



AESPA: The Digital Music Era and Its Impact on Generation Z

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Abstract. This article mainly explains the unique concept of AESPA, a new idol group born by Generation Z, and its influence on Generation Z and other people of different times. It shows their unique world view from their unique music concept of “human + AI virtual people” Such a concept has never been created and developed in the past 20 years, and its impact on Generation Z is also the most intuitive. It has a “diffuse” impact on society and future technological life, and has great guiding significance for the future pop music environment and even the life of Generation Z and beyond.

Keywords: Generation Z · Aespa · K-pop

1 Introduction: The Definition of Generation Z

Generation Z is the subject of this article, the eldest members of which are now entering young adulthood and the majority of whom are 20 years of age or younger [1–3]. Youth born between the mid-1990s and the late 2010s are referred to as members of the Generation Z, I, net-generation, and digital natives groups. The youth in today’s American society are members of Generation Z. Prensky (2001) asserts that today’s young are digital natives since they have never known a world without the Internet. There has never been a generation before that has experienced a time where technology is so easily accessible at such a young age [4]. Technology advancements in multimedia, including tablets, smartphones (which integrate a cell phone, media player, camera, and Internet capabilities into one device), social media, and other platforms, have made it possible for people to access [5, 6].

Since mixed and multiracial children are the fastest-growing demographics in the United States, Generation Z adolescents are particularly varied (American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, 2011). Since there is less concealment surrounding sexual orientation than in prior generations, the LGBTQ community is still expanding through Generation Z. Compared to earlier generations, more Generation Z youth are growing up in cities, which increases their exposure to a wide range of cultural viewpoints.[7].

From generation to generation, as the name implies, Z and we often say the millennial generation is similar, and Z from generation to generation, the general said, was born in 1997 to 2012 people, between the span of 15 years, these people are mostly young,

some still a student, they accept new things is very fast and more fond of unique and wonderful things.

The next part is about the influence of the new music style in the Z era on the Z generation.

2 New Generation Idol Group Aespa

Aespa is a female singing group launched by South Korea SM Entertainment Co., LTD on November 17, 2020. It is composed of four members KARINA, GISELLE, WINTER, and NINGNING. Meanwhile, the group also has four AI members (æ). Their appearance also marked the boundaries of the Z era. The team name comes from the combination of “æ” and “aspect” from the initials of “Avatar & Experience”, which means “to meet another self and embody the new world”.

Their concept is very rare and very new in the global music industry, this object has not been proposed by anyone or a group in the past 20 years, it is an innovation and breakthrough for the era and music audience.

Virtual reality (VR) virtual avatars, and real humans. The two beings compete with each other. On the gorgeous stage, virtual avatars and singers perform group sword dance. Virtual avatars armed with artificial intelligence (AI) on social networking services (SNS) communicate with fans.

K-pop is a brand-new future of popular music. SM Entertainment makes the new girl group aespa debut on the real stage and opens a new chapter in other worlds. Although virtual avatars have had the experience of appearing in activities, it is the first time that they have made their official debut as members of women’s groups [8, 9].

So, as Gen Z, what kind of idol groups do they like? From their characteristics, we can clearly understand that they like novelty and innovation, so when it comes to the concept of novelty in K-pop, except for SM, the concept of other entertainment giants is relatively weaker, especially their latest generation of female group AESPA, which is more in line with the trend of The Times.

South Korean media outlet IZE named Aespa as Generation Z’s favorite Korean idol group. IZE noted that the entertainment industry is turning over a new chapter to accommodate Gen Z. Yes, not only the entertainment industry has followed the trend of The Times, but all walks of life have begun to change themselves, and innovation has become an eternal pursuit. Stars are no longer just pretty or handsome, or just brilliant. Instead, they need to have something special and unique. IZE listed the celebrities most loved by Gen Z and explained why - No other K-pop group seems to be able to compete with Aespa, who are regarded as the first to merge IT with K-pop. The worldview and philosophy of Aespa are well known: “You will encounter a new world by meeting your AE (avatar), another version of you.” Aespa’s AE members are unique in that they have artificial intelligence and can speak and think. In this way, communication between members and avatars is possible. Aespa has garnered attention from Gen Z for its unique blend of technology with AESPA’s virtual world, without losing the signature performance style SM Entertainment has loved for years. With its stylish looks, top-notch skills, and sensuous musicality of its members, AESPA has become increasingly popular among young people.

