

# K-GLOBALIZATION

A micro report on K-Culture's ceaseless tour around the world.



# #GETCULTURED

We are **Culture Group**, Southeast Asia's leading authority in pop culture marketing. We serve as a creative and commercial bridge between brands and culture, pairing them to create business outcomes in Asia's most dynamic cities.

We believe that brands that are plugged into the consumer world have the power to create unparalleled commercial success. While research and data have enabled marketers to design campaigns and activations based on media consumption habits, there is insufficient information on the passion points consumers love - and how to build brands and businesses through those passion points.

Passion points are the key force driving youth culture and fandoms - the starting point for brands to succeed with a new generation of consumers. Consumers emotionally engage through passion points, and the ability to use passion as a medium is enables brands to connect with their target audience on a deeper level.

Welcome to **Culture Drop**, a series of micro reports keeping you in touch with youth culture in the region. In this report, get an well-rounded understanding on the **what, who, why, and hows** of thriving passion points in youth culture and actionable insights on how you can activate your brand to reach this demographic.

**In this edition, we explore the globalization of K-Culture and how your brand can bring value to this huge community of loyal 'stans'.**



# WHAT IS K-CULTURE?

## GLOBALLY

Korean culture has evolved from a phenomena embedded in music and film to one that has dominated the global pop culture landscape. Once a strong force in media, entertainment and music, the rise of K-Culture has evolved to be felt across the consumer landscape in food, beauty, fashion and more. In 2020, Parasite became the first movie in a language other than English to win at the Oscars. [BLACKPINK](#)'s 2020 single 'How You Like That,' achieved the most Youtube streams in a single day, only to be knocked off the podium by BTS's [DYNAMITE](#), was the most viewed Youtube video in 24 hours

K-Culture has taken over headlines, screens and the hearts and minds of fans globally. The phenomenon [started in 1996](#), but only reached the West in the 2000s with the runaway hit 'Gangnam Style'. Since then, the success of Kpop has become monumental, with BTS being named [TIME magazine's](#) most influential band in the world in 2020. The democratisation of the internet has allowed fans to access all parts of Korean culture, [mukbang](#), [learning Hangul](#) or K-beauty, which is expected to [expand to \\$20.5BN in 2021](#).

The desire to feel connected spans languages and geography, fans are willing to put in the time, money and effort to get closer to what they love, unlocking new opportunities for players across categories to all have a stake in this space.

## REGIONALLY

In 2002, the first Kdrama was being aired on [network television](#) in Singapore, Indonesia and Taiwan. After a huge [Jpop explosion](#) in the early 2000s, the way was paved for the *Hallyu* wave. South Korean [horror films](#) have become the most popular genre in the region. Fans can't stop talking about their love for *Hallyu* - the phenomenal growth of Korean culture around the world. **Four out of 10 markets in Southeast Asia come up top by number of Kpop related tweets in 2020, with Indonesia and Thailand beating South Korea, the birth land of Kpop.**





#### SPEAK THE STANGUANGE

A stan is a big Kpop fan! They all call themselves different things, though. BTS fans are ARMY, BLACKPINK fans are Blinks, TWICE fans are ONCES. The more you know!

## WHO CARES ABOUT K-CULTURE?

### SOUTHEAST ASIA STANS

There are [72 million Kpop fans](#) in Asia alone, more than four times the amount in Europe. It's no different when it comes to streaming, with Kdrama viewers growing four times over in 2020, and [BLACKPINK's](#) Netflix documentary became 2020's most viewed documentary in Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia, and Indonesia.

Willing to localise, co-create and share, stans have made it possible for Korean content to be loved across the region, regardless of what language they speak. United, savvy and always on, stans across the region are constantly on the lookout for content they can enjoy, merch they can collect and fans who share a common love for the culture.

### FEM Z IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

Fem Z – the 50% of Gen Z consumers that identify as women – are Kpop's most dedicated stans. K-Culture is a digitally native passion point, and most of the online generation (spending almost [three hours](#) a day on social media) is addicted to all things *Hallyu*. [Netflix](#), whose [audience demographic](#) is dominated by women, doubled its Korean content budget in 2021. On Twitter, [Kpop stans dominated](#) over fans of other international bands, and the platform is home to a large number of [women aged 18 to 24](#).

