



Research Article

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BTS And Its Musical Impact: A Study of Urban Youth of Metro Cities of India

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ABSTRACT

The BTS phenomena is known to all and the impact that they have created over the last few years cannot be neglected. The music of BTS is truly special as it has affected the minds of millions of young people from all around the world.

As a result, the goal of this research is to explain the story of BTS from the perspective of an urban teenager in India, as well as how BTS is influencing their mental health. The online survey which was carried out on 250 urban youth from five metro cities of India (Mumbai, Delhi, Bangalore, Kolkata and Chennai) gave their opinion and views on the popularity of BTS and beneficial it has turned out to be for them. The method has helped to develop and to move the study forward. The research study's overall aim is that BTS is forming a new community of urban youth who are stronger, better, and more optimistic toward the world, and who are ready to accept change.

INTRODUCTION

BTS (방탄소년단; Bangtan Sonyeondan) is a South Korean boy band also known as the Bangtan Boys. Big Hit Entertainment founded it in 2010 and it made its debut in 2013. Jin, Suga, J-Hope, RM, Jimin, V, and Jungkook make up the seven-member boy band. Much of their work is co-written and co-produced. Their musical style has grown to embrace numerous genres after beginning as a hip hop ensemble. They discuss topics like mental health, adolescent troubles and coming of age, grief, the battle to accept oneself, and individualism in their songs, which are typically focused on personal and social commentary. In addition to an alternate universe plot, their work typically combines literary and psychological components.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Rise of K-Pop and BTS

Music has usually been an essential component of one's life. The musical track has indeed modified the international arena from shaping one's individuality to creating a distinction in one's life. It may be witnessed that considering the start of the 20th century, the international's cultural hegemony shifted from Europe to the United States (Parc & Kim, 2020). The effect can also be felt in India. The upward push in the Western track got here a hurricane of recent tradition and fashion within the teens. However, matters slowly started to change. In 2012, the Korean artist PSY succeeded within the US and globally together with his track video "Gangnam Style", which has exceeded 4 billion views on YouTube (Boman, 2019). Even though the tune is not considered a K-Pop tune via way of means of many enthusiasts, it cannot be denied that it paved the manner for Korean tracks the world over, and India turned into no exception.

The fan base of BTS is famously known as the ARMY

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and it is no exception that the number is on the rise and more and more urban youth of India is getting attracted to K-pop and BTS in general. BTS music is impacting the mental health of the young listeners in terms of generating hope, optimism, self-esteem, self-acceptance, self-forgiveness, perseverance and happiness. BTS is recognized internationally for their compelling track lyrics disseminating the message of hope, self-happiness and optimism at the same time as elevating intellectual fitness problems confronted via way of means of the younger generation (Afrakh & Aslam, 2021).

The craze for BTS connecting with Bollywood is happening quite often. In the study of (Chakraborty, 2018) talks about the similarities between Bollywood and BTS hip-hop, trap, and classical instrumentals are evident. The lyrics are a confident assertion of self-confidence and love for their supporters, as well as a warning to the detractors.

The Rise of BTS and ARMY

According to Bang Si-hyuk also known as the 'the Father of BTS', Bang's ambition for a new idol group was realised perfectly with the Bangtan Boys. Instead of being gilded symbols for the public to worship, he envisioned a group that would connect with regular youngsters. The future was all about relatability. It was the ideal time to rework the model, with YouTube still in its infancy and social media exploding. Bang wanted his performers to have complete control over their social media accounts, which are typically managed by labels for most K-pop groups (Sprinkel, 2021).

BTS is using the language of the times to comfort and improve the self-confidence of those young people caught up in confusion and fear at a time when philosophy and humanities education are struggling. They suggest a path to self-development that includes self-awareness and self-ownership (Min-joo, 2017).

In another study (Parc & Kim, 2020) talks about how it's been almost two decades since K-pop first became popular around the world, and the trend has only continued to grow. In this regard, it's important to consider why K-pop has become so popular around the world. Because BTS is currently at the centre of the K-pop craze, it's important to examine the factors that have contributed to its worldwide success. Unlike most existing studies that focus on fandom and its activities, this article claims that BTS's phenomenal global fame is due to the efforts of previous K-pop singers.

