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9B21E010

BTS: Success and Risk with Fans and Influencers on Social Media

Daegon Cho and Sunghan Ryu wrote this note solely to provide material for class discussion. The authors do not intend to illustrate either effective or ineffective handling of a managerial situation. The authors may have disguised certain names and other identifying information to protect confidentiality.

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Nominations for the 46th American Music Awards were announced from YouTube Space Los Angeles on September 12, 2018.[[1]](#endnote-1) The Korean pop group BTS,[[2]](#endnote-2) who had performed their hit single “DNA” at the 2017 awards, were nominated for favourite social artist of 2018. The good news came while BTS were busy with their *Love Yourself* world tour—a world tour that started on September 5th and precluded their attending the awards ceremony on October 9th.[[3]](#endnote-3) BTS won the award and accepted with a pre-recorded message.[[4]](#endnote-4)

The media raved about BTS’s success—how it had happened through the use of new digital media; influencers on emerging platforms; and the social media activity of the group’s fans, known as BTS’s “ARMY,” or “adorable representative master of ceremonies (MC) for youth.”[[5]](#endnote-5) However, Bang Si-hyuk, chief executive officer of Big Hit Entertainment (Big Hit)[[6]](#endnote-6), BTS’s production company, was worried that fans and influencers on social media were highlighted too often as the only factor in BTS’s success. While it had become increasingly important for entertainment businesses to leverage digital channels, as BTS did, Bang maintained that BTS had achieved its success because he was putting forth his best effort in all the other factors, such as quality music, fabulous performances, and concepts with which different generations could empathize—efforts that were not well recognized.[[7]](#endnote-7)

Seven teenaged boys, previously unacquainted with each other, from South Korean towns outside Seoul had become a worldwide force in the music industry. With the group’s *Love Yourself* world tour underway and an American Music Award newly added to the shelf, Bang needed to consider BTS’s future. How should Bang build on BTS’s social media success and its relationship with its fan club? Were there considerations for building a sustainable success for the immensely popular Korean idol band?

BTS: An Unprecedented Success in the Music Industry

BTS was a Korean pop (K-pop) boy band of seven members: Jin (Kim Seok-jin), Suga (Min Yoon-gi), J-Hope (Jung Ho-seok), RM (Kim Nam-joon), Jimin (Park Ji-min), V (Kim Tae-hyung), and Jungkook (Jeon Jung-kook).[[8]](#endnote-8) Between June 2013 and August 2019, they released 17 singles and digital singles, six extended plays (EPs), and 12 original albums, including Japanese versions, repackages, and special songs.[[9]](#endnote-9) In 2017 BTS were the first K-pop singers to perform at the American Music Awards.[[10]](#endnote-10)

In both 2018 and 2019, the Korean boy band topped the *TIME* 100 Reader Poll.[[11]](#endnote-11) In 2019, the group won three major categories at the American Music Awards: Favourite Duo or Group Pop/Rock, Favourite Social Artist, and Tour of the Year.[[12]](#endnote-12) As of 2019, the band also held 13 Guinness world records on digital and social media channels, including the fastest time to reach one million followers on TikTok, most viewed YouTube music video in 24 hours, and most used hashtag on Twitter in 24 hours.[[13]](#endnote-13)

Their success was also reflected in the yearly rankings of album sales in Korea. The band was largely unrecognized when they debuted in 2013, ranking 55th on the Gaon Music Chart, the representative music chart in Korea. In 2014, BTS had climbed to 14th; in 2015, to fifth; and in 2016, to first—a position BTS continued to hold.[[14]](#endnote-14)

Many linked BTS’s overwhelming success to the band’s effective use of online platforms, where members interacted directly with their fans, and to the vigorous activities of influencers on those sites.[[15]](#endnote-15) In an interview with Korean media, Bang acknowledged BTS’s history with social media:

