smart. She is also a very good singer - she is the main vocal. Seulgi also started her training in elementary school. Her father recorded her dancing in elementary school and SM Entertainment saw that video, so they cast her to become a trainee."* (C5: 2). Her description shows her interest in the artists' individual life stories and development. Furthermore, Yuna explains how she will save pictures of Red Velvet's hairstyles and makeup while Seojeon describes how she will buy the same clothes as the artists she likes (C5: 2, C4: 3). Their wish to resemble the artists indicates that they, similar to Danish consumers, will build their self-identity or self-brand connection on the artist's storytelling.

However, a difference between Danish and Korean consumers seem to be the depth of the storytelling they engage themselves in. Gitte seemed to base her impression of Beyoncé off of a general image of her, as being talented and beautiful with a perfect life. Meanwhile, Korean consumers show a tendency to seek out more in-depth and true-to-reality type of knowledge. Both Yuna and Seojeon explains how they enjoy watching behind-the-scene videos, where the artists will talk about their daily life and it is easier to get to know their personality (C4: 2, C5: 5).

Additionally, in Korea an additional branch of storytelling exists, which involves the artist's concept, as visuals seem to be a big focus for Korean consumers. As explained in a previous paragraph, concepts involve the story and visual features of either the artist's identity or a single album or song. These concepts will often involve costumes and characteristic visuals and will usually change as the artist's comes out with new content. Examples of this are pictures beneath as BTS creating an album around the concept "Love Yourself", Twice's identity which overall is centered around cute concepts, or Block B's visual features of their music video "Jackpot", centered around a carnival.

Tasom explains how it was Red Velvet's pretty looks that made her interested: *"What got me interested is that they are pretty. I'm really interested in the visual things, but I also try and listen to the music from the agency."* (C3: 2). Additionally, both Seojeon and Wonjun admits that it was the looks of the artist that got them interested in the first place (C4: 2-3). The focus on visuals is however not only limited to the appearance of the artist himself. For example, Wonjun explains how he will buy albums based on its visuals (C4: 4). Furthermore, music videos play an important role as most Korean consumers will watch them and Yuna explains how they will talk about the videos' concept and clothing (C5: 1). This essentially makes visuals, such as concepts, part of the storytelling in the form of visual identity, which consumers also relate to and can make them take an interest in the artist.



Source: Pinterest

While it was concluded that the emotional connection was relatively mild for Danes and based off of a general image, for Koreans it seems to be stronger, as it makes them more invested and actively affects their behavior. This is not only limited to their need to know about the artist online, but also includes a strong wish to communicate with their idol or even meet them, which shows in how Tasom explains, that she will tag the artist in her tweets, because she wants him to see them (C3: 2). The wish to meet the artist will in turn further affect the consumers' buying behavior. For example, Seojeon explains how CDs can contain a ticket to meet the artist, which makes some fans buy multiple copies, for a chance to get the ticket (C4: 4). Additionally, special events known as fan meetings are held, which are explained by the entertainment company owner, interviewee P5, as an event that, in contrast to concerts, are more focused on interacting with the fans (P5: 1-2). Furthermore, fans can even pay to be part of an official fan club, in order to get first access to these tickets (C3: 3). Ultimately, Korean consumers seem to feel a very strong connection towards the artist and are very invested, which has resulted in these other types of live activities besides concerts, that are not directly linked to music, but instead centered around the artist's personality.

4.2.2B FANDOMS AND COMMUNITY

The relational connection that consumers build towards the artist fosters a fierce loyalty. Some consumers will not even allow themselves to like rivalry artists, which Tasom is an example of (C3: 4). Furthermore, the loyalty manifests itself as communities known as *fandoms*, as explained by Guo (Guo, 2018). Seojeon explains how in Korea, the fandoms mostly live online on social media or forums, known as fan cafés, that are dedicated to a specific artist, where fans can interact with each other. These are the platforms where fans will share their interest in the artist, for instance by sharing photos and talking about the artist (C4: 5-6). Tasom is an example, as she will go online to find people who also like Exo. She explains how these people are now her friends online. Most of them she has never met and some of them live far away, but they become friends based on a mutual love for the group Exo (C3: 3). That means, that their interactions are also centered around the artist. For example, Tasom explains how she will play a game with other fans, where she needs to recognize a song and its lyrics based on the intro (C3: 1).

This form of community seems to be very important to the Korean fans. Yuna explains how their common interest will usually make fans feel very close to each other. Furthermore, the feeling

applies on an overall level in the fandom as well, as Yuna explains it: *“All fandoms feel like they belong to each other.”* (C5: 4). It seems that being in a fandom creates a familiar feeling or a sense of belonging for each fan in the community, which is essentially build around a common love for an artist and with the purpose of appreciating the artist collectively.

The purpose reveals itself in the organized activities of the fandoms, which are also coordinated online. The activities are centered around appreciating the artist and include collecting money for various gifts to the artist, or even subway banners on the artist’s birthday (C4: 8). Furthermore, Tasom provides her own example of these activities, by showing a book she is creating with art and letters from fans, to give to one of Exo’s members (C3: 2). Additionally, Seojeon and Wonjun explain about fan chants at the concerts as one of these activities: *“It’s [the fan chants] really organized! The fan café gives notice to the fans before. It’s very prepared for the concert or the music broadcast. Maybe like two hours before, the leader of the fandom will tell everyone ‘yell this at that time.’”* (C4: 5). Moreover, at these events fans will bring their light stick. The light sticks are specifically designed for cheering and to show which artist the fan belongs to, so while the artist is performing, every light stick will light up, effectively identifying the artist’s fans in the crowd (C4: 3-4, C5: 5).

Taking part in these fan chants and bringing the light stick helps create a sense of belonging for the fans, but also effectively becomes a way for them to interact with the artist. Of course, it is not possible for an artist to be aware of every individual fan. The artist is however aware of his fandom, which he will typically name and address, and therefore in a sense is aware of every fan in that fandom. So, by being part of the fandom, the fans can effectively show appreciation as a mass through gift giving, chanting and by adding their light stick to the crowd. This way they get an opportunity to be noticed and fulfill the need to build a relation and emotional connection to the artist.

Comparing to Denmark, there seems to be a very different perspective on appreciating and supporting artists in Korea. As previously mentioned, Danish consumption is very self-oriented, and one consumer was not even aware that she was supporting the artist by streaming the music. This stands in great contrast to the Korean consumers who are eager to cheer on their artist and show

support. Not only are Korean consumers eager, but it seems like it is being regarded almost as a duty, since Yuna explains that some fans feel burdened if they cannot afford it (C5: 4).