There is a strong connection between the four members of the group and their “æ”, or AI persona. Each member has a corresponding AI image, which is composed of data publicly available on the member’s social platform. Called æ. So why is their AI avatar æ? The “æ” in Aespa stands for Avatar and Experience. People usually upload transmute ins or tubing we usually only meeting good and good things, like a photograph can take more than a dozen or even hundreds of pictures to pick just one show, also some people will be dedicated to very hot food stores and attractions, also just to upload pictures, such a thing, not including the coffee shop, library, study room and so on. Everyone has his/her æ. æ is another “me” formed by the fragments of our lives on social platforms and information networks. Since people tend to show their perfect and excellent selves on social platforms, æ also contains human desires.

After everyone has his/her æ, Anmu will form the AI society corresponding to our society. Aespa uses “æon” as the name for AI image identification. First, Avatar and Experience indicate that what we do on social networks is closely related to us. Secondly, the members of the group have their names, KARINA, GISELLE, WINTER, and NINGNING. However, the AI image is called “After everyone has his/her own æon, Anmu will form the AI society corresponding to our society. Aespa uses “æon” as the name for AI image identification. First, Avatar and Experience indicate that what we do on social networks is closely related to us. Secondly, the members of the group have their names, KARINA, GISELLE, WINTER, and NINGNING. However, the AI image is called “æ”, specifically for each person is æ-Karina, æ-Giselle, æ-winter and æ-Ningning. This way of naming is a hint that the current music style and future direction conflict with the rapidly developing level of technology and the new generation of people in modern society, suggesting that they are also struggling with the new age civilization and themselves, and so are we. Third, it may not involve value judgments, it may not involve a clash of civilizations, it’s just a form of expression, similar to Siri., specifically for each person is æ-Karina, æ-Giselle, æ-winter and æ-Ningning. This way of naming is a hint that the current music style and future direction conflict with the rapidly developing level of technology and the new generation of people in modern society, suggesting that they are also struggling with the new age civilization and themselves, and so are we. Third, it may not involve value judgments, it may not involve a clash of civilizations, it’s just a form of expression, similar to Siri.

As a clash of civilizations, such AI is undoubtedly an impact on the traditional form of human music, which also indicates that it is a challenge to the self in the human mind. “æ” is a deformation in Generation Z, representing the relationship between technology and electronic information technology in Generation Z and this generation. This shows that the changes brought about by technology are quite diffuse.“ æon “is also a distortion for civilization. Under the impact of the new generation’s culture and environment, science and technology are derived into music and daily life. Life is not just life, and music is not just music for social entertainment.

In addition, AESPA’s AE members have also attracted the interest of Gen Z, who have grown up with technology and are at an age when they can keep up with IT developments. In addition, with the advent of films such as The Avengers, cinematic universes and meta-universes are also popular among today’s young people.

The virtual world where æ is called FLAT. The FLAT is a mirror image of the real world, allowing members to interact with æ through the mirror. The medium through which humans connect to æ is called SYNK. When the human connection to æ is severed, it is called a SYNK OUT. The irregular, amorphous field at one end of the FLAT is called KWANGYA (wilderness), which is the linkage concept of SM groups, including EXO, NCT, etc. It was “something” from KWANGYA that could intercept AESPA’s SYNK signal. Black Mamba is the villain of KWANGYA, a computer virus-like creature that is waiting to infect æ. As mentioned earlier, æ carries part of human desire, and when this desire is too strong, it will become the nourishment of Black Mamba and promote the constant replication and spread of the virus. In addition, there is a guide figure named Nævis, who is the contact between ævis and the team members and guides them forward like a mentor.