Southeast Asian Fem Zs prove themselves to be extremely dedicated to the fandom. A report by iPrice stated that an average fan in the region was spending up to [\\$1,432 USD](#) a year on merchandise. Stans actively give back, doing charity work in the name of their idols, planting [8,000 trees](#) in mangroves in Indonesia.

While the Fem Z segment is often deemed as a complex, diverse audience to reach, what brands look for in Fem Z engagement, loyalty, and spend can all be found in K-Culture. By leveraging K-Culture as a medium – brands can unlock similar levels of connection and commitment among these communities. Growing brand love by giving them more of what they love.



# GOING 'GLOCUL'

**Global + local + culture = Glocul**

As K-culture evolved, new forms of entertainment have been created to enable fans new forms of engagement. Markets in Southeast Asia have made their mark in Kpop by adding a flavour of their own - we call this localization of global cultural trends 'glocalization'

Indonesian star [Dita Karang](#) joined Kpop group Secret Number and [SB19](#) from the Philippines found success by using the same Kpop training and production process. The stars from SB19 are now brand ambassadors for Lazada, Pepsi, and Dunkin Donuts. Similarly, Thailand has seen a huge interest in [Tpop](#), with Thai groups modelling their image, songs, and choreography off wildly successful Kpop hits. These groups are all uniquely local. The rise of *glocul* idol groups reflects a demand for something globally recognised while locally relevant. Demanding deeper connection with their passion, content that can relate to fans on a personal level creates greater resonance for them.

[Hit Kdrama series](#) are also getting regional remakes, localised to Indonesian languages, Thai locations, and Vietnamese cultures. Korean drama darling *Oh My Ghost*, a show about a timid sous chef finding love, was remade in Thai, even [localizing the plot](#) and details – from japchae to pad thai.

## K (AIR)WAVES

One company that has seriously taken advantage of Kpop's global appeal is [DIVE Studios](#). The podcasting company uses audio's wide reach, easy-to-consume format, and low data impact to bring Kpop to the stans worldwide.

"Podcasting is so different from other Kpop content out there because it feels more intimate," says [Brian Nam](#), CEO and co-founder of DIVE Studios.

It's paid off! DIVE has gone global, with 38% of its listeners in North America, 36% percent in Asia, and 17% percent in Europe!

# WHAT ARE BRANDS DOING IN K-CULTURE?

The smartest brands follow fans, and those fans are headed right to the heart of K-Culture.



**BLACKPINK** has partnered with **Malaysian university INTI**, making it the go-to cool school in the country. This is taking the idea that Gen Z learns through music to the next level



Elsewhere in APAC, **BLACKPINK** are now **Pepsi ambassadors**, and they've partnered with both [Indonesian Tokopedia](#) and [Filipino Globe](#)



BTS is another **powerhouse** in Southeast Asia. Their [Haagen Dazs x Tiny Tan](#) partnership proved to be an amazing opportunity for stans to **cop merch**



Partnering with **Tokopedia** in [Indonesia](#) allowed them to bring amazing performances in the midst of a pandemic and they're also making an impact to Filipinos by endorsing **Smart**