BTS members voluntarily used social media before their debut. They became “Twitter nerds” like other young people. The place where you can listen to the trendiest music today is YouTube. We also uploaded our music videos on YouTube, and fans first ran into BTS on YouTube. I think the number of fans grew as BTS communicated with fans on social media in real time.[[16]](#endnote-16)

BTS acknowledged their fans and supporters, routinely beginning acceptance speeches with “Thank you, ARMY.” The fan club—the “army that protected BTS”—had a significant influence on BTS’s various activities, specifically on social media. ARMY members were well known for helping BTS grow and raise their brand awareness around the world; they captured the attention of global media and led BTS to win the Top Social Artist at the 2017 Billboard Music Awards, with more than 300 million votes.[[17]](#endnote-17) As of 2020, more than 40 million members of ARMY subscribed to BTS’s YouTube channel, and more than 30 million followed the members’ Twitter accounts.[[18]](#endnote-18)

Within the social media world, *hommas*—homepage masters who ran sites or social network services for K-pop stars—played an important role as influencers, producing and distributing high-quality unofficial BTS content through the hommas’s fan pages or social media channels. BTS’s hommas provided ARMY with a variety of content, available whenever the fans wanted, which brought the fans even closer to BTS. However, the hommas also posed a threat to BTS and Big Hit: while their unofficial BTS content was tacitly approved and fed fans’ need for all things related to BTS, the hommas’ activities could undermine Big Hit’s profits and create social controversy, harming BTS’s reputation.[[19]](#endnote-19)

Changes in the Music Industry Ecosystem

Legacy media such as television (TV), radio, newspapers, and magazines operated in a market where users consumed content passively, and the communication went one way: from provider to consumer. However, in the new media market represented by social media, communication could go both ways between providers and customers. This two-way communication reduced the influence of intermediate agents like broadcasting companies and distributors, who had previously had substantial influence in the traditional media ecosystem. As new media and the mobile environment advanced, legacy media’s influence declined. According to a 2017 survey of how people used media, more respondents used smartphones (81.4 per cent) than television (77.2 per cent). Likewise, significantly more respondents perceived smartphones as an essential source of media (56.4 per cent) than perceived television as essential (38.1 per cent).[[20]](#endnote-20)

In this changing environment, the music industry added new media strategies. With video-based music consumption on the rise, talent agencies needed to create and use YouTube channels and other similar platforms to promote their artists. The artist Psy (Park Jae-sang), from Korea, provided an excellent example of successful video-based promotion. In 2012, Psy’s pop song “Gangnam Style” received 1 billion views in its first five months on YouTube—the first video to have more than one billion views over any duration on YouTube. In 2017, Psy’s video surpassed 3 billion views, having been the most popular video on YouTube for five years.[[21]](#endnote-21)

K-pop videos were primarily intended for viewers in South Korea and the rest of Asia, but “Gangnam Style” broke that trend, becoming a number-two hit in the United States.[[22]](#endnote-22) Subsequently, most views came from outside the Asia-Pacific region, and 90 per cent of the views were from outside Korea.[[23]](#endnote-23) Responding to these trends, Korea’s talent agencies created YouTube channels for their artists that were separate from the agency-maintained official YouTube channels. The agencies used these artists’ channels as specialized media for releasing new content. Using social media was no longer a choice but a necessary method of distribution for music production companies.[[24]](#endnote-24)

Idol groups like BTS were performers trained by agencies and marketed as role models, for their image, attractiveness, and personality. Idol groups were meant to form emotional connections with their fans while being commercialized by their talent agencies.[[25]](#endnote-25) In the traditional media environment, idol groups were tightly controlled: idol groups met consumers through broadcasting channels that allowed planning and editing before the content was delivered. In contrast, the most significant feature of new media was live streaming. New media also had other features, such as online comments and chatting, that allowed content producers to communicate with consumers in real time—interaction that was nearly impossible in traditional one-way broadcast channels. The new media platform itself also influenced viewers; for example, YouTube, one of the most influential new media platforms, continuously recommended a stream of new videos as viewers reached the end of each current video. The platform encouraged users to consume content in binge sessions.[[26]](#endnote-26)

