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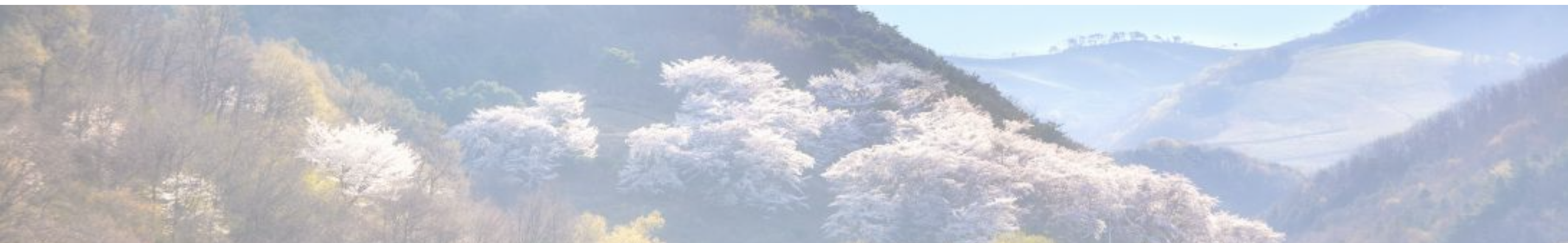
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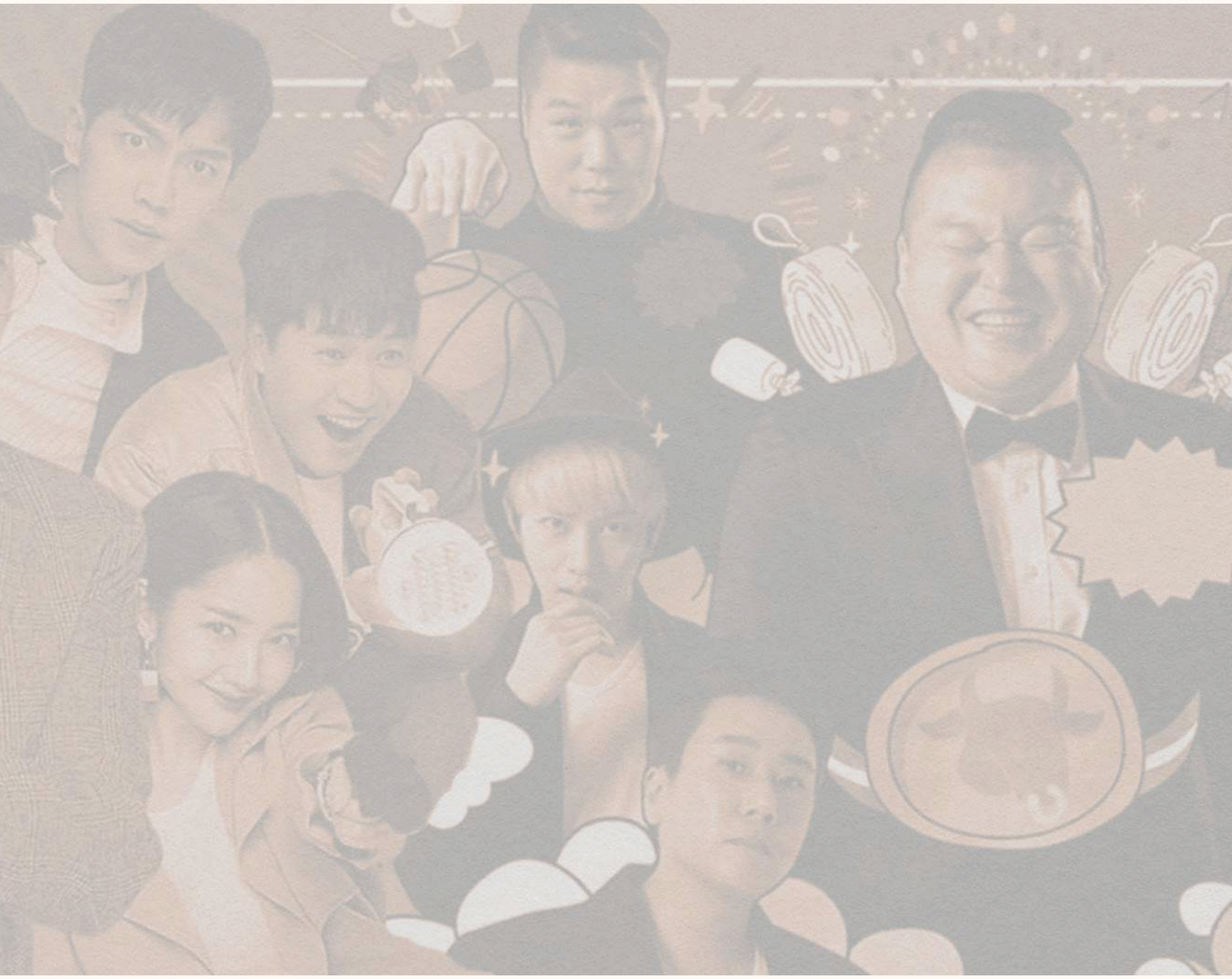
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THE PHENOMENON OF KOREAN VARIETY SHOWS



