

Solo Stardom: How HYBE Managed BTS's Break and Promoted Solo Careers

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Abstract

This case study examines the strategies employed by HYBE to advance the individual careers of its seven members, thereby adeptly managing BTS's group hiatus. In 2022, as BTS transitioned from collective pursuits to individual projects, HYBE faced significant pressure to uphold its financial achievements and global influence. In reaction, the enterprise meticulously launched individual debuts, employing pre-produced material, diverse promotional strategies, and strategic timing to ensure that each member received their opportunity to shine. This study meticulously explores the financial and cultural implications of BTS's pursuits, HYBE's strategic maneuvers, and the consequential effects on artist management within the global music industry. The analysis assesses the efficacy of HYBE's strategy through the examination of financial metrics, sales figures, and industry analyses. The analysis reveals that the individual pursuits of BTS have significantly contributed to breaking sales records and sustaining fan engagement while simultaneously mitigating the risks linked to the group's hiatus. The findings provide a strategic framework for navigating group hiatuses, enhancing both individual and collective brand value, alongside a more profound understanding of the evolving dynamics within K-pop management.

Keywords: Bangtan Sonyeondan, Bts, Hybe, k-pop, South Korea, Music

Introduction

Since their 2013 debut, BTS, which is run by HYBE Corporation, has revolutionized the worldwide music business by expanding the scope and influence of K-pop. With more than 105 million equivalent album sales, BTS is the best-selling boy band of all time. In addition to breaking records, they have

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increased the visibility of Korean popular culture throughout the world (Frater and Frater). But in June 2022, BTS revealed a big change in their professional path: a break from the group to concentrate on individual endeavors and do the necessary military duty that all physically fit South Korean men must complete. This statement came at a crucial time for HYBE, the entertainment giant whose financial stability and commercial strategy were closely linked to BTS's overall success (Stassen).

HYBE's founder, Bang Si-hyuk, and CEO, Lee Jae-sang, had long planned for this change, understanding that military duty would inevitably cause a pause and that the firm needed to continue growing beyond BTS as a group. To reduce the risk of being overly dependent on BTS, the firm implemented a multi-label strategy, growing its portfolio of artists and speeding up its foreign expansion (Frater and Frater). Importantly, before BTS took a break, HYBE acquired a wealth of pre-produced material and intellectual property (IP) assets, allowing for ongoing fan interaction via digital platforms, merchandising, and indirect artist-related goods like documentaries and webtoons (Cirisano). Even as group activities ceased, HYBE was able to sustain BTS's worldwide brand presence because of this strategic thinking (Eun-jung).

HYBE presented the break as a "new chapter" that prioritized personal artistic development, not a dissolution. Each member of BTS had a specific promotional window to optimize their particular visibility and financial potential, thanks to HYBE's careful planning of the staggered distribution of solo ventures. For instance, HYBE's third-quarter sales reached 445.5 billion Korean won when J-Hope's solo debut album, *Jack in the Box* (released in July 2022), sold almost 360,000 copies in its first week and was followed by well-known performances like *Lollapalooza* (Stassen). In its first week of release, Jin's single, "The Astronaut" (October 2022), sold 770,000 copies, helping to boost quarterly sales by 20.2%. RM, Jimin, Suga, V, and Jungkook all went on to make solo albums that smashed sales records. For example, Jimin's *FACE* sold 1.45 million copies in its first week, while Jungkook's *GOLDEN* sold over 2.43 million copies, including 200,000 copies in the US, which is the most ever sold by a K-pop solo artist (ET Online).

In addition to maintaining HYBE's cash sources, this phased strategy lets BTS members forge unique artistic identities, growing their worldwide fan base and enhancing the group's reputation (Washington). Because they offered direct lines of

connection and exclusive material, HYBE's digital platforms, including Weverse, were important in fostering fan interaction throughout the break. Notwithstanding these achievements, HYBE still had to deal with issues, including fan worries regarding member promotional inequalities and investor nervousness, which was demonstrated by a 27% decline in the stock price just after the pause announcement (Cirisano).

A creative example for entertainment organizations negotiating the challenges of group breaks, particularly in areas with required military duty, is HYBE's strategic management during BTS's vacation. The corporation is well-positioned to continue to dominate the worldwide music industry thanks to its ability to strike a balance between promoting individual members, preserving brand awareness, and diversifying its artist roster. The strategic planning and implementation of HYBE during BTS's break will be examined in this research paper, along with the commercial results, promotional strategies, and wider ramifications for artist management in the changing K-pop scene.