Also related to the eagerness to support, there is a great awareness of industry dynamics among the fans, who they will stream and buy albums, knowing it will help the artist succeed and win awards. For example, as shown in Tasom's statement, she is very aware that she can directly support the artist financially and career wise by listening to the music: *"Also, you buy the albums to increase the artist's sales ranking, so they might be able to win award shows later. So, you save your money to buy their albums. It's about supporting, to get sales rankings up"* (C3: 4). This clearly shows a much larger awareness in regard to industry dynamics and the artist's career development, than among the Danish consumers, whose buying behavior and consumption is purely focused on their individual needs. This awareness and tendency to support also stretches to include the company behind the artist. While it can be questioned whether Danish consumers will generally be aware of which record label an artist belongs to, in Korea it seems to be common knowledge among fans. For instance, Wonjun talks about how the right entertainment company can be crucial for a group's fame (C4: 1). Similarly, Yuna is aware of the company behind her favorite group, Red Velvet (C5: 1). Additionally, Tasom explains how she will usually only listen to music that comes from SM Entertainment who employs her favorite group Exo, implying that this way, she is still indirectly supporting the group, by supporting all the works of the company (C3: 3).

This tendency to actively consume music in communities and show support for the artists can be explained by the cultural dimensions of Korea as a society (Browaeys & Price, 2015). While Danes' consumption pattern was explained by their individualistic traits, Korea on the other hand is a collectivistic society with a score of 18/100 (Hofstede Centre, 2018). Essentially, the score express that Koreans put emphasis on loyalty and relationships. They have a "we" mentality, where identity is based on one's social group, and group dynamics are valued higher than the individual's needs (Browaeys & Price, 2015, p. 34). Because of this cultural dimension, communities will naturally evolve around the artist, as the group mentality and importance put on relationships is culturally embedded in the consumers. This need is then satisfied by interacting in fandoms, as it creates that familiar feeling of belonging that Yuna mentioned and is a way to establish relationships. Additionally, it is also seen in Korean fans' tendency to attend concerts alone since, as Yuna explains,

the fans can find other people from the fandom there (C5: 4). It stands in great contrast to the Danish consumers who would never attend a concert alone and testifies to the strength of the social relations within the fandoms.

Furthermore, this cultural dimension also explains the fierce loyalty and tendency to support the artist, as loyalty is typically emphasized in collectivistic societies. Since the fandoms are centered around an artist, that artist will naturally be regarded as part of the social group and therefore deserving of the fans' loyalty and support. In turn, it also includes fans educating themselves on industry dynamics, in their efforts to support the artist. In fact, as Koreans naturally adopt a "we" mentality, it is very possible that the artist is not even regarded as an individual the consumers support, but more as an extension of themselves since they belong to the same social group and identifies themselves through it. This can even be interpreted from one of the Exo chants; "*We are one*", that Tasom mentions. Essentially, it means that by being loyal and supporting the artist, they are supporting the whole group they belong to and additionally strengthening their own ties to that group. This unity can even explain consumers' focus on the artist's company as well. As concluded in the industry analysis, it is the Korean entertainment company as a whole, including the artist, that has the creative output. So, the company can essentially be regarded as an extension of the artist and therefore also part of the fandom's social group. Additionally, the group dynamic regarding creative output also results in the previously mentioned tendency, of consumers supporting other artists from the same company. Essentially, the "we" mentality applies to the company and all its artists who together, becomes a social group. As a result, the creative output of this social group is supported by the respective fandoms, regardless of which artist actually embodies it.

So fundamentally, community plays a big role in Korea in a way that does not exist in Denmark. In terms of music consumption, you see it to some extent at concerts in Denmark, as previously described by the Danish consumers. However, unlike Korean consumers, the tendency does not seem to be strong enough to actually build relations or affect the consumers' behavior to any great extent. Consumers do not engage with each other solely based on music. They do not make friends this way but will rather use music to get closer to their existing friends, which Gitte is an example of, as mentioned, since she would use Eminem music as a way of bonding with a few specific friends.

This direct contrast in consumer behavior is however natural, taking into consideration cultural differences, including the individualistic nature of Danes and collectivism of Koreans.

Guo (Guo, 2018), who examines dynamics related to fandoms, explains fan identification from social identity theory and touches upon, how each individual will have a social identity and a personal identity. Furthermore, the social identity is explained as formed by group engagements (Guo, 2018, pp. 149-150). In relation to Korean and Danish consumers, it explains their differences regarding fan communities. As Korea is a collective society, social identity is strong, making fan identification and fandoms culturally natural for Korean consumers. In contrast, as Denmark is an individualistic society, personal identity will be strong, meaning that it is less important for Danish consumers to strengthen their social identity through fan identification and communities.

4.2.2c KOREAN MOTIVATION AND BUYING BEHAVIOR

In the same way the cultural dimensions revealed itself in Danish consumers' buying behavior, for Korean consumers, emphasis on community and collective identity also shows in their buying behavior. The Korean interviewees buy the artist's physical albums despite also streaming their music and not having a CD player to play the albums (C3: 5, C4: 3, C5: 2). Tasom even buys multiple copies of the albums (C3: 3). This behavior shows how the traits of the Korean, collective culture affects the consumers' buying behavior and it does not only extend to CD's. Wonjun explains about the large amounts one of his friends would spend every month in support of the artist: *"She spent about 300.000 won [approx. 1700DKK] every month on goods to support. Albums, posters, everything that the idol member's face is on."* (C4: 8). The cultural focus on loyalty and support within social groups results in consumers making purchases and spending large amounts of money in support, rather than purely for their own consumption. Furthermore, through these purchases, such as the light stick, the fans can fit in with the fandom and further strengthen their sense of belonging, which is another way the cultural dimension shows in their buying behavior. As mentioned, there is generally a strong group mentality present in Korea and identity is built on social groups. So, these purchases become a natural way for Korean consumers to engage in their culture and the fundamental needs of belonging to a social group that it entails. Furthermore, interviewee P5, who is the owner of an entertainment company, explains how merchandise generally symbolizes the artist: *"In the fan's mind, this merchandise is the artist. It symbolizes the artist."* (P5: 2). As it was

established that Korean consumers seek to establish a relationship and emotional connection with the artist. So, as the merchandise symbolizes the artist they are emotionally attached to, they buy it to feel the gratification and strengthen that connection. Additionally, it also explains the many CD purchases, although a lot less symbolically as they, similar to lottery tickets, increase the odds of winning a meeting with the artist.