In the past, media consumers had been able to enjoy only limited content from their favourite artists. However, new social media platforms such as YouTube gave rise to a new type of consumer—the “prosumer,” who was both producer and consumer, actively involved in the design and distribution of content they wanted to enjoy. Prosumers—the hommas in K-pop culture—generated content for the various platforms they were using, and consumers were able to enjoy the expanded range of content whenever they wanted. The result was a more significant commitment to the original artists.[[27]](#endnote-27)

It was not difficult to find examples in Korea of ordinary people, not celebrities, who proved their influence as YouTubers. For example, YouTuber Gamst (Kim Jin-ik), who rose to stardom with his soccer commentary, was appointed as MBC TV’s public relations ambassador and digital commentator for the 2018 Russia World Cup and the 2018 Jakarta–Palembang Asian Games.[[28]](#endnote-28) YouTubers gained massive popularity as they freely expressed raw or honest emotions, which were difficult to show in mainstream media. There were also many musicians on YouTube, like J.Fla (Kim Jeong-hwa) and Ysabelle (Ysabelle Cuevas), who specialized in “cover music,” reinterpreting and singing other singers’ original songs in their own style. J.Fla, one of the most famous cover music YouTubers in Korea, was the first individual Korean YouTuber to surpass 10 million subscribers in 2018.[[29]](#endnote-29) Universal Music distributed international music in Korea and was aware that many people listened to pop music to study English. The company thus sponsored YouTuber Jan (Yang Seung-joon), who produced content for subscribers who wished to learn English.[[30]](#endnote-30) In many ways, talent agencies needed strategic partnership with such YouTubers to collaborate in promoting their new content, such as music videos.

Big Hit Entertainment and BTS: Success Factors

Bang started Big Hit Entertainment, a music production and celebrity management firm, in February 2005. He had previously worked for JYP Entertainment Corporation (JYP), one of the largest Korean talent agencies, and had composed many hit songs for the agency. Because of his history with JYP, Bang maintained a co-operative relationship with the agency in Big Hit’s early days. While Bang had produced many hit songs, the first group Bang produced was Glam, a South Korean girl group that debuted in 2012.[[31]](#endnote-31) BTS, debuted in 2013, accounted for most of Big Hit’s revenue.[[32]](#endnote-32)

Although Big Hit’s success may not have seemed to equal that of other big talent agencies due to its small roster of musicians, its financial statement suggested otherwise (see Exhibit 1). As of 2017, Big Hit’s sales were one-third that of SM Entertainment Co. Ltd. (SM) and YG Entertainment Inc. (YG). However, Big Hit’s operating profits were greater than those of the other big firms. As BTS’s territory expanded around the world, its sales and operating profits both jumped more than 300 per cent from 2016 to 2017. The firm’s growth was dramatic, especially when compared to the number of artists and corporate scale of other talent agencies.[[33]](#endnote-33)

Big Hit’s valuation was based on a price per share of ₩700,000,[[34]](#endnote-34) achieved in April 2018 when Netmarble Corporation, one of Korea’s largest mobile game developers, acquired 25.71 per cent of Big Hit’s shares at ₩201.4 billion. The purchase placed Big Hit’s value at up to ₩1.6 trillion,[[35]](#endnote-35) a valuation comparable to the three large agencies in Korea. As of August 2018, JYP was the most valued among the three, at ₩1.09 trillion.[[36]](#endnote-36) Given that a firm’s market capitalization reflected its growth potential, Big Hit was sending a good quality signal to the market.[[37]](#endnote-37)