Table 1: BTS Solo Journeys Amid Military Service: A Timeline of Creativity and Resilience

Member	Military Service Period	Solo Releases Before & During Service	Collaborations & Features During Service	Concerts & Notable Activities During Service	Post-Discharge Plans / Notes
Jin	Dec 13, 2022 – Jun 12, 2024	- <i>The Astronaut</i> (Single, Oct 28, 2022)	- Released solo albums <i>Happy</i> and <i>Echo</i> after discharge (2024)	- Limited public appearances during service	- Resumed solo promotions, fan meetings, Gucci brand ambassador (Aug 2024), solo world tour #RunSeokin_EP. Tour
J-Hope	Apr 18, 2023 – Oct 17, 2024	- <i>Jack in the Box</i> (Album, Jul 15, 2022)	- Released <i>Hope On The Street</i> album during service (2024)	- Headlined Lollapalooza Festival (Jul 2022)	- Solo world tour started Feb 28, 2025; new solo releases post-discharge

Suga	Sep 22, 2023 – Jun 21, 2025 (Alternative Service)	- <i>D-DAY</i> (Album, Apr 21, 2023)	- Continued producing music; hosted podcast <i>Suchwita</i> during service	- Limited public activity due to alternative service	- Expected to resume solo music production and activities after June 2025
RM	Dec 11, 2023 – Jun 10, 2025	- <i>Indigo</i> (Album, Dec 2, 2022)	- Released single <i>Right, Wrong</i> (May 2024); featured in collaborations and songwriting projects	- No concerts or new releases during enlistment	- Expected to resume solo and group activities post-discharge
Jimin	Dec 12, 2023 – Jun 11, 2025	- <i>FACE</i> (Album, Mar 24, 2023); <i>Closer Than This</i> (Single, Dec 22, 2023)	- Collaborated with Taeyang on <i>Vibe</i> (2023); launched show <i>You Sure</i> on Disney with Jungkook	- No concerts or new releases during enlistment	- Expected to resume solo and group activities post-discharge
V	Dec 12, 2023 – Jun 10, 2025	- <i>Layover</i> (Album, Sep 8, 2023); <i>FRI(END)S</i> (Single, Mar 15, 2024)	- Featured in IU's music video <i>Love Wins All</i> (2024)	- No concerts or new releases during enlistment	- Expected to resume solo and group activities post-discharge
Jungkook	Dec 12, 2023 – Jun 11, 2025	- <i>GOLDEN</i> (English Album, Nov 3, 2023)	- Collaborated on <i>Seven</i> and <i>Like Crazy</i> (2023); featured in Calvin Klein 2023 campaign; appeared on <i>The Tonight Show</i> (2023)	- No concerts or new releases during enlistment	- Expected to resume solo and group activities post-discharge

❖ Description

The table below gives a full picture of the solo careers of BTS members when they were in the military, which spanned from late 2022 to mid-2025. The exhibition shows how each artist kept going and made progress in their art despite the restrictions of enlistment by showing major solo releases, collaborations, and limited public appearances. This timeline shows that BTS has always had a strong connection with its fans and a lot of creative energy, even during a very important moment in their careers. HYBE's smart digital interaction backs it up.

❖ Notes

- Due to the constraints imposed by legal and military regulations, no concerts or live promotions took place during the individual's active military service.
- By leveraging pre-recorded content, social media, and digital platforms like Weverse, HYBE successfully ensured ongoing engagement from fans.
- Jin and J-Hope have embarked on their extensive solo promotions and tours following their return from military service.
- It is projected that in mid-2025, RM, V, Jimin, Jungkook, and Suga will recommence their professional endeavors subsequent to their respective discharge dates.

Review of the Literature

The scholarly exploration of K-pop group sabbatical management and the marketing of solo careers remains insufficient, especially regarding globally influential groups such as BTS. Nevertheless, contemporary studies on fandom culture, digital strategies, K-pop marketing, and brand management offer valuable frameworks for understanding how enterprises such as HYBE navigate these complex transformations.

The intentional application of soft power by South Korea, utilizing cultural exports as tools for national branding and international influence, is essential to the global success of K-pop (Seppälä). Se Eun Gong is of the thought that BTS, as pioneers, have significantly raised industry benchmarks and expanded the genre's allure, particularly in the United States, transforming K-pop into a truly global phenomenon. The current transitional phase in K-pop can be largely attributed to

the artists' obligatory military service, highlighting the challenges of sustaining momentum during enforced breaks (Se Eun Gong).

Kim and Kwon (2022) stress how important Korea's cutting-edge manufacturing techniques are to the worldwide success of K-pop. It is said that the music business's mix of cooperation and competition, along with changes in the competitive landscape, has been key to creating value at different stages of the sector. This paradigm gives us a way to understand how companies like HYBE change and come up with new ideas in response to changes in their sector.