The Korean buying behavior, motivated by a focus on social belonging and supporting the collective stands in great contrast to the Danish one, which proved to be very individualistic and motivated by each fan's own needs for consumption. While the Danish consumers' buying behavior could be explained from an experiential perspective, this is also possible for the Korean consumers', as emotions also proved to be an important aspect. However, while the Danish consumers seem to be building an emotional connection to a piece of music, the Korean consumers are building their connection to an artist, and part of the experience becomes the engagement in the community around the artist, as previously explained. However, the Korean buying behavior can also in part be explained by the psychological benefits the consumers get from fan practices. Guo (Guo, 2018) explains how the sense of being needed and having a mission is fulfilled, when fans realize the effect they have on the community they are contributing to (Guo, 2018, p. 150). As previously mentioned, Tasom explains how part of the fandom's mission is for the artist's sales ranking to go up and help the group win award shows. So, for Korean music consumers, the gratification happens as they see, how their purchases have a positive effect on the artist's career.

4.2.2D BRAND AMBASSADORS

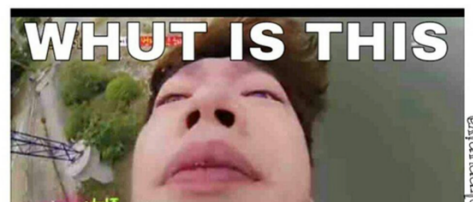
It has been discovered throughout the analysis of Korean music consumers, that they show a tendency to build a relationship and emotional connection to the artists behind the music they like. In turn this leads to very loyal consumers, who have extensive knowledge about the artist as well as a willingness to support him. This support shows both socially through community engagements as well as financially through purchases. In contrast to Danish consumers, who are using music as more of a secondary activity while doing something else, Korean consumers approach music as more of a hobby. They engage in online communities, write the artist, look at pictures and watch music videos, which means that rather than using music only as a secondary activity, it takes up their focus.

With this behavior, Korean fans are essentially, through the fandom, becoming brand ambassadors for the artist. One of the practices that Schau, Muñiz Jr. and Arnould (2009) explains as creating value in brand communities is *impression management*. It includes the practices that create positive impressions of the brand outside of the community (Schau, Muñiz Jr., & Arnould, 2009, s. 34). This is effectively what the fandom is performing. The purpose of the fandom's efforts to support is to increase the artist's sales ranking and earn him awards as Tasom mentioned, which in turn leads to the artist getting more attention and popularity. As Interviewee P5 explains, the Korean fandom plays a crucial role in heightening an artist's popularity: *"These days I feel like Asian consumers are different as they are kind of promotion ambassadors for the artist. They are striving for the fame of the artist. They are taking positive actions, helping the artist. In other places around the world, the consumers are more passive. They just listen to the music and watch on TV."* (P5: 3). Besides the purchases made to increase sales ranking, other purchases such as metro banners on the artist's birthday also help with external awareness, as anyone passing through the metro station will see. Additionally, the fandom's online engagement within the community create external visibility too. People outside the community, who have access to the Internet, are able to see the fandom's interactions on platforms such as social media, which are open to anyone. Furthermore, they create content on these platforms such as the memes⁴ shown below, which are enjoyed by the mass, and are therefore essentially creating a gateway for people outside the community to learn about the artist. Hereby the fandom is acting as brand ambassador for the artist, at least creating awareness and possibly also increasing his fanbase.

social media vs real life



**WHEN YOU
ACCIDENTALLY OPENED
FRONT CAMERA**



Source: Twitter

⁴ Meme: Usually consists of a photo with a humorous caption and is shared online on various platforms

4.2.3 SUBSET ON CONSUMER BEHAVIOR

Overall, Danish music consumption proved to be largely driven by the consumers' mood as well as the emotional connection they may develop to a song. This makes emotions an important aspect of their buying behavior, as it affects their decision-making subconsciously. Furthermore, music seems to be used as a way of enhancing other experiences, rather than being the main experience itself. Additionally, focus is largely on the songs as stand-alone products, as Danish consumers are generally not very occupied with an artist beyond his craft. However, the emotional connection that Danish consumers need to have with the music also applies to the artist to a certain extent. The consumers will still develop favorite artists, whom they take a bit more interest in, which is based on the emotional connection, as well as the consumer's ability to build their self-brand connections off of the artist's storytelling.

The emotional connection does however not affect their buying behavior or result in loyalty among the consumers, as they have no problem switching between artists and generally take on a self-oriented approach to consumption. They show no sign of artist awareness in regard to supporting the music they love, and consumption patterns are highly personal and focused solely on their own needs. Furthermore, their consumption can be explained by the cultural dimensions of Denmark. As Danish consumers prove to be highly individualistic and with low power distance, it explains why their consumption is also self-centered and they are less likely to idolize an artist.

In contrast to Danish consumers, Korean consumers seem to be developing an emotional connection to artists rather than songs. Due to this connection, the consumers are likely to seek out personal information about the artist, in an effort to establish a relationship and strengthen the emotional bond, which makes storytelling important in Korea as well. Moreover, the visual focus of Korean consumers, creates another dimension to storytelling, concerning the artist's visual identity. Due to the strong emotional connection that consumers develop, they also have a strong wish to communicate with and about the artist or even meet him, which affects their online behavior, as well as their buying behavior. In turn the relation that Korean consumers build towards an artist results in a strong loyalty.

The act of listening to music proves to be similar to Danish consumers, as it often happens while engaging in other activities. However, for Koreans there is a whole different aspect to consumption

that does not exist to the same degree in Denmark and adds to music as an experience product. It involves the consumers engaging in communities known as fandoms, which are centered around the artist they like. Here they build relations with other fans online and take part in organized activities in order to support the artist. Furthermore, the fandom becomes a channel for the consumers to communicate with the artist and be noticed. This form of consumption essentially becomes a hobby and primary activity.

The attitude towards appreciating and supporting artists generally stands in contrast to Danish consumers, as Koreans are eager to support and even show great awareness of industry dynamics, in an effort to help the artist.

Korea proves to be a collectivistic society, so Koreans will generally have a “we” mentality and base their identity off of social groups. Furthermore, emphasis is put on loyalty and relationships. Therefore, similar to Danish consumption, Korean consumption, and especially the tendency of communities and fandoms developing around an artist, can also be explained by the cultural dimension. Additionally, their buying behavior can also be explained by the cultural dimension, as it results in consumers making purchases as an act of support or to strengthen their sense of belonging in the community, rather than for their own personal consumption.