BTS and Mental Health

In the study (Lee, Bhattacharya, Antony, Santero, & Le, 2021), the research demonstrates how BTS's music promotes fans' mental health and well-being by regulating a variety of moods, allowing people to cope, reflect, and grow while listening to their music, and in some cases, fundamentally changing their behaviour or viewpoint. Studying one fandom from an emic perspective allows one to obtain a greater grasp of the community's context

and culture, as well as the artist's discography, in order to better understand the user data and generate meaningful debate.

In the study (Afrakh & Aslam, 2021), the goal was to see how BTS music affects young listeners' mental health in areas of hope, optimism, self-esteem, self-acceptance, self-forgiveness, perseverance, and happiness. The data was collected using 382 BTS listeners aged 12 to 30 years. The findings indicated that BTS' music has a beneficial impact on its listeners. The psychometric qualities of scales were evaluated using descriptive statistics, and alpha reliabilities were found to be within acceptable limits. Listening to BTS music was positively associated with hope, optimism, self-esteem, self-acceptance, self-forgiveness, perseverance, and happiness, according to correlation analysis, whereas regression analysis revealed that BTS music predicted hope, optimism, self-esteem, self-acceptance, self-forgiveness, perseverance, and happiness in listeners.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The overall objective is to find why the urban youth of India is highly attracted to the Korean music industry and how BTS has paved the way for Korean musical culture in India and what makes their music special in the eyes of the urban youth of India. The research would also aim to find out the complicated environment of being a music fan, in example, includes online communities and social media, as well as the fan's perceived relationship with the artists, all of which will surely affect the impact of music on listeners' mental health.

KEY OBJECTIVES

The main objectives for this research topic include

RO1. To identify the musical impact of BTS, paving the way for Korean Music among the urban youth of India.

RO2. To explore the musical features of BTS's song which makes it popular among the urban youth and helps them deal with mental health problems.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To understand the topic in a better and broader way, the research is based on primary information and quantitative research. The study would further explore the ways BTS have helped the urban youth in dealing with their self-esteem and mental health.

Data Collection

Even though there are various ways of data collection, for the following research topic, a Survey in the form of an Online method was found to be the most efficient one. The method has been chosen keeping the vastness of the topic, sample location and time constraint in mind. For the research, the respondents received a curated Spotify playlist of BTS songs.

The online survey was conducted by using Google Forms consisting of 20 questions for a period of 1 month; on different age groups, locations and gender. The survey was carried out on a total of 250 people in total to obtain the desired and comprehensive data.

The population of the Study

According to the National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER) report, 26.8 % of people between the age of 20-34 live in urban areas of India. Adding to that, according to the World Population Review and IIPS India, the most populated urban cities of India are Mumbai, Delhi, Bangalore, Kolkata and Chennai, thus helping in the study. Keeping the above points in mind for this study, the urban youth of the above five cities have been chosen as it would give the best data and inputs.

Sample

For the topic of research, non-Probability sampling has been taken into consideration. The sample consists of a survey of 50 urban youth of age between 18 to 29 years from each city of Bangalore, Chennai, Kolkata, Mumbai and New Delhi, adding up to 250 youth was taken to identify the choices and preferences of the younger generation. The survey was explicitly filled by those young individuals who have been following and listening to the music of BTS for at least One Year, thus helping in the scope of easy understanding of the research.

Data Interpretation

For the topic chosen for this research, as mentioned in the earlier section, a survey consisting of twenty questions was filled by 250 young people between the age of 18 to 29 living in the cities of Kolkata, Chennai, Bangalore, Mumbai and Delhi. Here is the detailed data interpretation and analysis of the said survey.

Your Age

Out of 250 respondents, 88% fell under the category of 18 to 23 years, while the remaining 12% were secured by the age group of 24 to 29 years. It is pretty clear that the popularity of BTS is high among the younger age group (Figure 1).