Jaejung Kang thinks that HYBE's plan for dealing with BTS's break is a great example of modern marketing and internet engagement techniques. HYBE keeps fans interested and makes more money by encouraging individual efforts during times when the group isn't doing anything (Kang). This method fits in with the K-pop industry's overall management structure, which includes corporations carefully watching artists' training, production, and public persona to make them more appealing and long-lasting (Trinh). The group's use of technologies like Weverse encourages direct connection between artists and fans, making it easier to plan streaming events and interact with followers on social media. This helps solo releases get more attention on worldwide charts (Hong et al.).

The strict training schedules and carefully planned public images of K-pop celebrities are two of the most important things that help them succeed. Research done by Chaeri Han and Amy Pothong shows that groups like BTS put quite a lot of work into improving their performance and appeal, often training for more than 10,000 hours (Han and Pothong). This careful foundation, together with higher manufacturing standards and smart branding, leads to a polished output that has an impact all over the world.

BTS's amazing achievements, which include five Grammy nominations and a string of Billboard chart-topping albums, show how creative they are as artists and how well their tactics work together. Their ability to appeal to people from many different languages and cultures challenges the idea that Western music is the best (Chase). Also, the individual projects that the group members worked on during their break have not only kept them in the spotlight, but they have also helped them grow as artists. This shows that it is possible to have a successful solo career in the K-pop world.

Despite the problems caused by BTS's break, HYBE's financial results have been quite strong. A look at HYBE's finances and strategic plans shows that income will rise by 21% in 2023, thanks to BTS's individual efforts and collective activities. This growth shows how well HYBE's diversified business plan works and how well it can use the successes of its individual members (Qiu).

Social media and digital platforms have completely changed how K-pop spreads throughout the world. Psy's "Gangnam Style" went viral, showing how powerful digital distribution can be. On the other hand, BTS's constant activity on social media has built one of the most committed worldwide followings, called ARMY (Shen). Fans take part in streaming parties, social media events, and coordinated purchases, which have a direct effect on chart positions and award nominations. K-pop's rise throughout the world is marked by a distinctive culture of participation (Aisyah).

The K-pop industry consistently grapples with challenges, such as an oversaturation of artists and the perpetual demand for innovative concepts. Bang Si-hyuk, the chairman of HYBE, has indicated that the pace of business development within the K-pop industry has experienced a deceleration (Aswad). Bang Si-Hyuk, the chairman of HYBE, said that K-pop "is not as hot in the market as you might think," even if people think the genre is becoming more popular quickly.

"Globally, it doesn't take up much of the market." Bang noted that Latin music and Afrobeats, on the other hand, are rising extremely quickly. He also said that it is "urgent" to get more people to know about K-pop (Dredge). "That's what I'm most worried about." He stated, "In fact, it's very clear that growth is slowing down when you look at our export indicators and streaming growth."

He emphasized the significance of adapting to contemporary developments and addressing the requirements of clientele (Aswad). Within this context, the individual pursuits of BTS hold significant importance for maintaining the group's relevance and for bolstering HYBE's position in the market (Dredge).

Recent research has shed light on K-pop's production innovations, global marketing strategies, and the role of digital platforms in keeping fans engaged. However, there are still big gaps in our understanding of how to strategically manage group hiatuses, especially for globally popular groups like BTS. Most of the research that has been

done so far has looked at either group branding or promoting individual artists in a way that is not really connected to the other. There hasn't been enough research into how these two things affect each other when a group is inactive.

Also, the studies that are already out there don't look at the long-term effects on finances that specific projects have throughout these times of inactivity. There has been some academic interest in how the solo projects of individual members affect the company's income streams and the long-term cultural capital of BTS (Kim & Kwon, 2022). However, there is still not enough research on this topic. In the same way, the complexities of fan interaction during solo promotions—especially how these efforts either increase or decrease fan loyalty—have not yet been fully studied in the existing literature.

There isn't much study on how HYBE's dynamic multi-label system and worldwide cooperation affect the market positioning and international reception of particular projects. There aren't many studies that compare HYBE's techniques to those of other well-known K-pop agencies, such as SM Entertainment and YG Entertainment. Future research that addresses these gaps will not only improve our understanding of K-pop's business practices, but it would also provide useful information for running worldwide music companies as the industry changes.

Methodology

This study employs a mixed methods approach in its research methodology, integrating both quantitative and qualitative data to deliver an in-depth analysis of HYBE's strategic management of BTS's hiatus and the promotion of its members' solo careers. This methodology facilitates a deeper comprehension of the intricate dynamics at play by merging quantifiable commercial results with contextual insights derived from media and fan interactions.

❖ Qualitative Analysis

Content Analysis: Investigate the promotional materials, encompassing press releases, interviews, and social media postings, to discern how HYBE maintained BTS's status and nurtured their connection with ARMY during their hiatus. This will aid in discerning strategies that enhance the collective identity of the group while simultaneously advancing the individual pursuits of each member.

