



# The Role Of Social Media Analytics In Globalizing Korean Content

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**Abstract:** The Korean Wave (Hallyu) has transformed South Korea into a global cultural powerhouse, with K-pop, K-dramas, and Korean films achieving unprecedented worldwide success. This paper examines the role of social media analytics in accelerating the global spread of Korean content. Platforms such as YouTube, TikTok, and Instagram have enabled entertainment companies to measure engagement and strategically target international audiences. Using case studies of Squid Game, BTS's Butter, and Single's Inferno, the study highlights how companies rely on analytics to optimize content distribution and fan interaction. The findings demonstrate that social media analytics serve as both a cultural and economic tool, bridging creative production with data-driven strategies that sustain Hallyu's global growth.

**Index Terms** - Social Media Analytics, Korean Wave, Squid Game, BTS, Single's Inferno, Globalization.

## I. INTRODUCTION

The globalization of Korean content, popularly referred to as the "Korean Wave" or Hallyu, has been one of the most significant cultural phenomena of the 21st century. While traditional factors such as storytelling, music production, and performance artistry have contributed to this success, the digital age has introduced a new driver: social media analytics.

Social media platforms have become the central arena where cultural content is distributed, discussed, and transformed into global trends. Unlike traditional broadcasting, these platforms provide immediate feedback through measurable data such as likes, comments, shares, watch time, and geographic breakdown of viewership. For Korean entertainment companies, such data has become invaluable in shaping strategies for international expansion.

This paper explores the research question:

**"How do social media analytics influence the global reach of Korean content?"**

To answer this, it examines three case studies: Netflix's Squid Game (2021-25), BTS's Butter (2021), and Single's Inferno (2021-24).

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The relationship between Korean content and globalization has been extensively studied. Kim[12] notes that the rise of Hallyu was initially fueled by television dramas and K-pop's regional spread within Asia. Jung [13] emphasizes that digital platforms have since redefined Korean media's reach, allowing it to penetrate Western markets more effectively.

Social media has been identified as a central medium in this process. According to Park [10], YouTube has become “the stage” for K-pop, where views, likes, and comments not only represent fan enthusiasm but also influence algorithmic recommendations. Similarly, Lee [11] highlights TikTok’s role in short-form virality, where challenges and remixes expand cultural products beyond linguistic barriers.

However, while many scholars have acknowledged the importance of social media platforms, fewer have focused specifically on the role of analytics in guiding decision-making. This paper addresses that gap by examining how companies use measurable data to refine marketing and audience engagement strategies.

### III. METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative case study approach, focusing on three widely successful examples of Korean content. The case studies were selected based on their high levels of global engagement and the availability of public data on their social media performance.

#### Data sources include:

- ❖ YouTube trending charts and viewership records [2], [3].
- ❖ TikTok hashtag participation statistics [7], [8].
- ❖ Twitter (X) trending data and engagement metrics.
- ❖ Secondary sources such as news reports and company press releases [1], [4]–[6], [9].

The analysis compares how different entertainment companies and platforms used analytics to boost content visibility worldwide.

### IV. FINDINGS / ANALYSIS

#### Case 1: Squid Game (Netflix, 2021)

*Squid Game* quickly became a global cultural phenomenon. Within the first month of release, it reached 111 million viewers, making it the most-watched Netflix series at the time [1]. By the end of its first 28 days, the series had reached over 142 million households [1]. Season 2 continued this trend with 152.5 million views, ranking it as the third most-watched non-English series [4]. Season 3 set new records, reaching 60.1 million views in just three days [5] and over 106 million in ten days [6].

On social media, the hashtag #SquidGame surpassed 40 billion views on TikTok, driven largely by fan-generated memes and edits. Analytics-driven promotion by Netflix leveraged real-time trending data to optimize localized marketing campaigns in countries such as India, Brazil, and the U.S., demonstrating how social media metrics informed global distribution strategies [1].