The concept of Aespa has always been shown in their works, So the concept of them, it’s still hard to understand because it’s a storyline. Their debut song “Black Mamba” shows that they communicate through mirror SYNK and æ in FLAT, but SYNK OUT is caused by the emergence of the AI virus “Black Mamba” which is made up of human desires. News of people losing contact with æ has emerged all over the world. So the four members of Aespa decided to find and defeat the AI virus Black Mamba, which is the beginning of their storyline. Since then, each of their music works and MV is closely related to this storyline, and the connection between such MV and song is very rare in the world’s music market.

3 The Embodiment of “æ” in the Work

The music video for Aespa’s first regular album lead, “Savage,” features a lot of æ. In the MV, the four members communicate with their corresponding æs to varying degrees. In the choreography of dance movements, æs participate in part of the dance formation, and their respective parts also have visual effects that seamlessly transform with æs, which greatly improves the performance of the AESPA concept in music works. Secondly, with this concept, in particular, various content such as AESPA’s stage video dancing with “æ” and AESPA’s SMCU video with a clear narrative of the world view has been well received. Including lyrics such as “AESPA is me and cannot be divided”, as well as words about AESPA worldview such as “AE-00”, “KWANGYA”, “SYNK” and “P.O.S” were also popular as a “meme” on the Internet, and “ㄷ dancing”, “ZU ZU ZU ZU ZU dance” and other defensive dances quickly spread through dance challenges. Has gained global popularity. Aespa’s unique concept is to expand the genre of the virtual world, or metaverse, into entertainment. With the advent of the non-face-to-face era, AESPA aims to bring more diverse and new experiences to the digital native generation who are familiar with various digital content.

4 Breakthrough and Innovation in the Pop Music Market

Where does pop culture go in this era of market segmentation? SM gave their answer and it is clear that they have been very successful all over the world so far. They break the traditional album picture plus CD configuration, in the album to add a sense of

technology AI. In their first official album, *Savage.*, their special edition album can be scanned by the corresponding app, and the album will appear on your phone and iPad with the same virtual AI portal as in the video. You can access the virtual portal by moving and changing the orientation of your phone. In the album with a member of the card is applied in the app scanning identification technology, after identifying character CARDS on your phone or the screen stop motion animation, this is Aespa in achieving their communication between human and virtual reality as a first step, this also is a great innovation in the pop music album, it is ever before. With the partnership between SM and Marvel, the future of the superhero universe in pop music is likely to arrive, which shows that the musical concepts created by SM and Aespa are also divergent.

5 The Impact of Aespa on People Under the Times

The advent of AESPA and the whole concept it leads to will undoubtedly have a different impact on the people of the time. People of different ages are distinguished by their distinctive characteristics. The level of influence is also divided into two aspects: “single” and “diffuse”. In Anthony Turner’s *Generation Z: In Technology and Social Interest*, he said -- What might seem excessive. The technology of one generation is standard in another. Studies frequently ignore the quality of technology use in favor of emphasizing its quantity [7]. When working with Generation Z, understanding what they are seeing and how that influences their development and relationships is more crucial than simply gauging how much time they spend on technology. Use on a Regular Basis and Social Interest.

Youth from Generation Z may use technology so regularly to escape from difficulties in their offline life or to find belonging by turning to escapism and fantasy to fill emotional and time voids. [7]. Because Gen Z uses smart technology so frequently, the AESPA concept has the greatest impact on Gen Z, with a “single” impact.

The diversity and strong acceptance of new things in the Specialists Highlight the fact that Generation Z shapes AESPA’s first fans can work in both the physical and digital worlds.