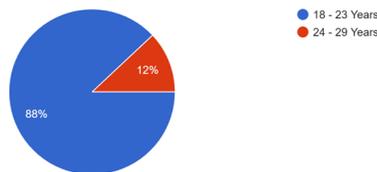


Figure 1: Representing age group of the respondents

Your Gender

When coming to the gender question of the survey, it is clearly evident that it is being dominated by the female section of the young urban population with 95.2% of the respondent. Only 4.8% of the respondents turned out to

be male. Male listeners of BTS are significantly low. Thus, BTS is undoubtedly more popular among young urban females than young urban males (Figure 2).

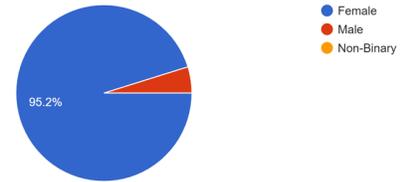


Figure 2: Representing the gender of the respondents

Your Location

When it came to the location, the survey was successfully able to identify an equal amount of participation from the young urban respondents of the above five cities, namely, Bangalore, Chennai, Kolkata, Mumbai and New Delhi. Each city contributed 20% to the survey with 50 responses. This allowed to look into the survey data holistically without any discrepancy or majority of the population from any particular city, thus helping in coming to an evident conclusion (Figure 3).

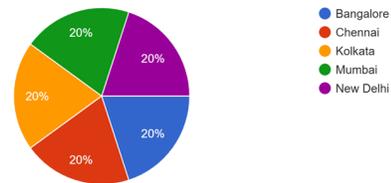


Figure 3: Representing the location of the respondents

How did you discover BTS?

Discovering anything new is exciting for everyone, and it is no exception. When asked about how one discovered or came across BTS, it was fascinating to observe that 47.2% said that their friend introduced them to BTS, while 36.8% came to know about BTS from YouTube. 9.6% discovered BTS via Instagram and 1.6% via Facebook. At the same time, 0.8% each discovered BTS through Twitter, from students, via themselves, VH1, Airang TV, and Korean shows, respectively. While it is beyond doubt that peer pressure or rather peer support has played a significant role in gaining the popularity of BTS among the urban youth, it is surprising to see that only 0.8% discovered BTS themselves. Word of mouth in the form of a friend and YouTube has played a tremendous role for BTS in gaining popularity among the urban youth of the featured Indian cities (Figure 4).

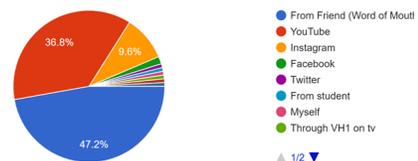


Figure 4: representing how the respondents discovered BTS



For how long have you been listening to BTS?

It is indeed of grave importance to know how long one has been listening to one genre of music before investigating the musical impact of the same. It has been mentioned previously that the survey has been taken by the respondents who have been listening to BTS for at least one year. When the above question came for answers, it was found that 33.6% have been listening to BTS for 1 to 2 years, 27.2% for 2 to 3 years, 16% for 3 to 4 years, and 11.2% for 4 to 5 years and 12% for more than 5 years. While the majority of the listeners have been listening to BTS for the last 3 years, it should not be underestimated the fact that a good portion have been listening to BTS since their debut, thus forming a strong and hardcore fan base. It is no doubt that these old listeners are the driving force behind creating this sudden urge to listen to BTS and creating a whole new generation of BTS listeners in India (Figure 5).

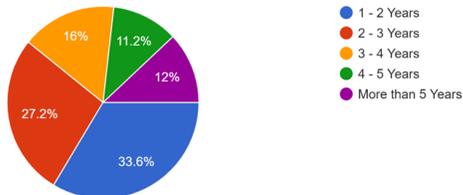


Figure 5: Representing how long the respondents been listening to BTS

Who is your favourite BTS Member?

The survey showed that V is the favourite BTS member with 32.8%, and Jungkook takes the second place with 23.2%. RM received 16% while Jimin got 10.4%, Suga 6.4% and J-Hope 3.2%. Take into consideration that this poll is based on the 250 responses received and may vary if a large population is considered. However, from the above responses, it is evident that the majority of the young urban population's favourite BTS members are V and Jungkook. While all the respondents chose their favourite BTS members, when asked about 'Additional Comments', three responses were received which stated that, they are OT7 (Figure 6).