In turn, the behavior of Korean consumers leads to fandoms taking on the role of brand ambassadors for the artist. This shows in how they create visibility, supports the artist’s career, and functions as a gateway for others to learn about the artist. Hereby also helping increase the fanbase.

4.3 THE CORRELATION: CONSUMERS AND INDUSTRY STRUCTURE

The previous section effectively summed up the analysis of Korean and Danish music consumers, hereby answering the first half of the second sub question. Here, the thesis will therefore proceed to show the correlation between music consumption and industry structure. So, by the end of this section, the second sub question will have been answered:

2: How does Koreans and Danes consume popular music and in what ways do the consumption patterns and industry structures relate to each other?

As both the Danish and Korean music industry as well as its consumers has now been studied, this following paragraph will examine how Danish and Korean consumer behavior relates to the way the music industries structure themselves.

Looking at Korean consumers, what stands out is the power of the fandoms, who's fierce loyalty and willingness to support socially as well as financially can make or break an artist. Therefore, it is no surprise that fandoms also affect the structure of the Korean music industry. This is reflected in entertainment companies having a separate marketing team dedicated specifically to the fandom. As the fandom is able to drive an artist's career with their purchases and ability to boost visibility, it creates a need for the companies to have a team that can manage fandom relations and satisfy their need to build a relation to the artist. This also explains the creation of activities such as fan meetings, as these are actions that the company are taking in order to cater to the needs of the fandom.

To an extent, fostering a fandom also makes the market more predictable for Korean companies, as it lessens the uncertainty related to creating the creative output. If the company knows that the artist has a sizable fandom who will support his work, it lessens the risk of losing money when investing in the artist.

Moreover, the fandom's commitment can to an extent be traced through their many purchases and online presence, which means that the company will likely be able to use the fandom as an indicator of whether the artist's popularity is decreasing. However, it also means that it is important for the entertainment companies to act with precision. Since the fans consume in communities and build relations with each other, it also makes it easier for rumors and negative impressions to spread. Therefore, any artist missteps can have disastrous effects on his popularity. This can partly explain why entertainment companies keep everything internal, as it makes it easier to control the processes and be meticulous about how they present the artist, in an effort to cater to the fandom. Additionally, the loyalty of the fandoms towards both artists and companies allow for the Korean approach to artist development. If a company like SM Entertainment knows that their group Exo has a large fandom, they can utilize this loyalty as it was discovered that it also extends to the company behind the group. This means, that it becomes safer for the company to make those large investments in new artist development, as the loyal fanbase of Exo will most likely also be supportive of any new groups the company creates.

Furthermore, another trait of the Korean consumers that shape the industry is their visual focus. This emphasis on visuals shows itself in the entertainment company's processes, as the artist's looks is one of the deciding factors at auditions. Additionally, it also plays a role later in the processes of creating music and content. As the artist's visual identity has proved to be important for Korean consumers, the companies are creating their creative output around concepts that will spark the consumers' interest.

Finally, as briefly touched upon, the collectivistic society of Korea allows for group orientation in the entertainment companies as well. It does not have to be the artist who actually has the creative output, as it is the group as a whole who is perceived as carrying out the tasks. In this instance the group is embodied by the company. Furthermore, the group orientation also explains the companies' tendency to internalize their processes, as it forms a clear social group and sense of belonging within the company. Additionally, it allows for a clear division of roles and establishment of a hierarchy, which is also part of the cultural dimensions of Korea, with a score of 60/100 (Hofstede Centre, 2018).

Looking at Danish consumers, the focus on songs as stand-alone products and lack of loyalty towards artists have also shaped the Danish industry's structure. It explains why the Danish music companies have had to focus on short-term commitments and allocate risk regarding the creative output, as the reaction of consumers cannot really be predicted. This stands in contrast to the Korean consumers, who are more predictable because of the fandoms and therefore allows the Korean entertainment companies to take on larger commitments.

Additionally, this lack of loyalty also explains why certain events such as fan meeting do not exist in Denmark, in contrast to Korea. Since the Danish consumers do not show any great interest in the artist beyond his craft and are not into idolizing, those type of events would simply not sell tickets, which explains why the Danish music company has not taken on those types of activities.

Similar to Korea, the cultural dimensions have also affected the way the industry structure itself. Due to the individualistic tendencies in Denmark, there is naturally also more pressure on the individual artist to perform and live up to the artistic expectations. Creative output will not be

regarded as a group effort the same way it will in Korea, so the artist is expected to be the one creating the music. It explains why the artistic development as well as the decision-making is put in the hands of the artist himself, as emphasis is put on individuality and the artist's personal authenticity. Furthermore, the low power distance invites a flat business structure with little regards to hierarchy, which explains why the company takes on the role as gatekeeper and partner rather than employer.

So, overall looking at the Danish and Korean consumers, they can help explain the structure and processes of each music industry. To an extent, the consumption pattern of Koreans become more predictable, as they are loyal and consume in fandoms, which allows for the Korean companies to take on the market-based approach that they are.

This is an approach that would be much harder in Denmark, due to the consumption patterns of Danish consumers. They are more unpredictable, as they are individualistic, and highly influenced by mood, with little loyalty towards the artist, which results in the Danish music industry being less market-oriented than the Korean. Instead they position themselves as gatekeepers and put the artist's personal creativity at center.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

In the previous analysis, a vast amount of differences was presented between the structures and processes of Korean and Danish music industry, as well as in terms of music consumption. These findings will now be used in the following section, in order to answer the third and final sub question, previously introduced:

3: Taking starting point in the findings of Danish and Korean music industry and consumers, how may cultural and structural differences impact a Korean artist's ability to gain success on the European market?

With this sub question, the following section seeks to argue whether it is possible for a Korean artist to cater to both the Korean and European market, given the structural differences between the industries and the cultural differences between consumers, which were previously presented. For this purpose, the findings in Denmark will represent the European market. The discussion will initially be overall debate of the difficulties of cross-cultural markets given the findings of this study. Then, the internationally renowned Korean group BTS will be introduced. This group will be used as a case-example, discussing how their approach possibly has resulted in cross-cultural success.

