The positioning of Korean popular music in the global music market in the 2000s

**Introduction**

The Korean popular (K-pop) music has gained popularity in recent years, with more and more individuals becoming interested in this music genre. At a time when most countries are facing a decline in the music industry, the Korean music industry is attracting positive feedback through the promotion of the K-pop. Nowadays, the K-pop attracts not only attention from the Asian countries, but also from Western countries. In other words, the K-pop is a new wave influencing the global music markets. The *Hallyu* is a wave, which includes various elements of Korean culture, for instance, music, drama, movie and fashion. Those entertainment sections effectively assist the Korean culture to propagate on a global scale. The report illustrates that the music industry revenue in South Korea reached $168.4 million in 2009 and $265.8 million in 2014. The figure increased by approximately $100 million in five years (Statista, 2017). Starting with year 2000, the Korean music industry has utilised numerous strategies in order to manage the music business. The success of the K-pop was not accidental, the Korean government and three Korean main entertainment labels (SM, YG, and JYP) utilised different methods in order to promote the K-pop to the global music markets. The Korean music industry was considerably influenced by the Information Technology revolution and sought to utilise the Internet in order to promote the K-pop, which could in this manner successfully gain international recognition. Normally, the global music consumers prefer the pop music from Western countries. Conversely, Korean popular music breaks the stereotype and creates the *Hallyu* wave in order to illustrate the characteristics of Korean culture. This essay will extensively describe Korean popular music in the 2000s. Firstly, it will outline the historical perspective in order to define the K-pop in a different era, from the technology revolution, government policy, and entertainment agency management to exploring the development of K-pop. Moreover, it is sought to analyse the music characteristic of K-pop and the importance of hybrid music in the Korean music industry. The final part will utilise the reports in order to investigate the challenge of K-pop. From this perspective, more could be inferred about how the Korean popular music has influenced the global music market in recent decades.

T**he definition of Korean popular music**

Korean popular music (K-pop) is a music genre adopted by prominent Korean musicians, with music elements including pop, hip-hop, rap, rock, R&B, and electronic music. This Korean wave is also referred to as *Hallyu*, which includes various entertainment sections in the music industry (Kim, 2012). The K-pop has been classified according to two periods, the first epoch being constituted by the traditional *Hallyu,* which emerged in the early 1990s, while the *Shin-hallyu* (new Korean wave) emerged in the 2000s. This period brought innovation to the Korean music industry and propagated K-pop into the new module (Chen, 2016). In the 1980s, the Korean popular music was restricted, and the individuals were normally exposed to the mainstream music via television channels. In that epoch, the ballad and some types of dance music were the main genres in South Korea (Yong, 2016).In the early 1990s, the first civil government emerged in South Korea and reformed the culture industries. The new generation involved more creativity in the liberal atmosphere. Furthermore, influenced by the American culture, the youth started to enjoy western popular music and other entertainment sections (Jang & Paik, 2012). Considering that the mainstream music ballad was not as popular as before in Korea, the young generation has started to enjoy a music type formed by Korean music hybridised with Western music elements (Fuhr & Chen, 2016). In the same period, the domestic K-pop was disseminated to other neighbouring Asian countries via local television dramas, for instance, Japan, Taiwan, Thailand and China. As these countries had a similar Asian culture, the *Hallyu* successfully broke the language barrier and popularised the Korean entertainment culture to those foreign countries (Chen, 2016). The dramas “What Is Love About” (1997) and “Stars in My Heart” (1999) were prevalent in some Asia countries. The Korean dramas tend to be accompanied by a touching soundtrack, which was becoming popular in the Asian culture. The romantic *Hallyu* assisted Korea in growing its transnational business in the 1990s (Chen, 2016).