Big Hit’s strategy with BTS was different from the wide release strategy adopted by the traditional talent agencies. Instead of the talent agency using its power to dominate various channels, including legacy media, Big Hit and BTS succeeded with a new approach that fit the changing environment and changing consumer behaviour. Big Hit’s market strategy with BTS focused on two factors: authentic communication in social media and the creation of massive content from organic interactions with fans.[[38]](#endnote-38)

Authentic Communication in Social Media

Unlike traditional media, which mainly carried stories about regulated and planned appearances and activities by idol groups, the new media’s most prominent features included live streaming and real-time interactive communications. To cope with these changes, big talent and production agencies like Big Hit adopted different strategies. The big talent agencies’ image-making strategy was based on guarding information about the groups and their content and releasing the information only though official, planned communication channels. For example, SM succeeded with the K-pop bands H.O.T. and EXO by using controlled and comprehensive release strategies.[[39]](#endnote-39) In contrast, BTS frequently produced, updated, and communicated through video clips about their everyday life. The clips were not strictly planned or high quality and were made with cell phones or camcorders whenever the group could make them.

BTS established a bond with fans by recording, sharing, and communicating the group’s everyday life instead of limiting information about the group to promotion through a firm or marketing campaign. BTS’s strategy was a continuation of a habit they had established before their debut: making video clips about their music and sharing their daily lives on their official blog.[[40]](#endnote-40) This strategy encouraged fans to feel that BTS band members were their friends rather than distant celebrities and gave fans a more reliable connection and more vital empathy for the band.[[41]](#endnote-41)

In interviews, many of BTS’s international fans said that they were first drawn to the group because of their music and came to like BTS even more as human beings. They continued to watch for content uploaded about their everyday life. Young and old K-pop fans described BTS as “humble.”[[42]](#endnote-42) By continuously having access to BTS’s real daily lives instead of temporary and planned broadcasting, fans accepted BTS’s image as authentic, not artificially created, which further strengthened the group’s positive image.[[43]](#endnote-43)

The strategy of authentic communication led to a huge following, or fandom, on social media. BTS’s ARMY fan group had a vast influence on the band’s growth and success, also helping them with international promotion and other activities. The impact of their influence was evidenced in 2018, when pressure from ARMY forced Big Hit to cancel BTS’s planned collaboration with Yasushi Akimoto, a composer with far-right nationalist and misogynistic views.[[44]](#endnote-44)

Winning the Top Social Artist award at the 2017 Billboard Music Awards was evidence of BTS’s popularity on social media and won the group massive attention in the US market.[[45]](#endnote-45) ARMY members organized translation groups on social media, translating BTS’s lyrics into local languages and distributing subtitled video clips with lyrics in local languages. For example, Bangtan Translations, one of the largest translation groups, interpreted and posted lyrics, tweets, and videos of BTS.[[46]](#endnote-46) The ARMY members formed small clubs of people who danced together offline, videotaped their dances to share on YouTube, and created and shared reaction video clips, in which they laughed and empathized with one another while watching BTS’s music videos or shows. The organizational fan culture spread on social media, not just among Korean fans but among fans around the world.[[47]](#endnote-47)

Organic Content Creation with Fans

BTS’s regular, organic interactions with fans resulted in a massive amount of content from the band. Before this trend, fans’ access to content was limited to video clips about official events or artists’ performances. The content was formal and restricted in quantity. In contrast, BTS continued to record and upload small parts of their life as if they were keeping a journal, leading to a flood of BTS content available in the market.[[48]](#endnote-48)

The amount of content on BTS’s social media channels, such as YouTube, Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook, was substantially higher than that of other competitors (see Exhibit 2). BTS also used Korean platforms like Naver Blog and V Live to provide different kinds of content, including official and non-official songs and music videos, video clips about their everyday life, and online streaming shows. Not only did these activities increase the quantity of content about BTS, but they also encouraged consumers to commit themselves to BTS. The prevailing opinion among the fans was that there was a lot of content to watch on BTS’s social media channels, and they visited the channels often since they were updated frequently.[[49]](#endnote-49)