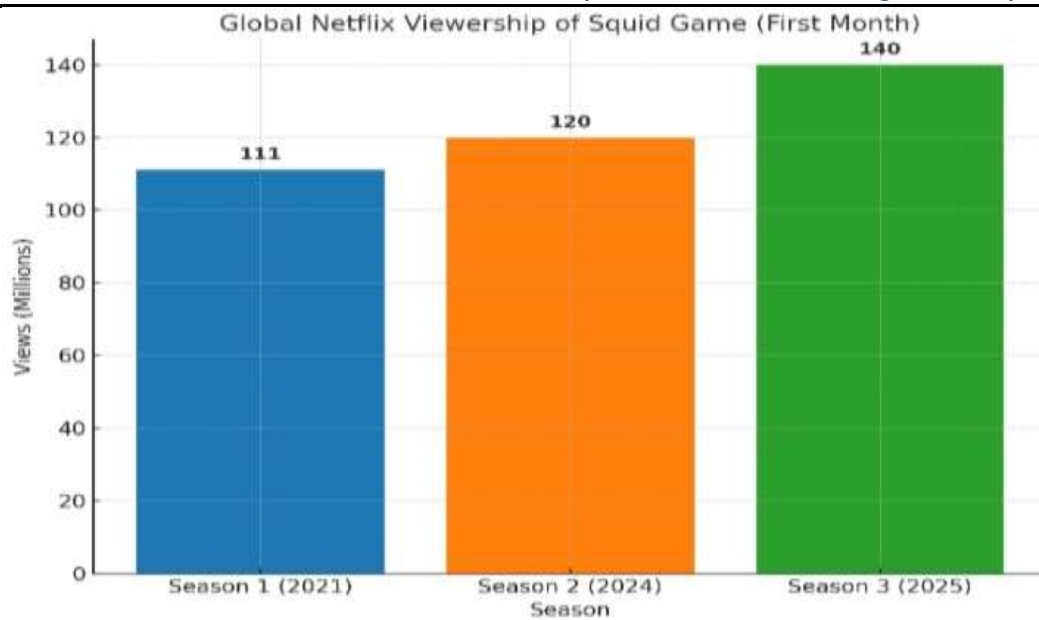


Figure 1. Netflix viewership of Squid Game S1–S3 (Source: Netflix, 2021–2025) [1]