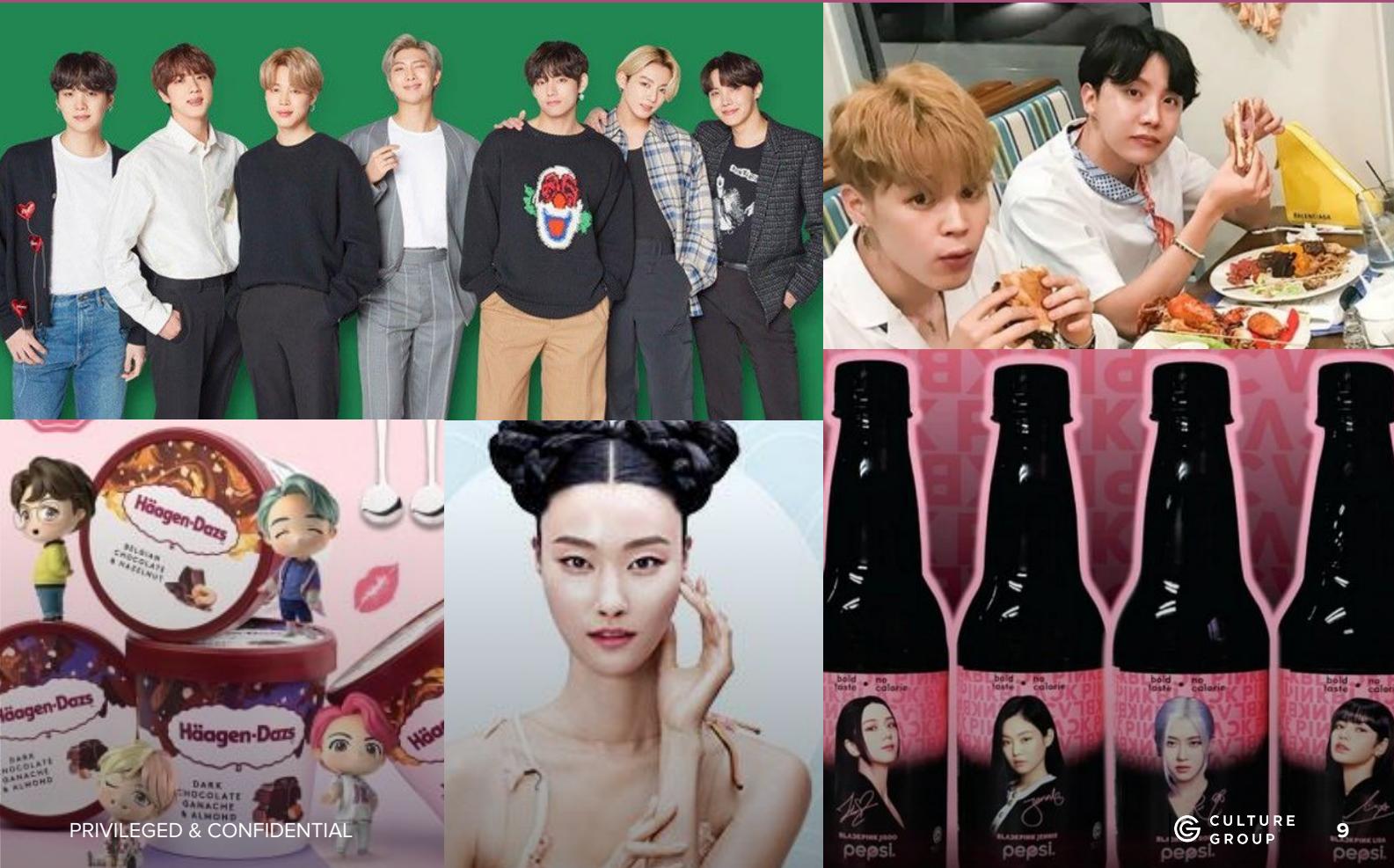


**Sephora** has brought out a range of **Korean-inspired skincare**, jumping in on the K-beauty bandwagon



**Airbnb** has announced a series of [Kpop experiences](#), where you can live alongside your idol, eating meals and doing morning makeup routines together

With Kpop bearing the torch of Hallyu worldwide, it now holds the **key** to unlocking your Gen Z audience's **hearts, minds, and wallets**.



# WHAT DO WE THINK?

Twila is one of the strategists and account managers at Culture Group, and our go-to expert for all things K-Culture. She's been an integral part of Culture Group's movement toward Hallyu, and has been acting as a walking encyclopaedia for all things K-Culture

"At Culture Group, we believe it's not anymore about the **why** you should look into K-Culture for relevance. It's about the **when** and the **how**. That's because Hallyu isn't so much a passing trend as it is a strategy. For fans, K-Culture is not just a common interest, it's a **lifestyle**. They will always find ways to connect to Hallyu because their lives have been deeply impacted by this passion that brought them lasting **friendships** and **memories**.

Establishing a solid brand position in this space **now** will allow your brand to live on in the hearts and minds of your audiences, therefore **unlocking new commercial opportunities** that would help your brand in the years to come. I look forward to sharing my insights with you so you can thrive in this space!