These two universes are complementary to one another in their eyes, thus they can simply flip between them. This situation has the effect of making it simple for Generation Z representatives to find and verify the information they require. They also communicate knowledge to others swiftly. They employ a range of communication tools and social media, thus communication processing is ongoing between them. “The frequent social media users are closely connected, and they primarily go about their daily lives. They value relationships through these platforms just as much as they do in-person interactions or maintaining online contacts “.Generation Z USES a variety of mobile devices, makes observations about the world, the places they live, expresses their thoughts and attitudes on Twitter, blogs, and online discussion boards, and shares images (through Instagram, Pinterest, and Snapchat) and videos (YouTube, Instagram, Snapchat). You can use Facebook for all of the aforementioned things. In addition to using Internet material, Generation Z also develops and controls it.Generation Z’s ease of switching between life in the real world and life in the virtual world is exactly what the AESPA concept wants. For the understanding of the AESPA concept, Generation Z people tend

to have their ideas, and the AESPA concept has the most single and direct influence on the people of Generation Z whether it is now or after the infinite development in the future. At the moment, the intelligent product has completely inseparable from our lives, the people of generation z can flexibly use intelligent products and network to get what they want, they also dare to bold to say on the Internet this virtual society, is never afraid of some possible alternative opinions contrary to the majority view. All these behaviors illustrate the concept of “æ”: a virtual world of another self that is integrated by the lives that each person expresses and shares on the virtual Internet. They will be the first ones to adapt to having æons. The form of feedback is reciprocal. Sm provides a platform for Generation Z to create their æs, and the æs created by each individual are constantly providing new feedback to SM and AESPA providers. A concept is an output of ideas, and this feedback becomes the reaction of the actual market after the concept is launched. Sm can draw the information they need through these æs created by everyone to provide reference materials for further communication between human beings and the virtual world. It can also be used to investigate the preferences of the current generation Z, which is more conducive to SM business behavior.

6 Diffuse Effects on Gen X and Gen Y

Aespa’s effect on Gen X and Y was “diffuse.” At present, Generation X and Generation Y are not significantly affected, because compared with Generation Z, Generation X and Generation Y use the Internet to participate in their lives at a far lower frequency and degree, which leads to the very weak influence of AESPA, which relies heavily on smart devices and the Internet to establish and disseminate AESPA. The so-called “dispersion” means that the impact of the AESPA concept on these two generations will take time to settle, and further actions by AESPA and SM company will be needed to truly see the impact on these two generations. Once the influence of AESPA reaches a certain level, SM will improve its virtual world software. Even into the real social life of the future, or will become a trend, as x, y, a generation of people will have more interest and demand to the concept of learning and cognition aespa, when such concepts and patterns of dispersion in a certain extent, the world changes in plants could also affect the direction of the future, the future change is changing society as a whole way of life, This will affect everyone in society, and AESPA’s model of the close integration of the human and virtual worlds will certainly affect both generations. In the future, will everyone have a corresponding æ? It is believed that as a combination of technology and music in the new era, such technology will have infinite possibilities in the future. SM Company is developing relevant software communication apps so that everyone will have a greater connection with the network world and AI. In this way, all education can penetrate everyone’s life in the future world. Education is easier to accept than “forcing” students to learn by gathering them in a classroom. It also greatly improves students’ learning initiative and enthusiasm, and truly integrates education into life, which is the best education [8, 9].

In the future life, the concept of AESPA and related products will be widely promoted and applied, so virtual technology and artificial intelligence will be popular in every one of our lives. At that time, we will also live in harmony and communicate with each

other like humans and “æ” shaped by SM in the concept. Countless modern cultures and history can be achieved through “æ” to achieve positive education and guidance for Generation Z, which is the biggest direction of social life and education in the future [10].

7 Conclusion

This paper focuses on the concept of the innovative new age idol group AESPA and its derivative concepts to illustrate their significant influence on Generation Z, including the characteristics of Generation Z and the characteristics of AI technology “æ” in the AESPA concept. The “oneness” and “dispersion” of the concept of AESPA are put forward, and the characteristics affecting different times and the degree of influence of the concept of AESPA are analyzed. It also extends to the impact on future life, including the combination of education and AI technology, the high degree of integration of lifestyle and AI technology, and will have a lasting impact on the creativity and innovation of the entire pop music industry in the future.

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