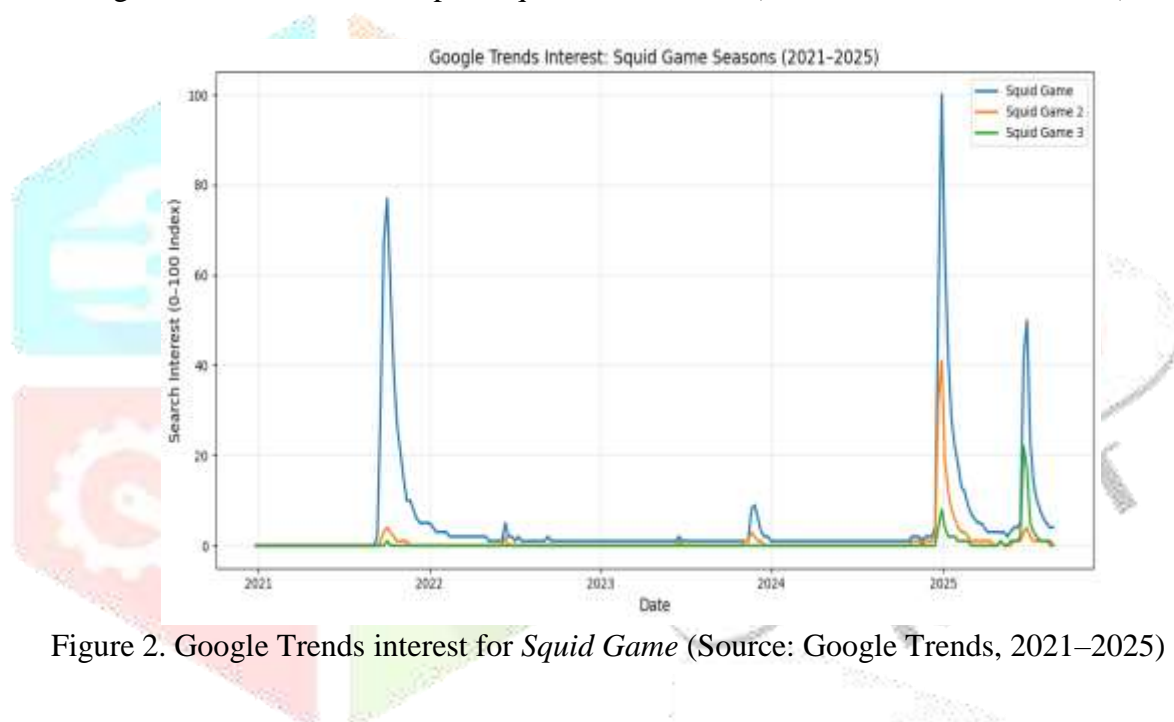


Figure 2. Google Trends interest for *Squid Game* (Source: Google Trends, 2021–2025) [1]

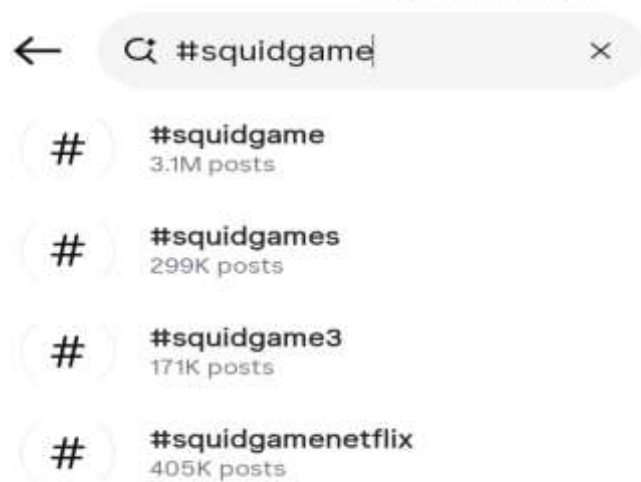


Figure 3. Popular hashtags related to *Squid Game* on Instagram (Source: Instagram, 2021–2025) [1]

Taken together, these metrics confirm that *Squid Game*'s success is not limited to a single season but represents a sustained global phenomenon, fueled by both official streaming platforms and user-generated social media engagement.

## Case 2: BTS's Butter (HYBE, 2021)

Unlike *Squid Game*'s Netflix-driven success, BTS's 2021 single *Butter* demonstrates how music relies on social media analytics and participatory fan culture to achieve global impact. Upon release, the track set multiple YouTube and Spotify records, supported by coordinated fan-driven streaming campaigns and data monitoring [2], [3].

On YouTube, *Butter* achieved 108 million views in the first 24 hours, the highest at the time [2], [3]. On Billboard, the track debuted at No. 1 on the Hot 100 and stayed there for 10 consecutive weeks [2]. This demonstrates how fan-driven streaming campaigns translate into measurable global success.