Case Study Review: An in-depth examination of the management strategies employed for each BTS member's individual pursuits will be conducted through a comprehensive case study approach. This involves a thorough analysis of marketing strategies, collaborative partnerships, and the timelines of specific projects. Insights into how HYBE facilitated the individual identity development of each member will be derived from interviews, perspectives of industry experts, and statements made by BTS members from publicly available sources.

❖ Quantitative Analysis

Sales and Streaming Data: Analyze the chart performance, album sales, and streaming statistics for the individual projects that were released during the hiatus. This will facilitate a more nuanced assessment of each member's career trajectory and their respective contributions to HYBE's overarching financial prosperity.

Social Media Metrics: To assess the efficacy with which HYBE has leveraged digital platforms to advance solo endeavors and maintain the visibility of BTS, it is essential to gather quantitative data on social media interactions, including likes, shares, and comments. The metrics from Weverse, Instagram, and Twitter will serve as significant indicators of fan engagement and business outcomes.

Background of HYBE and BTS

❖ HYBE's Role in BTS's Success

HYBE Corporation, originally founded by Bang Si-hyuk as Big Hit Entertainment in 2005, played a pivotal role in the rise of BTS, a preeminent force in the global K-pop landscape (Montevirgen). Big Hit Entertainment originally focused on modest projects, including collaboration with JYP Entertainment on the boy group 2AM and overseeing the vocal trio 8Eight. The pivotal moment occurred in 2010, when Bang Si-hyuk enlisted BTS's inaugural member, Kim Namjoon (RM), and conducted nationwide auditions to identify the other members (Wikipedia). On June 13, 2013, BTS officially launched their career under the Big Hit label, embarking on a strategic journey that would significantly transform both the company and the global music landscape (Wikipedia).

Unlike the conventional K-pop trainee system, HYBE's initial strategy was notably unconventional. Unlike the refined idol persona prevalent in the industry, BTS's foundational concept was rooted in hip-hop and authenticity (r/bangtan). By

allowing members to engage in songwriting and production, the organization made considerable investments in their artistic development, fostering a genuine connection between BTS and its fan base (Koreaboo). Their songs, characterized by accessibility and a keen awareness of social issues, facilitated BTS's gradual ascent to both local and global acclaim, thus validating HYBE's calculated risk (Sheridan).

❖ **BTS's Rise: Key Milestones**

A series of pivotal moments in BTS's ascent solidified its global stature. Their 2016 album, *Wings*, garnered critical acclaim and expanded their audience through its complex themes and elaborate narratives. The *Love Yourself* series (2017–2018), with its focus on self-acceptance and psychological well-being, achieved significant financial success and cultural resonance, profoundly impacting audiences globally (Bosch). Throughout this period, they achieved remarkable milestones, such as filling stadiums globally and ascending to the pinnacle of the Billboard 200 chart (Caulfield).

The status of BTS as global icons was further reinforced through the *Map of the Soul* series (2019–2020), which intricately fused diverse musical styles with concepts from Jungian psychology. Their acclaim expanded beyond conventional K-pop markets due to their global collaborations and participation in prestigious events such as the Grammy Awards. The accomplishments reflect HYBE's strategic objective of integrating global marketing with creative authenticity, leveraging social media and digital platforms to cultivate an extraordinary global following recognized as ARMY (Montevirgen).

❖ **BTS's Brand Identity**

BTS's brand identity, which centers on themes of social justice, mental health awareness, and self-love, is essential to their success. In contrast to many other idol groups, BTS builds a strong emotional bond with its fans by candidly addressing social concerns and personal hardships in both their songs and public appearances (Koreaboo). Because of their sincerity, BTS has stood out in the K-pop market and cultivated a reputation for being unconventional.

Their relationship with ARMY is crucial; through social media, fan projects, and charitable endeavors motivated by BTS's messages, the fandom is more than simply a customer base (Montevirgen). This mutually beneficial relationship has increased

BTS's cultural influence and maintained its relevance throughout time, solidifying its reputation as a symbol of empowerment and constructive social change.

❖ **Impact of BTS's Hiatus**

A significant moment transpired not only for the ensemble BTS but also for the entirety of the K-pop industry when the announcement was made regarding their hiatus in 2022. The principal reason for the interruption was the obligatory military service in South Korea, which requires all male citizens to fulfill their duty (Bosch). This has led to the unavoidable disruptions that have transpired in the professional trajectories of male idols. The close interconnection between HYBE's financial standing and brand identity with that of BTS presented a significant risk for the company (Min). The organization recognized the need to strike a delicate balance between enhancing the individual pursuits of the BTS members and preserving the collective integrity and unity of the group as a cohesive entity (Wikipedia).