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ABSTRACT:

WHAT IS K-VARIETY?

Korean variety shows, better known as K-variety, is a broad spectrum of entertainment programmes hailing from South Korea. Within the umbrella of K-variety, competition shows, game shows and even variety shows fall in this category. There is a huge spectrum of K-variety shows and it is nearly impossible to strictly categorise Korean variety shows according to conventional Western standards as most of them are a mix of different traditional entertainment programme genres. Each variety show follows a basic format that sets the show apart from others and usually includes comedic elements. While following a particular format, the interactions between the show's cast and its guest are usually portrayed to be unscripted, in order to present a genuine connection between the programme and its viewers. These shows are usually meant for casual viewing and make for a great bonding activity with families and friends. This paper discusses the history of television in South Korea and how it has given rise to the phenomenon of K-variety, as well as an in-depth analysis on the global and domestic impacts of the Hallyu wave on variety programmes.

History of TV in South Korea

In order to understand the rise of entertainment programmes in South Korea, the history of television in general needs to be looked at. As television programme trends change according to the socio-political scene of its time, it is important to understand the movement of the local industry in order to identify the characteristics of K-variety programmes. Television in South Korea has been a growing force in the media since it was first conceived in 1956. It is thanks to television's overwhelming popularity that allowed variety shows to grow to its height of popularity today.

Early Days of Television

Broadcasting through television programmes first began back in 1956, with Korea's first broadcasting station, HLKZ-TV. At that time, it was when Syngman Rhee first took over the presidency of South Korea and the country was still new to its independence and was not doing well financially. The value of Korean imports were much higher than their exports, with "exports amounting to $25 million and imports $389 million" (Seth, 2013). With the economy not doing well, the Korean public also did not have the finances to spend on leisure activities such as watching television. Not many people had access to television, with an estimated "300 sets in Seoul" (Lankov, 2011) during the 1950s. Since television was not gaining much traction, HLKZ-TV eventually had to shut down with the vast majority of the Korean population having never heard of them.



After the 1961 military coup led by General Park Chung Hee, the Korean economy began to pick up thanks to his "five year plans" (Tudor, 2014). With more Koreans doing financially better, a greater number of the population were able to afford television sets. General Park's government set up KBS company for television broadcasts and strictly controlled its content. The government saw the potential to use television "as both a useful indoctrination tool and source of entertainment" (Lankov, 2011) thus they started having 4 regular television broadcasts for the South Korean public. The creation of KBS was started with the "explicit intent of the military government to enlighten the people and promote their policies" (Ma, 2011), which strongly implies that television was initially seen as a political tool rather than entertainment, to spread propaganda by the government. With this implementation, the growth of media in Korea started to rise.

Prior to the rise of variety programmes, Korean dramas took the limelight domestically first. A few years later in the late 1960s, commercial broadcasting stations started their journey in the entertainment market and MBC-TV and TBC-TV were among the first. The two commercial stations created the trend of Korean dramas and its growth helped to propel the Korean economy as well. KBS, MBC-TV and TBC-TV became the main competitors in creating television dramas for public entertainment. Television dramas were so popular that in 1974, the Seoul Police Department had to send out a warning announcement to the public to be on alert during drama broadcast timings as "experienced burglars used these time slots to raid houses." (Lankov, 2011). From this, it is very clear how popular Korean television dramas were at the time. The popularity of dramas were also reflected in the Korean economy, with an "average annual increase in the GDP approximated at 8 percent" (Lankov, 2011). On top of local dramas, Korea also mainly imported television programmes from the West. As the popularity of television grew in tandem with the Korean economy, almost the entire population of Koreans could afford to have a television set in their homes. By the 1980s, there were "at least 5,967,000" television sets compared to "fewer than 10,000" (Lankov, 2011) eight years ago.