5.1 CHALLENGES OF CROSS-CULTURAL MARKETS

5.1.1 OVERALL STRUCTURAL CHALLENGES

The differences that were discovered regarding the structure of the music industry showed that Danish music companies are dependent on each other's expertise, working project-based and using the industry networks. Utilizing these networks allows for knowledge sharing, which may increase a company's chances of success. Additionally, it proved to be a way of managing risk of uncertainty, as risk is being allocated between all parties involved in a project, rather than being placed within a single company entirely. This tendency was also present in artist development, as it typically

involves short-term commitments with artists who have already developed an artistic direction and gained a following.

Meanwhile, Korean companies place the entire production internally, which allows them to micro-manage the creative processes. While it may place all risks of uncertainty at a single company, it also lessens the complexity of working creatively. Quick decisions can be made internally in the company, rather than having to account for external creatives' inputs and work out compromises, which adds to the complexity. This structure is reflected in Korean artist development as well, as companies will usually enter into long-term commitments with the artist, taking full charge of his artistic skills and development as part of their operations.

This means, that if a Korean entertainment company were to collaborate with European companies concerning its artist, the structural differences between the companies might be challenging to overcome. Korean entertainment companies are used to all operations taking place internally and the intense competition with other entertainment companies putting restraints on knowledge sharing. Thus, it will possibly be difficult for Korean companies to utilize the network and properly engage in knowledge-sharing with European partners, as it simply does not come naturally.

Additionally, cultural differences are also present, such as power distance resulting in a slight hierarchy in Korea and a flatter structure in Denmark, or Korea being a collectivistic society and Denmark being more individualistic. These general cultural differences as well as the structural differences in the music industry could result in a lack of cognitive proximity between Danish and Korean employees, adding to their difficulties in absorbing each other's knowledge. However, as the Danish companies largely depend on the network and their partners' expertise in order to succeed, the difficulties that the differences bring can very likely have a negative effect on the partnership and in turn the end product.

Another point is that Korean companies take on a vast amount of operations, which they are able to micro-manage due to the internalization lessening complexity and providing a fast respond time. So, if a Korean entertainment company were to collaborate with a European company on operations, there would be a new, external partner to coordinate with and whose creative input would also have to be considered, significantly increasing the complexity of the processes.

Furthermore, the traditional operations of Korean entertainment companies do not seem to be compatible with the European market. Some aspects of operations, such as the minimal role of the artist in the creative processes, could possibly make it difficult for him to be successful, as artist creativity has turned out to be a major focus in European music industry.

Moreover, the Korean approach to storytelling through concepts and visuals might not appeal to a European audience. This is due to the European consumers being used to true-to-reality storytelling, based on the artist's personal story, which stands in contrast to the Korean staged approach, involving costumes and changing concepts. Since the Danish consumers showed no sign of having the same visual focus as Korean consumers, a European audience is likely to not be interested in this aspect of storytelling. The company could end up spending a lot of time and money on developing concepts that would not help the artist in Europe. Thus, changes would probably need to happen regarding operations, in order to adapt to the European market.

In terms of marketing and sales, the approach would also have to be different, since it was discovered that the Danish consumers' buying behavior was focused on personal needs and centered on streaming, with no regards for artist loyalty. This means, that the Korean artist cannot expect that developing a fanbase will result in Europeans loyally buying his CD's and merchandise. Most likely, CD and merchandise sales will be non-existent compared to Korea, so the entertainment company would be required to shift focus to streaming platforms in order for their artist to be successful in Europe too.

5.1.2 CROSS-CULTURAL CONSUMPTION

It is not only the consumers' different buying behavior a Korean company would have to consider when entering the European market. The general approach to consumers would have to be different. As discussed earlier, Korea is a collectivistic society where relationships are important and social identity is strong. This means that communities play a big role for Korean music consumers, who will consume in fandoms and have strong loyalty towards an artist. Therefore, it also makes sense that Korean entertainment companies will work on a lot of extra content besides the music, and thus allow for the consumers to get to know the artist and build a relation to him. Furthermore, it makes sense that the company has a marketing department focused on the fandom, since the

strong sense of loyalty and community inside a fandom together with their buying power can lift the artist's career.

However, on the European market, the Korean entertainment company would have to shift focus to gain success, since the consumers are very different. As discovered from Danish consumers, there is no community among music fans the same way as there is in Korea. Consumers are individualistic and focused on their personal preference rather than social relations. Furthermore, emotional connections with the artist are not as important as in Korea. The tendency in Europe is rather that a piece of music speaks on its own, while little attention is paid to the artist. Therefore, focusing resources on fostering a fandom and building emotional connections to the artist will prove unsuccessful in Europe due to the lack of loyalty and community among fans. Rather, in order to create value for European consumers, it seems that Korean entertainment companies would need to focus more on songwriting. Korean entertainment companies would need to spend resources on creating authentic and highly creative music, that is not limited by concepts and preconditions, but is good enough to live on its own, and thus effectively creating emotional connections and potentially capturing a European audience.

5.1.3 CROSS-CULTURAL SONGWRITING

In order to deliver this highly creative and authentic music, it would be appropriate for Korean entertainment companies to collaborate with European partners on songwriting, as they know the market and are working relatively freely with personal creativity in focus. Additionally, the overall setup for songwriting proved to be similar in Korea and Denmark.

In Korea however, the tendency to perform high control over the processes persists throughout songwriting as well. Whereas Danish companies put the artist at the center of the process and emphasize personal creativity, Korean companies are in charge of the creative output and will set preconditions for the creative process, which the artist is often not a part of.

Due to these essential differences, cross-cultural collaborations on songwriting may prove to be difficult for Korean artists. In the Korean music industry, which is built up on collectivism, creativity is seen as a group effort, embodied by the company. Therefore, the expectation towards the artist expressing his personal creativity may put a lot of pressure on a Korean artist, who is used to working based on the company's visions, or in many cases, he is not even part of the process until the song

is finished. It is possible that the Korean artist has never expressed himself creatively on a professional level before, as his role in the Korean entertainment company is more limited to only perform the finished product. Therefore, putting him in a situation where he is the center of the creative process could positively have a negative effect on the creative output, simply because he is not acquainted with the process and has not written songs on a professional level before.

Cross-cultural songwriting for Korean artists could possibly be of general difficulty for Korean artists and not just concern songwriting process itself. Korean artists are highly skilled in performing arts because of the many trainee years they have gone through in their company. However, the Korean artists are likely to be inexperienced in art creation on a professional level, so a lack of personal creativity could prove to be a big problem for their credibility as artists in Europe, where an artist's authenticity and ability to express himself is highly valued.