The interruption necessitated a rigorous evaluation of HYBE's strategic capabilities, as it became imperative to sustain fan engagement and revenue streams in the absence of group activities (Sheridan). HYBE's approach involved the careful gathering of preliminary resources, leveraging BTS's creative assets, and orchestrating phased solo launches to ensure that each member could attain personal success while preserving the integrity of the BTS brand (Montevirgen). This period also posed a challenge for the corporation in balancing the expectations of its fan base with the confidence of its investors amid prevailing uncertainty regarding the group's future (Sheridan).

Discussion: Strategic Management of BTS's Hiatus and Solo Pursuits

This section examines the strategic management employed by HYBE during BTS's hiatus, aimed at safeguarding the group's international standing while enabling the members to explore their endeavors. This analysis delves into the marketing and branding strategies utilized to foster unique personal identities for each individual while also investigating how these initiatives played a role in HYBE's overarching financial and commercial achievements during the hiatus. The discourse synthesizes qualitative insights and quantitative results to offer a thorough comprehension of this pivotal phase.

Strategic Planning of Solo Projects

The meticulous orchestration of BTS's hiatus by HYBE was marked by a carefully devised implementation of distinct initiatives. The endeavors were initiated to preserve the collective's identity while simultaneously allowing each individual to cultivate their distinct artistic persona. In the period when BTS's group endeavors were temporarily suspended, this approach proved crucial for maintaining fan engagement as well as ensuring the economic sustainability of HYBE (Stassen, 2024)

From the outset, the organization has unequivocally communicated that the hiatus currently undertaken by BTS is not indicative of a disbandment. Instead, it represents a deliberate "new chapter" focused on individual growth and sustainable longevity (Min). The implementation of this messaging facilitated a more nuanced management of fan expectations while simultaneously reinforcing the notion that BTS's collective identity endured unscathed throughout the hiatus (Montevirgen). HYBE's previous content development encompassed the procurement of a substantial collection of intellectual property associated with the group, which comprised unreleased music, films, and merchandise. This facilitated the group in maintaining a continuous flow of engagement with their audience during their period of sabbatical (Sheridan).

To reduce redundancy and enhance the distinct concentration of each participant, the implementation of the solo project was carefully orchestrated. In July 2022, J-Hope distinguished himself as the inaugural artist to unveil his solo album, titled *Jack in the Box*. The album received substantial support from prestigious concerts, including a headline performance at Lollapalooza, and achieved sales of approximately 360,000 copies in its inaugural week, all without supplementary promotional efforts (Seppälä). The economic viability of individual projects during the initial phase of the hiatus was evidenced by the release's contribution to HYBE's sales, which reached a remarkable 445.5 billion Korean won in the third quarter of 2022. In October 2022, Jin released his single "The Astronaut," which led to a notable 20.2% increase in quarterly sales (Sheridan). The track achieved sales of 770,000 copies within its first week, a notable achievement in its overall success. Achieving 610,000 first-week sales, RM's *Indigo* (December 2022) maintained its momentum, thereby reinforcing HYBE's strategic approach of systematically and consistently releasing its products (Chan et al.).

To distinguish their individual brands while simultaneously enhancing the identity of BTS, each member's solo endeavors were meticulously tailored to reflect their unique personalities and musical styles. In the case of "Jack in the Box," J-Hope adopted an innovative and experimental methodology, marking a significant divergence from the conventional sound that had characterized BTS (The Silicon Review). This methodology resonated with particular demographics and showcased his artistic versatility. The song "Indigo" by RM exhibited a reflective quality and profound lyrics, aligning with his position as the leader and the thoughtful voice of the group. The innovative graphics and global streaming strategies aimed at diverse regions were pivotal in Jimin's FACE (March 2023) achieving remarkable solo records with 1.45 million sales in its first week (Chan et al.). Suga's D-DAY successfully commanded digital-first markets in East Asia and North America through the adept use of storytelling and profound cultural resonance (The Silicon Review). In the interim, V's Layover (September 2023) achieved a remarkable milestone, recording 2.1 million first-week sales and generating 264.1 billion won in revenue (Aadrika Sominder). Jungkook's GOLDEN, released in November 2023, achieved an impressive 2.43 million first-week sales, with 200,000 copies sold in the United States alone. This remarkable feat established him as the K-pop soloist with the highest first-week sales in the genre's history (Chan et al.).

By implementing this staggered release strategy, HYBE successfully ensured that BTS remained in the public eye during their sabbatical, all the while sustaining a consistent flow of revenue. Moreover, it forbade members from competing against each other, thereby guaranteeing that each individual release garnered focused promotion and attention from the audience. HYBE employed a strategy that is both data-driven and adaptable (Lam). This approach employed data derived from global streaming trends and insights into audience engagement to refine scheduling and promotional efforts (Seppälä).