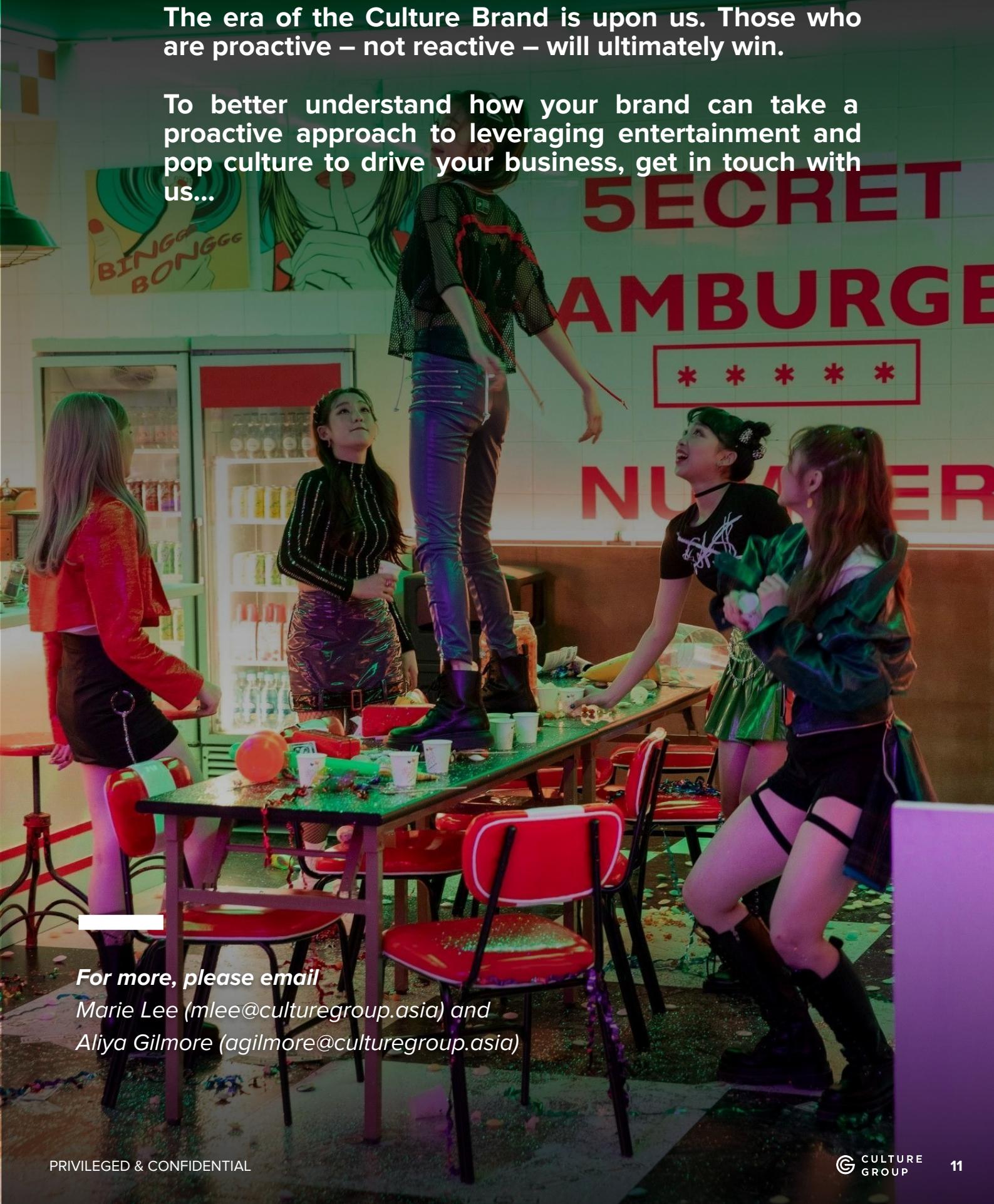
**Twila Bergania, Culture Group Head of K-Culture & resident fangirl**



# #GETCULTURED!

The era of the Culture Brand is upon us. Those who are proactive – not reactive – will ultimately win.

To better understand how your brand can take a proactive approach to leveraging entertainment and pop culture to drive your business, get in touch with us...



*For more, please email*

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