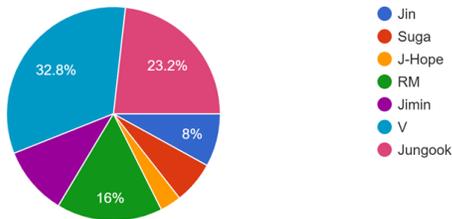


Figure 6: Representing the favourite BTS member of the respondents

On a typical day, about how many hours do you spend watching/listening to BTS

It was pretty surprising that 31.1% of the respondents listen to/watch BTS for more than 4 hours in a day which is equivalent to spending 1/6th of a day in BTS and their music. This clearly demarcates the importance and the

impact that BTS has created in the lives of the young urban population, both musically and psychologically. Thus, after observing the above data, it can be stated that the music of BTS is addictive for the urban youth and that they can undoubtedly spend hours a day listening and watching to BTS (Figure 7).

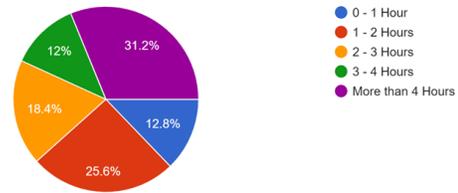


Figure 7: Representing the time spent by the respondents listening to BTS everyday

Your favourite BTS song among the following

The above question was chosen to identify the favourite BTS song among the urban youth. While the Top 7 Most Streamed Songs of BTS of all time on Spotify (Last Updated: November 10, 2022) were given as choices, the option of writing their favourite song was also given as a medium of answering. After accumulating all the 250 responses, it is noteworthy that the song 'Blood, Sweat & Tears received 16%, followed by 'Fake Love' with 15.2% and 'Boy With Luv' with 12.8%. The respondents' top 3 preferred song choices are all in Korean, while complete English songs like Dynamite received 9.6%. Thus, language is not a barrier to listening to music and songs in Korean have created a huge impact in the minds of urban youth (Figure 8).

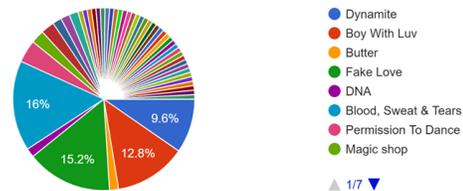


Figure 8: Representing the favourite BTS song of the respondents

Do they help with accepting and loving yourself?

Self-love is appreciating oneself that grows from actions that support our physical, psychological and spiritual growth. From the above data it is evident that BTS helped 89.6% of the respondents with accepting and loving themselves. While 8.8% said maybe and a mere 1.6% gave their answer as No. BTS has paved the way for accepting oneself. They have helped the urban youth in accepting oneself and helped in positive growth of the young individuals (Figure 9).

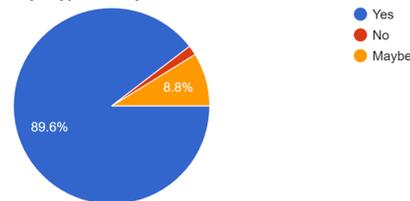


Figure 9: Representing whether BTS help the respondents help with acceptance and loving yourself

Did they help you through hard times

Young adults are considered one of the vulnerable sections of society and are highly prone to emotional difficulties in their day to day lives. With the fast-paced world, they face a relentless challenge with keeping up with the modern-day standards and thus go through hard times very often. Nevertheless, when it came to BTS, 91.2% said that BTS helped them deal with their hard times. While a mere 7.2% said maybe and 1.6% said No. BTS became a ray of hope for the majority and helped them overcome various difficulties in life. It kept them motivated, and their music became a source of inspiration and peace (Figure 10).

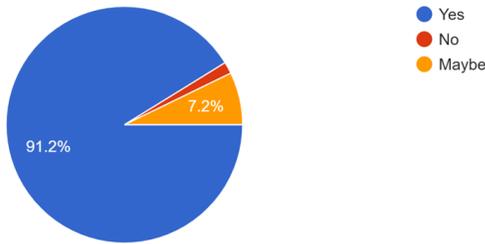


Figure 10: Representing whether BTS helped the respondents through their hard times

Did BTS change your life for the good

While changing your life for the better may not be easy, according to the survey, BTS did change life for good for 88.8% of the respondents. While 8.8% said maybe, 2.4% said No. It is pertinent to see that the younger population procrastinate and fail to achieve their daily or life targets. But for most respondents of the urban youth, BTS did play a significant role in turning around their lives for good and became a positive source of energy (Figure 11).