To live up to BTS fans’ expectations Big Hit launched a “BTS Festa” event, which lasted for one or two weeks and began every June 13, the anniversary of BTS’s debut. For the event, highly anticipated by fans, Big Hit uploaded intentionally planned content, such as newly arranged songs, choreographed videos, and videos of gatherings, every day.[[50]](#endnote-50)

Big Hit did not strictly enforce its copyright in relation to fans’ activities; therefore, fans could create and distribute secondary content relatively freely. The agency’s *laissez-faire* attitudetoward copyright led to the emergence of new power influencers—the hommas.[[51]](#endnote-51)

Hommas: Supporters or Opponents?

The hommas, or homepage masters, were fans who followed celebrities, photographed them, and uploaded the content to fan pages or social media accounts.[[52]](#endnote-52) Hommas carried expensive equipment with them, often worth tens of thousands or millions of Korean won, to photograph or videotape their stars, capturing moments that ordinary fans could not capture and producing quality content with their professional editing skills.

While BTS and Big Hit created official content, hommas made a range of unofficial content. Initially, hommas tried to differentiate their material to create more not-for-profit content and gain popularity among fans. However, they later carried out various for-profit activities, producing and selling goods such as photobooks and DVD products to other fans. Hommas also participated in overseas exhibitions.[[53]](#endnote-53)

Hommas’ Influence on BTS’s Success

BTS fans enjoyed both the official content distributed by Big Hit and the unofficial content produced by hommas and the other fandom communities. Some hommas had more than one million followers and were considered to be the pinnacle of fandom culture. While Big Hit tried to communicate directly with the public through social media, hommas, with their compelling content, served as a bridge between Big Hit and ARMY members (see Exhibit 3).

According to a survey conducted by the case authors, hommas’ content was influential. Fans who followed hommas were overwhelmingly satisfied with their content (84.1 per cent). A significant number of fans who recognized hommas also purchased hommas’ products (38.4 per cent), and most of the fans who bought these products were satisfied (80.9 per cent). Most importantly, 62 per cent of survey respondents indicated that hommas’ content enhanced their commitment to BTS; 28 per cent were undecided about the effect of the content, and only 10 per cent said that the content did not enhance their relationships with BTS (see Exhibit 4).

The influence of hommas’ content was further highlighted when BTS’s hommas’ activity was compared with the activity of EXO’s hommas. Twitter was a major channel on which hommas uploaded their content, and a search of well-known hommas’ Twitter accounts revealed that BTS’s hommas had overwhelmingly more followers than EXO’s hommas (see Exhibit 5). While there were 25 BTS hommas who had more than 500,000 followers, there were few EXO hommas with a similar number of followers. The exception was hommas accounts run by members of the EXO group itself.

The positive effect of the hommas’ content on increasing both engagement with BTS and the scale of the BTS hommas community was far more significant than that relating to BTS’s competitors, and this helped to explain the hommas’ substantial influence on BTS’s success.[[54]](#endnote-54)

The case authors also questioned survey respondents about hommas’ influence on BTS’s fandom. Almost three-quarters of respondents (71.8 per cent) indicated that the hommas positively influenced the growth of BTS’s fandom. Only 5.3 per cent thought the hommas did not have a positive effect. This influence was more noticeable among respondents outside Korea, suggesting that the hommas had a significant impact on the expansion of a global fandom for BTS. While social media increased the amount of BTS-generated content that fans could consume, there were still limitations on the ability of fans living abroad to access and consume the content. Hommas’ content and products helped to resolve these limitations by providing content to these fans through different channels.