3S Policy and the Introduction to Entertainment Programmes

With television dramas drawing large numbers of viewers domestically up till the 1980s, another political change brought about new transformations to the media. South Korean media went through democratisation and liberalisation with the start of General Chun Doo Hwan's presidency in 1980. Right after taking over, General Chun was primarily concerned with reforming the media industry in South Korea. The two commercial broadcasting stations MBC-TV and TBC-TV were eventually merged into KBS under this new military government so that Korean media would be once again entirely controlled by the government. General Chun set his sights on the Korean media as a source of entertainment for the people and as a source of income for the country. Since the 1980s, the Korean media has had a strong focus on the "audiovisual contents industry or entertainment industry as the next-generation leader of the national economy" (Shim, 2008) and the broadcasting station focused on importing newer shows for the public as well as venturing into creating more entertainment programmes on top of domestic television dramas. This was also the era when coloured television entered Korean households, which created many more opportunities for media content to grasp the attention of their viewers.

As more content was being made for television, "broadcast time increased and entertainment programs began to multiply" (Lankov, 2011), generating newer levels of interest in the Korean television industry. General Chun's interest in using the media as a political tool is reflected in his "3S Policy", which stood for "Sex, screen and sports" (Cole, 2019). With the idea of using television and films to "detract from the growing popularity of movements demanding for constitutional revision" (Cole, 2019), censorship guidelines for the Korean media were relaxed. This led to the creation of more types of genres for television shows, particularly for entertainment programmes. Some of Korea's top variety shows were conceived during this period. Some of the successful ones include Korea Sings or National Singing Contest from KBS and Sunday Night from MBC. As the country's economy was on a high, "nearly 80 per cent of all South Korean households owned television sets by 1980." (Larson,1995).

In the wake of the Korean war, South Korea was focusing on building a national identity and television was viewed as a viable platform to spread cultural awareness. As Korea was still importing many of their television programmes from the West at this time, a cultural debate surrounding the importance of an inherently Korean culture started amongst the people. Many people were concerned about the development of Korean culture amidst the influence of Western ideologies that came with their television programmes. There was widespread fear of "the contamination of authentic culture" (Kang, 1982) during this time as many cultural critics "blamed television for the introduction and popularisation of Western culture" (Kang, 1982). Since television was to blame for this fear, the authorities started to look towards using television as a means to continue spreading awareness for traditional Korean culture. The government ordered broadcasting companies to allocate "at least 30 percent of their broadcasting hours to cultural and educational programmes" (Kang, 1982) in hopes to boost public interest in Korean culture. Instead of using television dramas to carry out this purpose, broadcasting stations looked at using variety shows as a possible outlet to promote Korean culture as variety shows were more flexible in their formats than television dramas. Thus the 1980s were the beginning of the growth of Korean variety programmes.

While Korean variety programmes were still not as popular worldwide as compared to K-dramas, the 1990s still saw substantial growth amongst variety programmes as the television industry expanded its reach outside of South Korea. The country was significantly impacted by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) Crisis of 1997, and its economic impact led the country to reduce their expenditure on importing foreign television programmes. Korean broadcasting companies had to "dramatically decrease their import of foreign programs, from $57.2 million in 1997 to $27 million in 1998" (Jin, 2016), which was a fifty percent decrease from what it initially was prior to the crisis. This meant that Korean companies had to spend more time and effort producing and creating their own television programmes for public entertainment. Eventually their efforts paid off as Korean dramas started to see an increase in their popularity not only within the country, but amongst its regional neighbours as well.

Early Rise of Variety Programmes

The 1990s was a booming decade for Korean entertainment as the country started to export a few television dramas to neighbouring countries within South East Asia. At the same time, variety programmes were enjoying a boost in popularity within Korea as more effort was being put into developing K-variety during this period. As broadcasting companies now needed to produce more original content, significantly more effort was put into the creation of formatted variety programmes. Since Korea was unable to import too many foreign programmes due to financial constraints, broadcasting companies had to be creative in producing their own original formatted programmes inspired by popular concepts.

With a rapidly globalising world that relied heavily on commercialization, this was when formatted entertainment programmes were gaining popularity in the world. This phenomenon radically changed the way programmes were exchanged across countries as formatted programme concepts became a new commodity to be bought. In the late 1990s, “concepts adapted from territory to territory began to cross borders in great numbers” (Jin, 2016) as countries began to import a greater number of variety programmes on top of scripted, dramatic programmes. As there was a sharp increase in the number of cable television channels, these new channels of viewership called for “the development and supply of programs to be provided” (Shim, 2008). Not only were the programmes imported, countries also began to adapt the format of another country’s variety shows to suit the tastes of their own country’s people. This helped to bring in fresh ideas to the entertainment industry and keep the audience satiated.