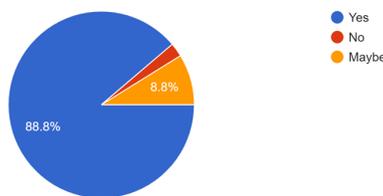


Figure 11: Representing whether BTS changed the life of respondents for the good

How high would you rank your self-confidence before you discovered BTS

As per the above graph, it can be seen that 16.8% have very low self-confidence and have given 1 to themselves. While 31.2% have given their self-confidence a rating of 2, which is a low number. 24% have rated themselves at 3. Only 16% have rated themselves at 4, and a mere 12% have rated themselves with high self-confidence with a rating of 5. The picture is apparent that the majority of the respondents have very low self-confidence before discovering BTS and their music. The next question of the survey would try to answer the self-confidence level of the respondents after discovering BTS (Figure 12).

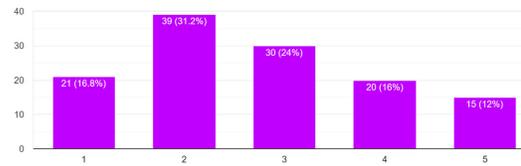


Figure 12: Representing the self-confidence of the respondents before discovering BTS

How high would you rank your self-confidence after discovering BTS

While in the previous question, the majority of the respondents had little and low self-confidence, but after discovering BTS, the scenario has completely changed for them. The data shows that 44.8% have rated their self-confidence as 4 while 42.4% as 5. That is, when combined, it depicts 87.2% with high self-confidence. Only a fraction that is 1.6% have still rated as 1, 0.8% as 2 and 10.4% as 3, respectively. The following data proves that the musical impact of BTS has increased the self-esteem and self-confidence of urban youth to a higher level than what it was before. The role of the music of BTS simply cannot be ignored (Figure 13).

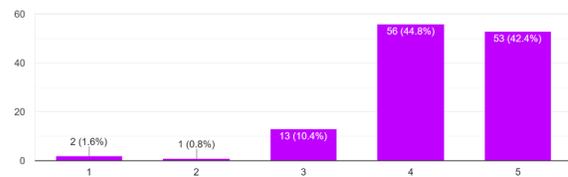


Figure 13: Representing the self-confidence of the respondents after discovering BTS

Did BTS help you deal with your mental health

So far, a lot about positive thoughts, psychology, loving yourself, body positivity, self-esteem and self-confidence has been talked about. All of the said are inter-connected with one's mental health, and to further bolster the acquired data, the above question was asked to the respondents. 82.4% said that BTS did help them deal with their mental health. While 12.8% said maybe and 4.8% said No. Attaining good mental health is crucial for anyone, and it is fascinating to see how BTS played a positive role in helping the majority of the urban youth deal with their mental health and brought a sense of positivity and hope in their minds (Figure 14).

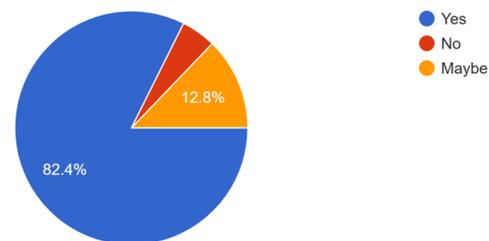


Figure 14: Representing whether BTS helped the respondents deal with their mental health



Why do you like/love BTS?

While answering this question, many respondents felt very emotional and wrote their hearts out. While some praised their musical capability and the genre of the music they create, many also mentioned the depth in the lyrics of their songs. While talking about lyrics, they said that even though most of their songs are in Korean, the melody is impactful and life-changing for them. One can simply search for the English translation and find out the meaning behind the lyrics to the songs.

The respondents also wrote about how BTS helped them accept their sexuality, feel proud of their body image, embrace every individual, live with open arms, and gain self-confidence, self-esteem, self-acceptance, hope, self-forgiveness, and a place of happiness and love.