Furthermore, the multi-label framework and global expansion initiatives of HYBE have enabled the formulation of tailored promotional strategies that align with the distinct attributes of diverse markets. The Japanese division of the corporation focused on the development and promotion of artists tailored to the local market (Guy). This illustrates HYBE's broader strategic objective to diversify revenue sources beyond the primary global fanbase of BTS. By employing this thorough approach, HYBE showcased its commitment to safeguarding the legacy of BTS while

also laying the groundwork for a future that encompasses both individual and collective endeavors (ET Online).

In conclusion, the strategic planning executed by HYBE for BTS's solo endeavors during their sabbatical exemplifies a remarkable equilibrium between individual artistic autonomy and corporate vision. HYBE ensured that each member of BTS was afforded the chance to thrive individually while collectively nurturing and enhancing the BTS brand. This equilibrium was achieved through a series of phased releases, tailoring content to unique capabilities, and utilizing analytics-driven marketing strategies.

Unbroken: BTS Members' Achievements During Military Hiatus

❖ The Achievements of Jin

Through the strategic use of pre-recorded content and social media platforms, Jin successfully sustained a significant degree of fan engagement during his military service, which spanned from December 2022 to June 2024. Following his discharge from the military, he released two solo albums in 2024: *Happy* and *Echo* (vio-hyls). These compositions showcased his vocal range and profound emotional resonance. In early August 2024, Jin extended his influence beyond the music industry by assuming the role of a global ambassador for Gucci (Colón). His individual world tour, organized under the hashtag #RunSeokin_EP. Tour, marked a resounding return to the realm of live performances (SORIDATA). Jin's remarkable ability to navigate his military responsibilities while simultaneously engaging in creative pursuits and securing corporate endorsements exemplifies his adaptability and sustained popularity (BTS ARMY).

❖ In the realm of J-Hope's achievements

Throughout his military service, spanning from April 2023 to October 2024, J-Hope remained relatively inactive in the public sphere; however, in 2024, he released the album *Hope on The Street*. In the years preceding his conscription, he emerged as the headlining act of Lollapalooza 2022, which marked an important anniversary for K-pop soloists (McIntyre). Upon fulfilling his military obligations, J-Hope embarked on a worldwide tour commencing in February 2025, during which he unveiled new musical compositions, thereby reaffirming his vibrant stage presence and artistic evolution. In the realm of solo K-pop artists, he has consistently upheld his

prominence, owing to his dynamic performances and introspective songwriting (BeSoccer).

❖ Suga's Achievements

Suga maintained his creative pursuits during his alternative military service from September 2023 to June 2025. He accomplished this through the composition of songs and the presentation of his podcast under the title *Suchwita* (etimes.in, 2024). World Music Awards shared that AGUSTD's *Daechwita* Official MV has surpassed 15 million likes on YouTube. He now holds the record for being the first and only K-pop soloist to reach the milestone this decade (*Mirchi*). The album *D-DAY*, released in 2023, received acclaim from music critics for its lyrical depth and emotional sincerity (McIntyre, 2025). Suga's influence remained palpable through his musical endeavors and partnerships with fellow artists, even in light of his limited public engagements (IMDb). His contributions to the production process behind the scenes during his tenure underscore his prominence as a prolific producer and a distinguished figure in Korean hip-hop (Srivastava).

❖ The Achievements of RM

During his military service, which spanned from December 2023 to June 2025, RM unveiled his highly acclaimed single "Right, Wrong" in May 2024 (Benjamin). In 2025, RM achieved a major milestone by becoming the inaugural Korean rapper to receive a nomination for an American Music Award (Filmfare). He is celebrated for his reflective lyrics and artistic sophistication. Through collaborations with artists like Erykah Badu and Anderson. Paak has showcased his capacity to connect with audiences globally (Willman and Willman). RM's solo endeavors have received commendations for their capacity to intertwine hip-hop with profound social critique, thereby solidifying his status as a significant presence in the global music landscape.

❖ The Achievements of Jimin

Jimin's solo career flourished during his period of enlistment, which extended from December 2023 to June 2025. In this period, he unveiled the album *FACE* (2023) along with the track *Closer Than This* (2023). He collaborated with Taeyang on the track "Vibe" (2023), resulting in a partnership that achieved notable commercial success (Filmfare, 2025). Alongside his numerous BMI Pop Awards, Jimin has etched his name in history as the inaugural Korean solo artist to ascend to the pinnacle of the Billboard Artist 100 list (Hwang You-mee). By engaging in brand

ambassadorships with Tiffany & Co. and Dior, he significantly amplified his influence on a global scale. In the interval of BTS's sabbatical, Jimin has distinguished himself as a remarkable solo artist, showcasing his artistic prowess and achieving record-breaking milestones (Sidell).