By importing television concepts from other countries, Korea was able to appease the national fear of the loss of culture, since each imported format could be adapted to suit the palate of the Korean audience. Within Korea, these formatted shows were perceived as “ideal solutions to deal with the resilience of national cultures” (Jin 2016), which helped to foster a stronger sense of national identity in Korea. With the flexibility of variety programmes, it was easier to highlight Korean culture as compared to scripted drama programmes. As South Korea’s television industry continued to grow, their original variety programmes also gained some attention from regional countries. By the late 2000s, Korea started to “diversify their exports of new programs, including reality shows and game shows in addition to dramas” which is “considerably different from the first stage of the Korean Wave” (Jin, 2016). This early success for Korean entertainment programmes was the start of them gaining an international audience. Many countries were interested in Korean variety show formats on top of their K-dramas, thus K-variety also managed to gain a foothold in the international market, contributing to South Korea’s economy.

The K-variety Appeal

While South Korea of today is more well-known for their attractive idols and heart rending dramas, variety shows are on the verge of making a huge breakthrough internationally as well. These variety programmes are significantly cheaper to produce as compared to full productions of television dramas, which would involve various sets, actors, a fully fleshed out script and more. Variety programmes offered a “relatively low-cost, high-rating, and internationally marketable alternative to more traditional prime-time series.” (Kim, 2021), thus many broadcasting companies hopped onto this trend in order to create more programme formats that could be easily marketed to the rest of the world.

One of the main attractions of Korean variety shows are their strong cast members. Many people are drawn to these shows because of the interactions between cast members and how the cast facilitates conversation and games with their guests. An executive producer from New York states that “You definitely need a strong cast. You need personalities. I think that’s what makes or breaks the show” (Butler, 2020). South Korean variety programmes definitely got this aspect down, as each show is helmed by a cast of well-liked comedians, actors or idols. An example would be the cast of the popular variety show “Running Man”. The cast of the show were so well-received to the extent that the hosts themselves have a strong fan base and they even held annual “Running Man” fan meetings around Asia since 2013 - much like typical Korean idols.

Unlike popular Western reality television shows, “background laughter (by either a laugh track or a live audience) and behind-the-scenes commentating by MCs are kept to a minimum or eliminated entirely” (Kim 2021) in Korean programmes. This creates a more authentic interaction amongst the participants of the show and the cast. In turn, this allows the viewer to feel a strong, genuine connection to the people they see on screen. Compared to American shows, Korean shows have a more friendlier, positive tone as they “do not like this kind of aggressiveness” while American shows “primarily focus on competitions among participants in a cruel way” (Jin 2018). This provides a breath of fresh air to international viewers as well, who would be accustomed to the cut-throat tones of typical Western variety programmes. Instead of the toxicity that comes with Western variety programmes, K-variety promotes familial bonds and friendly competition. The viewer would be left with positive feelings after watching a K-variety programme and this feeling is what sets Korean programmes apart from international competition.





K-Variety Genres

The long history of Korean variety programmes has enabled much development and many evolutions of the themes and content. Today, there are many different genres of Korean variety shows for audiences from all walks of life who seek different content in K-variety. In this section, the paper will briefly discuss the main genres of K-variety programmes.

Firstly, arguably the most popular genre of K-variety is game shows. This includes programmes such as Running Man, Infinite Challenge and Knowing Brothers where the cast participates in missions or games to compete for a reward.

Secondly, observational reality shows such as I Live Alone and The Return of Superman are also highly popular as they capture the audience by portraying genuine behaviours, interactions, and emotions of the cast. In fact, this element of observational reality shows can be found across different genres of K-variety as it is a distinctive aspect of Korean entertainment programmes compared to its counterparts from other countries.

Another genre of K-variety which has received massive success in recent years are singing competition shows such as Miss Trot, Romantic Call Centre, King of Masked Singer and more. In fact, 5 out of the top 10 most popular K-variety programmes in 2021 were singing competition shows based on an annual survey by Gallup Korea (Kim, 2021).