Cross-cultural songwriting for Korean artists could possibly be challenging for Danish and Korean songwriters as well. Danish songwriters, who are used to relatively high creative freedom in their work, might feel creatively restricted by the preconditions a Korean entertainment company might set, as well as the company's general influence on the process. It might also be challenging the other way around: If songwriters were to collaborate based on a Danish company's approach, it is possible that the Korean songwriters may become overwhelmed with the lack of frame and prerequisites for the sessions, as they are used to receiving relatively specific instructions from Korean companies. However, since songwriters are creatives and may very well have their own projects where they can create freely (e.g. Jacoby who also creates music for himself), chances are that the process will not be as foreign in reality.

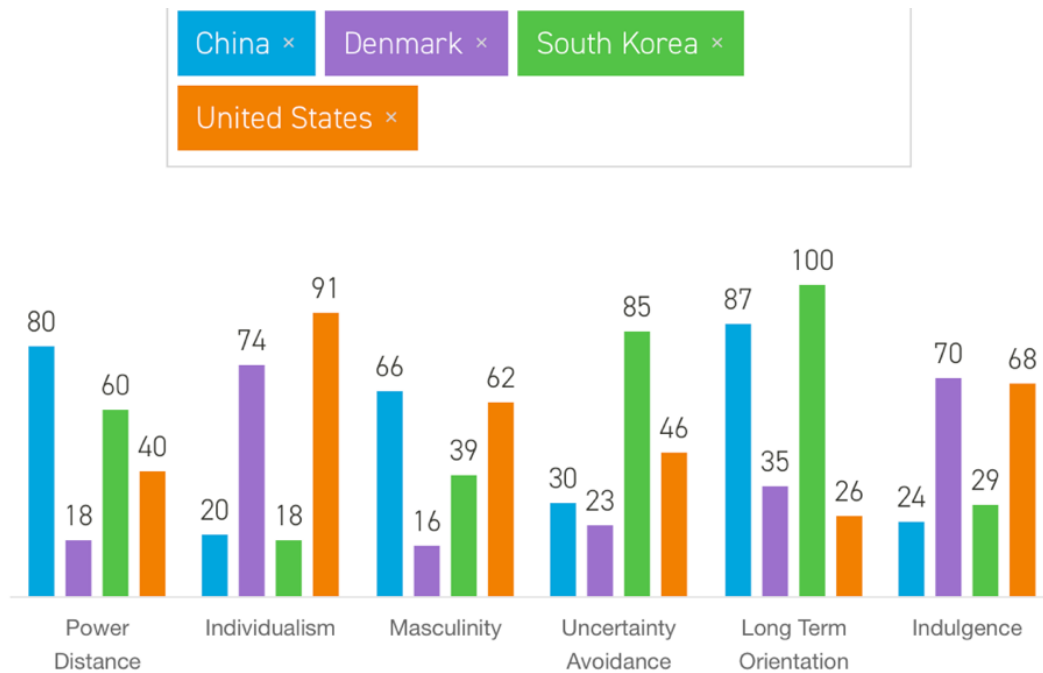
Nevertheless, if the Danish approach to songwriting is embraced, the Korean entertainment company will lose control over the creative process. This makes it difficult for them to maintain a market-oriented view, where they can incorporate a marketing strategy as well as concepts and visuals that are valued by Korean consumers. So, by giving up control, in an attempt to adapt to European values regarding personal creativity and creative freedom, Korean artists would be at risk of not living up to the expectations of Korean consumers.

5.2 SUCCESS STORY: BTS

In an effort to answer the third sub question, the previous sections discussed the many cultural and structural difficulties a Korean company and its artist would face and the changes that would have to be made, if trying to cater to the European market. Furthermore, a pattern revealed itself in which it seems difficult for a Korean company to cater to the Korean and European market at the same time, due to these contradictory differences.

However, this section will now introduce the Korean boyband BTS as an example of a group who has managed to overcome these challenges and become very successful worldwide.

As the following introduction will show, a lot of BTS' accomplishments in the western part of the world has been centered more around the U.S. rather than Europe. This does of course present some difficulties, when comparing their success to the findings of this thesis, as it is based on Danish data and generalized to fit the European market rather than the U.S. market. However, the rationale is that these two areas overall represent Western culture and will therefore, when generalizing, inevitably have cultural dimensions that resemble each other to some extent, in turn reflecting on consumption and industry structures. In the same way, East Asian cultures will to an extent have cultural dimensions that resemble each other. This is exemplified by East Asian cultures generally leaning more towards collectivistic societies and Western cultures leaning more towards individualistic ones, as illustrated on the following page. Furthermore, specifically regarding the music industry, Europe and the U.S. generally share music trends and the major artists will typically enjoy success in both areas when comparing charts, which enables the generalization of BTS' successes in U.S. as testifying to an overall success on Western markets.



Source: Hofstede Insights, Country comparison

5.2.1 AN INTRODUCTION TO THE GROUP

BTS is a seven-member, male group created by the Korean company, Big Hit Entertainment and had their musical debut in Korea in 2013. Year 2017 marked their breakthrough in the U.S, as they were the first K-pop group to win a Billboard Music Award (Drysdale, 2017). They were nominated alongside some of the top artists worldwide, such as Justin Bieber, Selena Gomez, Ariana Grande and Shawn Mendes and ended up winning the ‘Top Social Artist’ award (ET, 2017).

Since then, their international career has been growing quickly, as they have had a total of eight songs on the American music chart, Billboard Top 200, of which two became no. 1 hits and three were in the top 10 (BTS Chart History, 2018). The group has been highly popular in the rest of the world as well with their 2017 album ‘Love Yourself: Her’ topping the iTunes album charts in 73 countries (Will, 2017). Their three latest albums have each sold over a million copies, and with the latest album ‘Love Yourself: Answer’ from August 2018 selling 1,9 million copies, they broke the record for the highest number of albums sold in the history of the Korean music chart, Gaon (SBS PopAsia HQ, 2018).

Their increasing popularity enabled them to perform at American Music Awards in 2017. Additionally, it also provided them with extensive U.S. TV appearances, including on major American

talk shows like 'The Late Late Show with James Corden' and 'The Ellen DeGeneres Show' (Herman, 2018). Furthermore, the group has collaborated with successful, western artists such as Nicki Minaj, Desiigner and Steve Aoki (Spotify: BTS, 2018).