Before the advent of hommas, there was limited content about favourite artists available for media consumers. However, with the emergence of hommas on various platforms, consumers were supplied with a large volume and wide range of content, available whenever they wanted it, which led to a more significant commitment to artists.[[55]](#endnote-55)

Hommas were not just beneficial for existing consumers. They also worked positively for potential consumers of artists’ work. By producing and distributing more content, hommas created more opportunities for potential consumers to learn about artists. Once consumers became interested in homma-promoted artists, the large amount of content generated by hommas could satisfy the new consumers’ interest.[[56]](#endnote-56)

Hommas as a Potential Threat to BTS

Social influencers such as the hommas could also be a threat to BTS.[[57]](#endnote-57) Avid fans had produced content for artists’ fans for a long time. Some people produced school supplies, stationery, and other content featuring their favourite singers, taking commercial advantage of consumers’ interest in the artists. However, with advances in social media, social influencers were able to expand their influence and establish a new platform beyond those ordinary fans could achieve in the past.[[58]](#endnote-58)

Celebrities’ schedules were relentlessly leaked to hommas, who carefully followed the celebrities to gather raw materials for content that attracted more and more followers to the hommas’ channels.[[59]](#endnote-59) However, these activities violated Korean publicity rights and were technically against the law. For-profit hommas’ activities were also illegal because they were unofficial; fraud cases had further compounded the seriousness of this issue. Another consideration was that hommas’ activities were becoming more like those of a corporation, which led to questions about tax consequences and a controversy over tax evasion.

The bigger problem was that talent agencies found it difficult to take issue with the hommas because limiting their activity might result in a loss of fans. Big Hit had tacitly approved BTS-related secondary content created by fans, but this activity could harm the firm’s profits and create social controversy.[[60]](#endnote-60)

Challenges for BTS and Big Hit Entertainment

BTS’s success had many implications for managers in the entertainment industry. Given Big Hit’s short history, its success with BTS was encouraging. The group’s success was unprecedented in the global media and entertainment industries, and its potential for future growth appeared to be just as substantial. However, the strategy that led to BTS’s current success—responding and adapting to a changing new media environment—could be replicated. As competitors in the domestic and global markets abandoned traditional strategies and copied BTS’s strategies of communicating authentically and producing massive amounts of content, BTS would lose its differentiating advantage. Most importantly, the potential threats inherent in building relationships with fans and influencers on social media were dramatically increasing.

Seven teenagers had become a worldwide force in the music industry, thanks to their enthusiastic fans on social media. Would their fame last, or did Bang need to take a different approach to expand and manage BTS’s fan base on social media and leverage its influence to obtain a sustainable competitive advantage in the era of new media?

Exhibit 1: Big Hit Entertainment and the three Largest South Korean talent agencies—2016 and 2017 sales and operating profits (In ₩100 millions)

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **2016** | | **2017** | |
|  | **Sales** | **Operating Profits** | **Sales** | **Operating Profits** |
| Big Hit Entertainment Co. Ltd. | 352 | 104 | 924 | 325 |
| SM Entertainment Co. Ltd. | 3,499 | 207 | 3,653 | 109 |
| YG Entertainment Inc. | 3,218 | 319 | 3,498 | 252 |
| JYP Entertainment Corp. | 736 | 138 | 1,022 | 195 |

Sources: Big Hit Entertainment, *2017 Audit Report* [in Korean], accessed May 1, 2021, http://dart.fss.or.kr/dsaf001/main.do?rcpNo=20180322000053; SM Entertainment, *2017 Annual Report* [in Korean], accessed May 1, 2021, <http://dart.fss.or.kr/dsaf001/main.do?rcpNo=20180402002889>; YG Entertainment, *2017 Annual Report* [in Korean], accessed May 1, 2021, <http://dart.fss.or.kr/dsaf001/main.do?rcpNo=20190402001791>; JYP Entertainment, *2017 Annual Report* [in Korean], accessed May 1, 2021, http://dart.fss.or.kr/dsaf001/main.do?rcpNo=20180330001728.

Exhibit 2: BTS and EXO—YouTube and Twitter Traffic as of September 17, 2018

(a) Number of YouTube Video Clips

(b) Number of Tweets

Note: Numbers are a count of YouTube video clips and tweets from official channels and accounts, respectively.