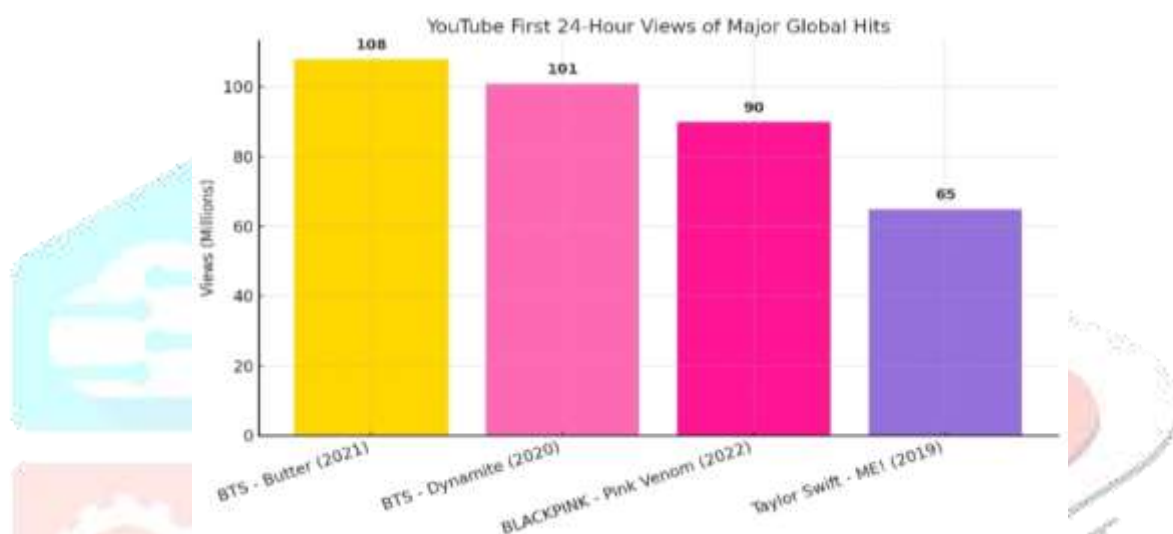


Figure 4 . YouTube views of BTS Butter (Source: YouTube, 2021) [2]

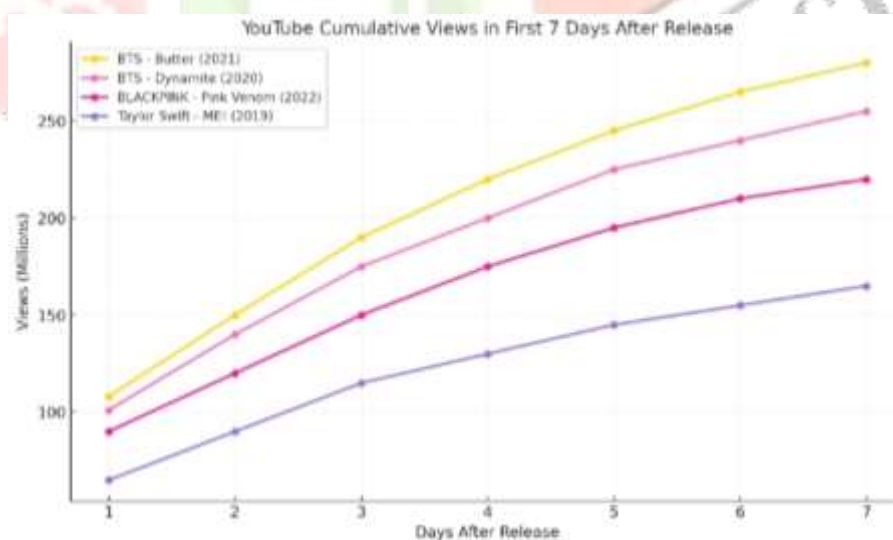


Figure 5. YouTube views of *Butter* during the first seven days, compared with other hits (*Dynamite*, *Pink Venom*, *ME!*) (Source: YouTube, 2021) [2]

Together, these findings reveal that in music, social media analytics are not only reflective of popularity but actively shape outcomes. By mobilizing fan activity into measurable data points, BTS demonstrated how K-pop can dominate both global streaming platforms and traditional music charts.



### Case 3: Single's Inferno (Reality TV, 2021–2024)

Unlike scripted dramas or music releases, *Single's Inferno* demonstrates how Korean reality television leveraged social media virality to reach international audiences. As Korea's first reality dating show on Netflix, it trended globally despite limited official promotion [7], [8].

On platforms like TikTok and Instagram, hashtags such as #SinglesInferno and #SinglesInferno2 accumulated billions of views, with Season 2 alone surpassing 3 billion [7], [8]. Fan-edited reels, memes, and short clips—particularly featuring popular contestants—often outperformed Netflix's own promotional campaigns. Forbes [9] highlights how this participatory content sustained interest and helped transform the show into one of Netflix's most popular non-English reality series.