Furthermore, they became the first K-pop group to enter the UK top 40 singles chart in August 2018 (Arthur, 2018). Additionally, Billboard announced that the BTS now holds the record for 'most simultaneous hits on world digital song sales chart' and celebrates them as a chart ruler, with music at the top of numerous charts, including the Billboard 200, Artist 100, Social 50, World Albums, Digital Song Sales and World Digital Song Sales (Billboard, 2018).

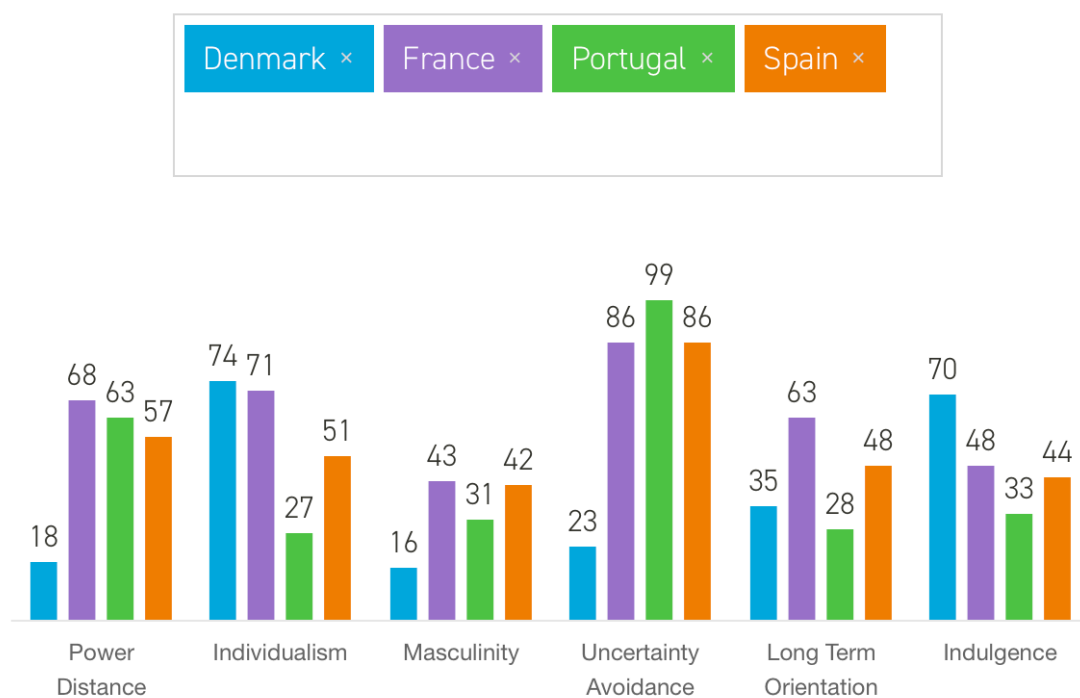
5.2.2 THEIR APPROACH TO THE EUROPEAN MARKET

5.2.2A COMMUNITY: BTS' ARMY

BTS' mainstream success seems to have started with the Top Social Artist award, as this marked an increase in attention towards them. This specific award is fan-based, as the winner is determined by worldwide fans voting for their favorite artist (Billboard Music Awards, 2018). This suggests that a loyal fanbase has proven to be very important for BTS, as it has helped develop the group's international career. This is also supported by interviewee P5's statement, saying that today a group's fandom plays a crucial role in the artist's popularity. Interestingly, as previously discussed, the findings of this thesis showed that in Europe, it might prove inefficient to try to foster a fandom due to the cultural nature of European fans. However, this sense of community and loyalty has actually proved to be very important for BTS, as their fandom, named ARMY, has helped make their mainstream success possible. It is important to note, that the Billboard voting system actually allowed fans worldwide to vote through social media (Billboard Music Awards, 2018). So, it is possible that a large amount of the votes actually came from BTS' Korean fandom, who are likely to have engaged in any organized voting activities due to their previously explained consumption behavior.

However, another explanation for BTS' success relates to variations in the cultural dimensions. It is safe to assume, that the national cultures making up European or even more general Western culture, will have variations in their cultural dimensions. Therefore, generalizing based on only

Danish findings is probably too imprecise in this case. Reality is that Western cultures according to Hofstede Insights include societies more collectivistically minded than Denmark (depicted below with Spain and Portugal as examples). Moreover, these are also among the countries where BTS have been number one on iTunes charts (Will, 2017). Thus, a likely explanation is that Western fans from the more collectivistic societies, who strongly value loyalty and social relations will have found the ARMY community around BTS appealing and have established deep emotional connections with the group. This seems to have especially been possible due to their vast online presence, which includes uploading a behind-the-scene series known as ‘Bangtan Bomb’ on YouTube (BangtanTV, YouTube, 2018), providing twitter updates, where they have more than 16 million followers (BTS, Twitter, 2018), and broadcasting on V live, where they have more than 10 million subscribers (BTS, V Live, 2018). Through these activities, the group has been able to successfully build a relationship and emotional connection with their fandom, as well as expanding it worldwide. This in turn has helped to lift the group’s career in both Europe and the U.S., where they have achieved impressive results on music charts.



Source: Hofstede Insights, Country comparison

Furthermore, it is important to note that even individualistic countries may have strong subcultures that find the Korean group appealing. These subcultures might include Asians living abroad or people who for various reasons take interest in Asia. Here, France can be used as an example, since the country's score on individualism is very similar to Denmark, meaning that the country may similarly also be less prone to show artist support and consume music in communities. However, Mr. Park mentioned France as the only European country where they have been able to organize KCON⁵ (P4: 1). This indicates that there might be a relatively large subculture present in France that is interested in Korean culture and for this reason, will also be more likely to embrace Korean music and the Korean way of consuming, including joining a community and loyally supporting the artist.

5.2.2B STORYTELLING: THE UNDERDOG

Additionally, BTS seem to have been able to create quite a strong storytelling for themselves, which is another aspect that likely has contributed to their success. They incorporate concepts into their creative output, such as their album series 'Love Yourself', which was previously mentioned as an example of the Korean use of concepts. Additionally, as already mentioned, they make their personalities quite available to fans through social media, and all together these initiatives help them appeal to their Korean fanbase. However, they also have a more true-to-reality storytelling surrounding them. The group is from a small Korean entertainment company, which makes their success surprising and rather unique, as that level of popularity is usually only gained by the groups from the three biggest entertainment companies in Korea (Glasby, 2017). Thus, since they were never expected to become top artists but still managed this, and even surpassed all other Korean artists by breaking through to mainstream western markets, they have established a very strong storytelling of BTS as the underdog. This story allows for BTS to be someone the fans can admire for their hard work and unlikely accomplishments and have possibly helped create a bridge to European consumers, as it is true-to-reality and something they can relate to and build their self-brand connections on. This way, their overall storytelling manages to have elements that are appealing to both Korean and European consumers.