From the genre of singing competition programmes, another genre gradually emerged. Known as reality survival programmes, this genre features shows like the Produce series (e.g. Produce 101, Produce 48 and Produce X 101), Show Me the Money, Street Woman Fighter and more. In survival shows, participants consist of unknown individuals, entertainment agency trainees or even established, debuted artistes. The participants collaborate and compete with one another to escape elimination at certain stages of the competition and the prize usually involves high stakes. The prizes of such survival shows can be in the form of a contract to debut as a solo artist or in a group, prize money or even sponsorship deals. This genre is very popular amongst international audiences as the popularity and influence of Korean popular music, or K-pop, worldwide has also led to the influx of international contestants on these survival shows. For example, Produce 48 involves Japanese trainees as well as Korean and the recent Mnet programme Girls Planet 999 had trainees hailing from Korea, Japan and China.

Niche Genres

Besides the aforementioned genres, Korean variety programmes also cover plenty of niche categories such as food, travel, dating and more. It is important to note that K-variety consists of a wide spread of genres, but this section will focus mainly on the impacts of food and travel variety programmes to provide an idea of their significance.

Food variety programmes are particularly important in Korea as food is considered to “reveal the identity of a region” (Choi, 2012). K-dramas have already helped to kickstart interest in Korean cuisine as dramas often feature characters consuming iconic Korean dishes like “bibimbap” or “ramyun”. Hence, showcasing traditional Korean cuisine in food variety shows also helps promote the country’s culture to its international viewers in a direct manner. By having a variety show centering on a particular restaurant or cuisine, they invoke “a desire in the viewers to taste the restaurant menu items” and the show becomes “a motivating factor to visit that place in person” (Sung, 2020). Examples of successful food programmes include Baek Jong-won’s Alley Restaurant, which is widely acknowledged as one of the top variety shows in Korea. The restaurants featured on the programme with favourable reviews from the host, Baek Jong-won are “instantly brimming with customers” (Sung, 2020).

The host of a food show is important because it is through their reactions to the food that viewers will be able to decide if they themselves would want to patronise the restaurant. Lee Young-ja, a female comedian, is one such host. On Omniscient Interfering View, her expressions and vivid descriptions of the meals “created an illusion of having the food right in front of one’s eyes” (Sung, 2020). After the episode where she sampled food from rest stops was broadcasted, the Korea Expressway Corporation stated that “the sales of food surged by 200%” (Sung, 2020). Thus, it is evident that such programmes help to promote Korean cuisine both locally and internationally. At the same time, they also contribute to the consumption of Korean food products internationally, thus helping to boost the country’s economy too.

Food programmes often include some elements of the travel variety show, as the “authenticity in food experiences is often linked to notions of the locality” (Choi, 2012) which implies that food is one of the main factors in attracting tourists to visit Korea for an authentic culinary experience. One way Korea continues to promote tourism is through travel variety shows, which focus not only on food, but also spotlights the sights and unique cultural value of its lesser known tourist attractions. Popular dramas have already succeeded in attracting people to come and view filming locations, but variety programmes are able to introduce a more educational perspective about Korean culture for potential tourists, while still providing comedic entertainment. For example, the long running travel variety programme, 2 Days 1 Night features a regular cast and celebrity guests exploring local destinations in South Korea while completing missions

Characteristics of K-Variety

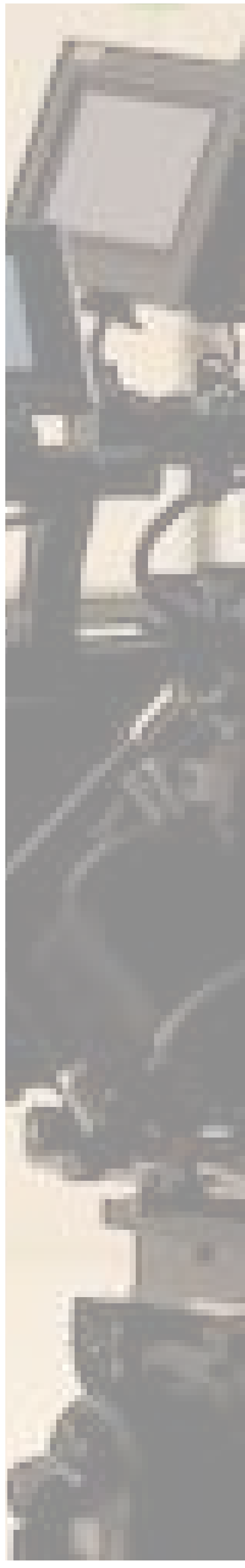
It is clear by now that Korean variety shows have many different genres which cater to different audiences. However, one characteristic of K-variety that makes it unique is the combination of different genres in one show. In fact, most Korean variety programmes do not have a conventional format that is restricted to a single genre, unlike many other variety shows from other countries. For example, America's culture of late night shows, such as Jimmy Kimmel Live, The Tonight Show starring Jimmy Fallon, and The Late Late Show with James Corden, clearly fall under the variety genre of talk shows within a set. An example of a mixed genre K-variety is Busted, a Netflix variety show which combines reality, comedy and game show elements with a mystery fiction where the cast attempt to solve mysteries. The storyline follows a thriller plot but is accompanied by comedy which eases the tension. Busted is a prime example of the absence of creative boundaries in K-variety when it comes to setting the genre for the show.