❖ **The Achievements of V**

Before V enlisted in the military in December 2023, he unveiled his solo album *Layover* in September 2023, followed by the release of his track *FRI(END)S* in March 2024 (Mukherjee). Throughout his military service, he showcased his acting talents by appearing in the music video for the song "Love Wins All" (2024) produced by Indiana University. The uniquely expressive vocal quality and artistic versatility of V have been lauded by critics (YeontanNews). His pre-enlistment efforts contributed significantly to the formation of his identity as a solo artist, even though his public presence was limited to his military service period (Entertainment desk). Enthusiasts globally remain enthralled by V's unique fusion of R&B and visual narrative artistry (Srishti Pandey).

❖ **Jungkook's achievements**

Before his conscription in December 2023, Jungkook's English solo album *GOLDEN*, released in November 2023, broke records and ascended to the pinnacle of charts globally (Riya Siddhacharjee). The chart-topping singles *Seven* and *Standing Next to You*, each having ascended to the pinnacle of the *Billboard Hot 100*, were likewise a product of his collaborative efforts. Jungkook has been prominently showcased in major advertising initiatives, including the 2023 campaign for Calvin Klein, and has graced the stage of *The Tonight Show* with his performances (tapapriya-dutta). His ability to sustain solo popularity during his military service serves as a testament to his extensive appeal and adaptability as a performer and a culturally relevant icon (Entertainment Desk, 2025).

The Role of Social Media and Digital Platforms in Solo Promotions

The individual careers of BTS members were strategically advanced by HYBE during the group's hiatus, with the promotion intricately linked to a sophisticated and multi-faceted digital marketing strategy. Through the strategic use of social media platforms, including Weverse, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, and TikTok, the organization successfully sustained BTS's global brand recognition and fostered significant levels of fan engagement. In light of the lack of group events, this digital-

first approach proved crucial in preserving the ARMY's connection to BTS as distinct entities, as it emphasized the importance of digital communication.

From the outset, both HYBE and BTS recognized the importance of authentic connection, achieving this through the consistent narration of stories and dissemination of information. The marketing strategy employed by BTS transcended mere music sales; it focused on the conveyance of narratives that resonated deeply with their audience. The promotion of each member's solo ventures was meticulously crafted, taking into account their unique brands and musical styles, all conveyed through a coherent narrative (Sheridan). For instance, J-Hope's album *Jack in the Box* was showcased with a focus on his alternative hip-hop origins. The event was complemented by a listening party showcasing prominent independent musicians, effectively laying the groundwork for his unique creative identity (YouTube, 2023). A comparable approach was employed by V's *Layover*, comprising five music videos in total, one corresponding to each track on the album. This approach was adopted to prolong promotional periods and elevate audience interaction by leveraging visual storytelling (Aadrika Sominder).

An exceptionally effective approach employed by HYBE was the deployment of Weverse, the organization's proprietary fan community platform. Through postings, livestreams, and exclusive material, BTS members engaged directly with their fans via Weverse, fostering a sense of community and intimacy among the group members (Wang). This platform enabled fans to experience a sense of recognition and appreciation, fostering their loyalty and encouraging active involvement in promotional activities (Sheridan). The capacity of BTS to interact with their audience as individuals rather than mere consumers has been a fundamental aspect of their success, as emphasized by marketing analysts. This has enabled them to nurture a base that is intensely committed and actively advocates for and endorses their pursuits (LinkedIn, 2025).

Furthermore, the strategies employed in social media marketing encompassed the systematic dissemination of pre-release teasers, which significantly enhanced the anticipation and engagement of the ARMY (Wang). To maintain engagement and anticipation among followers for forthcoming releases, HYBE employed a strategic approach utilizing GIFs, brief films, and enigmatic posts. This illustrates the capacity of digital marketing to create significant engagement independent of traditional media (Oom Singapore, 2023). Due to their unwavering online engagement, BTS

successfully maintained their brand's relevance continuously. Their strategy involved the release of goods and the organization of mini-events aligned with various holiday seasons, thereby maintaining engagement with their audience year-round (Min).

Moreover, HYBE incorporated targeted audiences and niche markets into the promotional strategies of each solo endeavor to enhance their overall efficacy. For example, J-Hope's promotional strategy featured headlining Lollapalooza, thereby introducing him to a broader and more varied audience beyond the typical K-pop enthusiasts (Seppälä). Conversely, certain members concentrated on digital-first markets or appearances on American television to engage alternative audiences (YouTube, 2023). This nuanced strategy demonstrated HYBE's understanding of global market segmentation and the importance of customizing promotional tactics to align with each member's musical style and the target audience they aim to engage (Min).