The following are some of the responses from the 250 participants

"BTS gives me a reason survive and recognise my potentials. Their music hypes me up to function Every day. I love how every member is down to earth and there are no idols who care and cater to their fan's sentiments so much. I love them because they are someone who deserve all the world, because for me, they are the definition of perfection. If I stop here, it would be an injustice to them, but also my insurmountable love for them can never be enveloped in a Google forms response." (P23)

"I love music that are relatable and has meaning, I found that in their lyrics. They are very hardworking and trying their best to break all stereotypes. I get the motivation to do great in my life. Moreover, when I lost all hopes on myself, I found BTS and literally changed me to who I'm right now." (P5)

Please comment on how BTS helped you in dealing with you Mental Health.

While through a previous question in the survey it has been made clear that for 82.4%, BTS did help them deal with their mental health, the above question takes a deeper dive into understanding how BTS helped urban youth of India deal with their mental health. The findings are noteworthy.

Many participants shared their life stories about a mental breakdown state they were in and how BTS helped them overcome those hurdles and find themselves again. Some even mentioned having suicidal thoughts, but BTS changed their minds, and they overcame severe depression. They also mentioned how they were not alone anymore. They also talked about how BTS helped them deal with anxiety and meltdown. BTS also helped them overcome their mental breakdowns and overcome their worst nightmares. Thus, it is evident how BTS played a pivotal role for so many urban youths dealing with their mental health.

The following are some of the responses which justify the above said points:

"Yes, they helped. I've been through a phase when I was so stressed. Motivation and condolences from them and

especially the ARMY friends I met because of BTS, they helped me a lot. So, I'm so thankful to BTS because due to them I found such good friends" (P71)

"For a time, I was really depressed with how my life was going... but at that time BTS came into my life and completely changed it. From then I haven't shed a drop of tear. Their songs and the way they portray the emotions is just enough to make you happy and calm." (P7)

Please comment how BTS changed your life.

For 88.8% of the participants, BTS did change their life for the good, the above question takes a deeper dive into understanding how BTS changed their life. So far, researchers have come across how BTS helped the participants deal with their mental health, which is still considered a taboo in the society. Let us understand what the respondents wrote on how BTS changed their lives.

"BTS helped me recognise my true potential and I would always shy away from taking new opportunities before. But now, I try and attempt everything that helps me love myself and recognise myself. To establish my identity, I need confidence. This, y'all, was only instilled in me by BTS. I stopped being socially awkward and started communicating, this is because I met army who always motivated and hyped me up, and that is the fandom of BTS." (P23)

"I have always felt left out or an outcast for the way I think or believes I have. Hence, I never considered that my ideas were worth the value. But knowing that 7 other people think the same way. And in radiation to that. Millions of people think that way too. Makes me feel a lot more accepted and happier. And makes me believe that in my true family. I am always accepted." (P3)

CONCLUSION AND FURTHER SCOPE

The study gave a broader understanding about how the urban youth of India is attracted to the music of BTS and how it helped them deal with their mental health. They have become more confident, gained body positivity and have found happiness in their songs. It could be seen that BTS has created a positive impact over negative elements and have helped the urban youth deal with mental health problems as well. Many participants referred to BTS's music and lyrics as "friends" or "companions," describing how listening to the songs brought them physical and emotional comfort. The participants felt true comfort from these imagined relationships, which helped them develop emotional resilience for self-coping. Participants learnt and experienced therapeutic tactics include visualising a place or person of comfort through linked imagery and externalising suppressed thoughts by reacting to lyrics through these songs, similar to tapping into positive imagination for trauma recovery.

The ARMY community is one strong community which is gradually growing in India and there is no doubt that it will continue to do so and making lives of the urban youth better. The larger picture that could be attained from the

research study is that BTS is shaping a new community of urban youth who are stronger, better and positive towards the world and are ready to embrace change. Even though the research was limited to only the music of BTS, everyone is also aware of various other Korean musicians and groups and idols that are playing an equally important role in shaping and connecting music with mental health. Thus, there is a further scope of going deeper into this topic and even do comparative study or analysis between these groups to look into deeper the impact that is happening all around the world and not just stay limited to India.

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