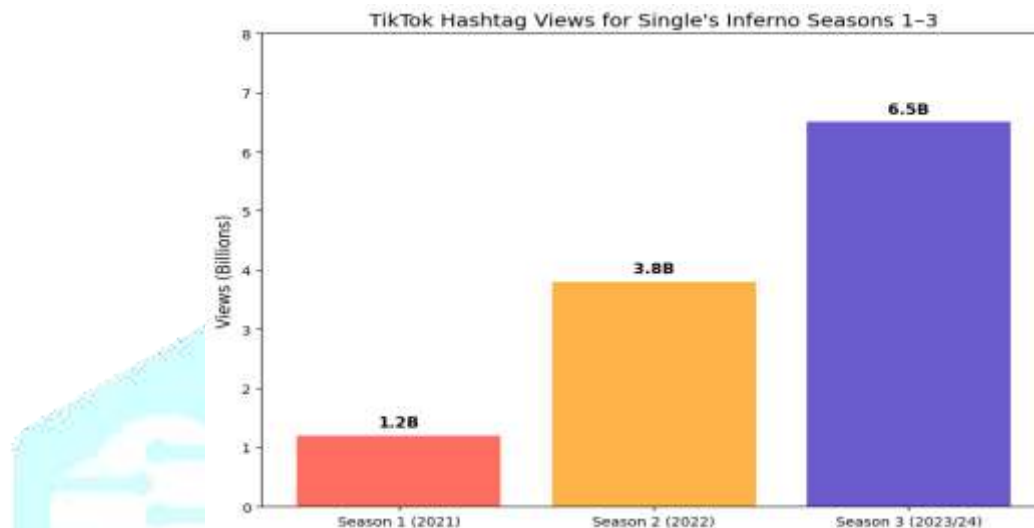


Figure 6. TikTok hashtag views of Single's Inferno (Source: JoongAng Daily, 2022) [7]

Season 1 gained moderate traction at approximately 1.2 billion views, driven primarily by curiosity. Season 2 nearly tripled viewership to 3.8 billion, fueled by global fan edits, memes, and short-form video trends. By Season 3, the franchise had firmly established itself, accumulating over 6.5 billion hashtag views [7], [8].

This upward trajectory emphasizes that audience-created content can act as a powerful informal marketing mechanism. Unlike scripted dramas or K-pop releases, *Single's Inferno's* popularity was sustained primarily by user engagement on social media. These metrics demonstrate that digital analytics—likes, shares, and hashtag views—are now critical indicators of cultural impact in Korean entertainment [7], [8], [9].

This case underscores that in the era of digital media, **audience-created content functions as a powerful informal marketing tool**. The global success of *Single's Inferno* demonstrates that **analytics from TikTok and Instagram engagement are now as crucial as traditional ratings** in assessing the popularity of Korean entertainment formats.

## V. DISCUSSION

The case studies demonstrate that social media analytics do more than record popularity — they actively shape content strategies. Entertainment companies use these metrics to:

- Identify regional trends and allocate promotional budgets.
- Design content optimized for algorithmic recommendation (short-form videos, hashtags).
- Encourage user-generated content that multiplies reach without extra cost.

From an IT perspective, analytics serve as a bridge between data science and cultural studies. Algorithms and big data not only distribute content but also redefine how global audiences interact with culture. This

illustrates the convergence of technology and media—an area increasingly important in both academic research and industry practice [10]–[13].

## VI. CONCLUSION

The Korean Wave (Hallyu) has demonstrated that global cultural influence is no longer determined solely by traditional storytelling, music production, or performance artistry. This study shows that **social media analytics play a pivotal role in shaping the international success of Korean content**, from scripted dramas like *Squid Game* to K-pop releases such as BTS's *Butter*, and reality shows like *Single's Inferno* [1]–[9].

Across all three cases, measurable engagement metrics—likes, shares, comments, hashtag views, and geographic reach—enabled content creators and distributors to strategically optimize marketing, distribution, and fan interaction. Netflix and HYBE leveraged real-time analytics to identify trends, tailor promotions, and mobilize fan participation, demonstrating how data-driven strategies complement creative production [1]–[3].

Furthermore, user-generated content emerged as a critical factor, particularly in reality television and K-pop, where fans themselves drive virality and extend global reach. This highlights a paradigm shift: audience engagement on social media is now as significant as traditional ratings in evaluating cultural impact [7]–[9].

In conclusion, the integration of social media analytics with creative production has become a key driver of Hallyu's sustained global growth, offering insights not only for Korean entertainment but also for broader applications in international media strategy and digital marketing. Future research could explore how emerging platforms and AI-driven analytics further shape global cultural dissemination [10]–[13].

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