In summary, the adeptness of digital platforms and social media marketing that HYBE exhibited during BTS's hiatus played a crucial role in sustaining the group's brand success. Through the support of HYBE, every member of BTS has been allowed to cultivate their careers, all the while maintaining the cohesive strength of the BTS brand. Such success was achieved through the employment of authentic narratives, active engagement of fans, strategic teaser marketing, and distinctively crafted promotional initiatives (Wang).

Financial, Cultural Impact, and Fan Dynamics

During the group's break, BTS members engaged in personal projects that not only bolstered HYBE's financial success but also had profound cultural implications and transformed the dynamics within the fan base. This section delves into the economic implications of individual pursuits, the cultural significance of these endeavors, and the evolving relationship among BTS, HYBE, and their dedicated ARMY fans.

❖ Financial Impact

The intentional deployment of individual initiatives that HYBE executed proved to be a commercially advantageous endeavor. The substantial income generated by each member's solo release served to mitigate the temporary absence of group performance opportunities. The financial disclosures presented by HYBE reveal that

the company's quarterly sales remained strong during the hiatus period (etimes.in). In the third quarter of 2022, sales amounted to 445.5 billion won, attributed to J-Hope's solo debut. The fourth quarter of 2022 saw an increase to 535.5 billion won, propelled by the projects of Jin and RM. By the second quarter of 2023, sales peaked at 621 billion won, influenced by the albums of Suga and V (Rieun). GOLDEN by Jungkook achieved remarkable success, selling 2.43 million copies within its inaugural week, with 200,000 of those sales occurring in the United States. This accomplishment marks the highest number of copies sold by any K-pop solo artist (Billboard, 2023). The data presented indicates that BTS's pursuits were not merely financially viable but also crucial in maintaining HYBE's profitability during the hiatus (Trust).

An additional element that played a role in mitigating risk was HYBE's strategy of diversification. Although BTS's income contribution diminished from 95% at their peak to under 20% in 2024, the overall revenue of the company persisted in its upward trajectory, bolstered by emerging acts like NewJeans and Le Sserafim (Music Business Worldwide, 2024). This alteration exemplifies HYBE's capacity to leverage the individual achievements of BTS while concurrently formulating a more sustainable business strategy.

❖ Cultural Impact

The members of BTS were afforded the chance to delve into distinct subjects and musical styles through their solo endeavors, thereby reinforcing the group's foundational theme of individuality and self-expression. For example, Jimin's song "FACE" delved into the themes of vulnerability and self-discovery, while Suga's song "D-DAY" concentrated on personal development and resilience (Zellner). The portrayal of BTS as artists who defy norms and champion mental health and social justice was significantly reinforced by the profound impact their works had on fans globally (Rieun).

Critics and industry analysts have illuminated the intricacies and diversity of BTS as a collective during their solo era. A survey conducted by the Korea Creative Content Agency in 2024 (KOCCA, 2024) revealed that 78 percent of international fans felt that solo endeavors enhanced their appreciation for BTS as a collective, while 65 percent indicated that they discovered new musical genres through the individual releases of the members. This cultural diversity enriched BTS's artistic legacy and set new standards for individual pursuits within the K-pop genre.

❖ Fan Dynamics and ARMY's Role

Through the promotion of community engagement and transparency during the sabbatical, HYBE and BTS successfully maintained their strong connection with ARMY. The connection between fans and both the collective and individual members was effectively fostered through platforms such as Weverse, livestreams, and exclusive behind-the-scenes content (Theseus.fi, 2022). The findings of a recent poll indicated that most fans perceive solo activities as enriching rather than divisive (Billboard, 2023). This occurred notwithstanding the concerns expressed by certain fans regarding disparities in promotion and the competitive dynamics among the members.

In summary, the personal pursuits of BTS members during their hiatus not only ensured the financial security of HYBE but also enriched the cultural narrative surrounding the group and expanded the ARMY fanbase. In the realm of the global music industry, this era exemplifies the power of astute strategic planning, authentic artistic expression, and engagement rooted in community participation.

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Article Information:

<i>Received</i>	8-Mar-2025
<i>Revised</i>	17-May-2025
<i>Accepted</i>	22-May-2025
<i>Published</i>	15-Jun-2025

Declarations:

Authors' Contribution:

- All authors **Conceptualization, and intellectual revisions. Data collection, interpretation, and drafting of manuscript**
- The authors agree to take responsibility for every facet of the work, making sure that any concerns about its integrity or veracity are thoroughly examined and addressed

• **Conflict of Interest:** NIL

• **Funding Sources:** NIL

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