Source: BTS, “BangtanTV,” YouTube channel, accessed September 17, 2018, www.youtube.com/channel/UCLkAepWjdylmXSltofFvsYQ; EXO, “SmTown,” YouTube channel, accessed September 17, 2018, www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL15EBBC3899C5503A; BTS (@BTS\_twt), Twitter feed, accessed September 17, 2018, https://twitter.com/BTS\_twt; EXO (@weareoneEXO), Twitter feed, accessed September 17, 2018, https://twitter.com/weareoneEXO; SM (@SMTownGlobal), Twitter feed, accessed September 17, 2018, https://twitter.com/SMTOWNGLOBAL; YG Family (@ygent\_official), Twitter feed, accessed September 17, 2018, https://twitter.com/ygent\_official; JYP Nation (@JYPnation), Twitter feed, accessed September 17, 2018, https://twitter.com/jypnation.

Exhibit 3: model of relationships between BTS, Hommas, and ARMY



Note: Influence and relationship indicated by the thickness of a line. While ARMY members had weak relationships on social media, the hommas had a strong influence.

Source: Created by the case authors.

Exhibit 4: Responses to a survey Distributed through KakaoTalk Open Chats and ARMY’s Facebook account

EXHIBIT 4 (CONTINUED)

Note: The survey was conducted on September 7-10, 2018, on the online community sites of BTS’s fan clubs. Of the 344 respondents, 251 were Koreans and 93 were non-Koreans from Asia, Africa, Europe, North America, South America, and Australia.

Source: Created by the case authors.

Exhibit 5: A quantitative comparison of BTS and EXO Hommas’ Twitter accounts (as of September 5, 2018)

(a) Comparison of Hommas’ Twitter Activity for BTS and EXO

(b) Twitter Account Information for BTS’s Hommas

| **BTS Member** | **Homma’s Twitter Account** | **No. of Followers** | **No. of Photos and Video Clips** | **No. of Tweets** | **Twitter Sign-Up Date** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| V | @taehyungpic | 1,140,000 | 10,400 | 10,500 | Aug. 2015 |
| @taehyungpiics | 511,000 | 10,100 | 19,000 | Oct. 2012 |
| @TAETAELAND | 826,326 | 2,064 | 6,658 | Feb. 2014 |
| @TO\_MY\_DARLINGV | 579,498 | 2,649 | 8,140 | May 2014 |
| @\_nuna\_V | 667,768 | 2,029 | 7,715 | Oct. 2016 |
| @winterVerry1230 | 547,432 | 1,112 | 5,268 | May 2015 |
| Jimin | @parkjamjam\_kr | 966,595 | 3,189 | 14,082 | July 2013 |
| @scene\_stealer\_ | 553,962 | 1,711 | 6,056 | Apr. 2015 |
| @mighty\_jimin | 561,460 | 1,661 | 9,635 | July 2015 |
| Jungkook | @JUNGKOOKcokr | 1,786,927 | 2,190 | 6,373 | Nov. 2013 |
| @madein1997\_jk | 996,817 | 1,842 | 10,418 | July 2015 |
| @hi\_springjk | 752,991 | 3,490 | 13,058 | July 2014 |
| @headliner\_jk | 721,603 | 1,584 | 4,181 | June 2016 |
| Suga | @suga930309com | 542,599 | 2,733 | 8,004 | Jan. 2013 |
| @sugaonthebeat39 | 490,399 | 1,321 | 8,862 | May 2015 |
| J-Hope | @218\_Jhope | 651,949 | 1,920 | 4,737 | May 2013 |
| @THEHO218 | 517,129 | 3,036 | 15,811 | Oct. 2014 |
| @HopeSmiling0218 | 495,090 | 1,737 | 4,592 | Mar. 2014 |
| Jin | @improving\_Jin | 395,795 | 2,413 | 7,456 | June 2013 |
| RM | @namjunemolle | 503,040 | 1,838 | 5,994 | May 2015 |

