

**Imelda Ibarra (US BTS ARMY)**

**Method to the Madness: The Global Power of ARMY**

*Abstract.* Contrary to popular belief and media representation, K-Pop fans have a diverse demographic, which allows them to have an undisputed impact when it comes to promoting their “faves.” Social media helps erase the constructed boundaries of nations to the point where fans from across the world communicate and coordinate projects on a global scale, unheard of in the Western market. Whether it’s an attraction to food, music or history, millions of dedicated K-Pop fans are developing an interest in its country of origin. During this presentation, US BTS ARMY will discuss fan engagement, social media management, and the indirect exposure of the general public to Korean culture.

**Imelda Ibarra** is the Founder and CEO of US BTS ARMY. Established in 2014, it is the first US fanbase for Korean supergroup BTS. US BTS ARMY is a non-profit organization dedicated to coordinating global projects, maintaining an active social media presence, as well as updating the general public on news and relevant information pertaining to BTS. What started as a small project with 1 person, has grown into an 11 member, well-oiled machine with a following on social media of over half a million and counting. Having successfully collaborated with media giants such as The American Music Awards, SiriusXM, and iHeartRadio, there is no telling where the US BTS ARMY will go.