⁵ A Korean convention hosted annually in numerous locations around the world with the aim to promote Korean popular culture, such as Korean pop music and beauty products.

5.2.2c MUSIC CREATIVITY AND COLLABORATIONS

Finally, it seems that BTS' focus on creativity in music production has helped with their international success as well. Their entertainment company has made an effort to include its artists in the creative process and seems to be making room for personal creativity this way, as some of the group members are credited on several of BTS' songs (Spotify: BTS, 2018: *Love Yourself: Answer*, Credits). Furthermore, their focus on music and creativity in terms of songwriting also shows in the group's tendency to take up social issues in their songs, undoubtedly adding to the creative depth and complexity of the process (Kelley, 2017). Moreover, to an extent the company is also utilizing their external network, similarly to European music companies. This is exemplified by BTS collaborating with several Western artists. Through these collaborations, each party functions similarly to the European structure, where everyone adds to the creative process with their expertise, in order to work around the uncertainty related to music. In this case, it means that BTS and their company are able to create music, using their own knowledge of the Korean music market as well as utilizing established artists' knowledge of the Western markets. Ultimately, they are working around the industry uncertainty and the heightened uncertainty from cultural differences by working across cultures and looking to other creatives for a little certainty.

Finally, it is also worth noting, that the collaborations with Western artists may not only contribute to music creativity. It can also function as a form of bridging between European and Korean markets, making European consumers interested in BTS through collaborations with the Western artists that they are already familiar with. An example of how this could take place is if consumers base their self-brand images on Desiigner and build an emotional connection to this artist, similarly to Gitta with Beyonce. When Desiigner then collaborates with BTS, it may result in the consumers channeling these self-brand images to BTS as well, since they are now affiliated with Desiigner, in turn making those consumers interested in BTS.

However, by focusing on the music itself as well, rather than only the artist, BTS is able to create highly creative music that is more likely to appeal to European consumers, who do not pay as much attention to the artist and to a higher degree need to connect with the song. Furthermore, by including the group members in the creative processes along with the company's producers and songwriters, they are also able to live up to the European standard of artist creativity.

5.3 CONCLUSIONS ON CROSS-CULTURAL SUCCESS

Overall, in spite of cultural and structural contrasts seemingly making it difficult for a Korean artist to be successful both in Korea and Europe, BTS proves themselves as a successful case. Big Hit Entertainment, the company behind BTS, seems to have found a solution that takes starting point in the structure of a Korean entertainment company and Korean ways of consuming, by fostering a fiercely loyal fandom and focusing the music around concepts. Then, by incorporating elements such as artist creativity, complex songwriting and true-to-reality storytelling they are able to appeal to the European market as well, and thus in a sense creating a hybrid solution.

However, as a final remark, it is important to note, that the case of BTS may very well not provide other artists with a recipe for success. As previously discovered, music is consumed as an experience and largely based on feelings. So, it might be a very unique combination of BTS' music, personality, and storytelling as well as timing that has made them successful.

In today's global music markets, what role does cultural differences play and to which degree does it give opportunities and challenges for artists to have an international career?

Furthermore in an effort to put these conclusions in relation to the overall problem area and answer the research question it can be established, based on the findings of this thesis, that cultural differences in consumer behavior and the local approach to the creative processes still plays a substantial role for an artist's ability to develop an international career.

Overall these differences present challenges regarding international collaborations, due to the different perspectives on knowledge sharing, songwriting and artist creativity, as well as the generally contrasting structures of music companies. It does however also give opportunities for artists to collaborate internationally in order to reach a broader audience, and for music companies to learn from each other by adopting parts of the creative processes and create unique, hybrid structures, as was seen in the case of BTS.

Additionally, challenges are presented regarding international fans' consumption behavior, as consumption patterns and perceived value will vary greatly depending on the local cultural characteristics. As a result, it becomes difficult to cater to numerous consumer cultures at once.

However, international opportunities also present themselves for in the form of sub-cultures or even national cultures around the world that will have similar cultural traits, and therefore are likely to find the artist as well as the ways of consuming his music appealing.

More specifically, fostering the cultural phenomenon known as fandoms has proved itself as an opportunity, as was seen in the case of BTS. Fans become important brand ambassadors, who can help lift the artists' international career, due to the the strong sense of loyalty in these communitites. Finally, as these fandoms have a massive online presence, it becomes easier to obtain international awareness, as it allows for consumers all around the world to gain access to the music and community.

5.4 FINAL REMARKS AND PERSONAL REFLECTIONS

This kind of comparative analysis is an effective tool for exploring the overall cultural and structural characteristics of Danish and Korean music industry. However, as a final remark I believe it is important to point out that one needs to be careful about the stereotypical portrait it can provide of two cultures, when doing an overall comparison.

An example of this, is saying that Korean artists do not take part in the creative processes of making music, or that creativity is a group effort, implying that artists will not have personal motivations. Often times it will likely not be as simple as that and it is safe to assume that many K-Pop artists are creatives themselves, which is likely what made them take interest in the music industry in the first place.

Through the data collection process and by generally immersing in Korean music culture it has become my impression that for many Korean artists, becoming part of an entertainment company and being placed in a K-Pop group is a way of opening doors to a difficult industry. Joining a group provides them with the means to establish themselves as artists and will often times provide them with the opportunity to express their personal creativity at a later time, when the K-Pop group has lost momentum.

It seems that cultural dimensions such as the collective society of Korea, the relatively high power distance and their tendency to high restraints has resulted in very patient individuals, who will put

the needs of the group first and not indulge in their personal needs as an artist. Rather they are patient about personal needs and will put their goals aside and accept the dynamics they find themselves in, in the entertainment company. Essentially, they will play by these rules in the beginning of their career, when they are at the bottom of the creative hierarchy, patiently waiting for a later time, where they are able to contribute with their own art. Examples of this are artists such as Hyolyn and Jay Park, who both started in a K-Pop group, but later were able to pursue solo careers and involve themselves in the creative processes. Furthermore, they have now both started their own music companies (Esspey, 2017; Forbes, 2018).

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