Exhibit 5 (Continued)

| **BTS Member** | **Homma’s Twitter Account** | **No. of Followers** | **No. of Photos and Video Clips** | **No. of Tweets** | **Twitter Sign-Up Date** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| BTS as a Whole Group | @allbtspics | 548,000 | 12,800 | 33,200 | Nov. 2012 |
| @BTS\_BiTS | 387,000 | 15,700 | 10,000 | Aug. 2014 |
| @btsanalytics | 1,020,000 | 2,806 | 16,600 | May 2017 |
| @BTS\_Billboard | 612,000 | 4,264 | 19,700 | Dec. 2016 |
| @USBTSARMY | 342,000 | 9,094 | 90,900 | Apr. 2014 |
| @SuperStarBTStwt | 757,000 | 86 | 110 | June 2017 |

(c) Twitter Account Information for EXO’s Hommas

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **EXO Member** | **Homma’s Twitter Account** | **No. of Followers** | **No. of Photos and Video Clips** | **No. of Tweets** | **Twitter Sign-Up Date** |
| Suho | @Suho\_planet | 543,540 | 4715 | 12,566 | Apr. 2012 |
| @\_CottonBlossom | 170,025 | 2,585 | 6,432 | May 2014 |
| D.O. | @wishboynet | 162,158 | 1,900 | 4,910 | Mar. 2013 |
| @doh\_kyungsoocom | 139,348 | 1,423 | 3,749 | May 2012 |
| @112sweettime | 150,312 | 3,204 | 40 | Sept. 2014 |
| Chanyeol | @chanyeolit | 725,505 | 7,525 | 17,087 | May 2012 |
| @candycrush0506 | 352,390 | 2,986 | 6,074 | Aug. 2013 |
| @Precioso1127 | 171,452 | 3,047 | 4,884 | Dec. 2013 |
| Baekhyun | @overflow0506 | 326,244 | 2,516 | 5,753 | Apr. 2013 |
| @esquimau56 | 238,898 | 1,168 | 4,943 | Feb. 2014 |
| @fuzzylittlebaby | 192,880 | 2,071 | 3,701 | June 2014 |
| Chen | @MonAmiChen | 104,556 | - | 5,856 | Dec. 2013 |
| @WITH\_CHEN | 165,067 | 6,924 | 14,271 | July 2013 |
| @KIM\_OPPA921 | 96,837 | 3,188 | 5,655 | May 2014 |
| Sehun | @iridescent\_boy | 1,119,476 | 7,567 | 15,292 | Apr. 2012 |
| @hyperbeat\_sh | 524,124 | 3,926 | 7,341 | May 2012 |
| @aiolos\_sh | 327,621 | 5,600 | 13,644 | July 2012 |
| Lay | @19911007com | 101,322 | 2,802 | 4,159 | Sept. 2012 |
| @layixingworld | 82,755 | 44,188 | 61,893 | May 2012 |
| @howdyixing | 35,450 | 1,620 | 4,698 | Dec. 2013 |
| Xiumin | @mywarmspring326 | 133,249 | 3,384 | 10,494 | Nov. 2013 |
| @xiumonday0326 | 124,904 | 2,606 | 5,883 | Nov. 2013 |
| @ICETREE326 | 90,180 | 1,752 | 3,036 | Aug. 2015 |
| Kai | @jonginnet | 758,701 | 5,410 | 16,403 | May 2012 |
| @exokai\_kr | 263,309 | 2,316 | 5,250 | July 2013 |
| @kai\_n\_kimjongin | 187,450 | 2,398 | 4,009 | Feb. 2013 |

Note: Twitter activity counts were based on the number of followers for each of the 20 most active hommas Twitter accounts for each of BTS and EXO.

Source: Created by the case authors based on account information for the specified Twitter accounts, accessed on September 5, 2018.

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