The feeling of authenticity found in Korean variety shows is often mentioned as one of the main characteristics of K-variety. Across forums on the internet discussing Korean variety television, it is very common to find comments highlighting the distinctive authenticity in K-variety when compared to its counterparts. K-variety often appears to be unscripted due to the minimal scripting that is aimed for casual viewing experience and to not be taken overly serious (D. Lee, 2021). Usually, the script only describes the main segments of the show such as the introduction of guests and the games played, up to the extent of certain scripted jokes. The remainder of the plot largely depends on the spontaneity of the cast to offer good reactions and show emotions which can be emphasised in post-production. One example of K-variety which exemplifies authenticity can be found in the reality show The Return of Superman, which portrays a celebrity dad taking over the job of the mother in taking care of the children for two days. According to the show's executive producer Kang Bong Gyu, the show is about "exposing the celebrity's personal and private lives to the audience" and the popularity of the show was contributed by the parents across the world due to commonalities they share (Campione, 2021). From this, we can see that relatability conducted by real human emotions and interactions is a major selling point of K-variety that transcends culture and nationalities.

Another unique characteristic of K-variety originates from the post-production process, where elements such as sound and text effects are added to enhance the viewing experience. A few post-production techniques give K-variety its characteristic style. First, sound and text effect goes hand-in-hand to highlight key moments and keywords respectively. They can either work as prompts to call the audience's attention to something or facilitate the conveyance of a long message by highlighting a few important words or sentences. Secondly, a distinctive editing style can often be found across different Korean variety shows of similar themes. For example, during the result announcement in a survival show, the expression and emotion of the participants are always highlighted to build up tension and anticipation within the audience.

Key Figures in K-Variety

Every person who is involved, whether on-camera or behind the scenes, in a Korean variety show is vital to completing the show. In the previous section, we demonstrated how the cast have a huge responsibility in making the show entertaining due to the minimal scripting. Additionally, the significance of post-production by the producing team was also briefly discussed.



Another key figure of variety shows is the show host or emcee (MC). The role of the show's host might appear to be simple and straightforward, but their responsibility and influence on the show are much more far reaching than audiences may assume. The most popular and well respected K-variety host is Yoo Jae Suk, who is regarded as the "Nation's MC" in Korea. He is responsible for hosting numerous Korean hit variety shows in the past two decades, such as X-Man (2003), Running Man (2010), and the recent success of Hangout with Yoo (2019). Yoo Jae Suk has proven over and over again that a good show host is a vital factor in creating an enjoyable and successful show. The MC is essential in controlling the flow and the theme of the show as intended and intelligently deals with unexpected scenarios with quick-witted banter. Apart from that, the MC is important in ensuring good engagement amongst the cast so that no one gets left out and each person gets to showcase their charms and talents. Therefore, a good K-variety MC is highly sought after as their experience and expertise are transferable skills across different shows. Notably, the trio of Yoo Jae Suk, Kang Ho Dong and Shin Dong Yup are regarded as the big three MCs in Korea, and their reputation can easily attract audiences whenever they appear in a new show which shows that the audience recognises the importance of a good show host.

Apart from the show host, the selectively casted guests are also instrumental in the success of K-variety. Depending on the theme of the show, guests range from ordinary individuals with interesting backgrounds or more commonly, celebrities who are deemed suitable for the show. For some shows, having celebrity guests can have a strong impact on the show's ratings. Korean variety shows depend on their popularity to survive, which is usually gauged by television ratings reported by market measurement firms such as Nielsen Media Research or Total National Multimedia Statistics (TNmS). Therefore, household names such as movie stars are invited for their ability to attract an audience. In return, celebrity guests receive publicity and the opportunity to promote their recent works such as a new album, drama, or movie.

However, fame is only one factor in determining whether a celebrity gets invited onto shows. "Entertainment sense", or "예능감", refers to one's ability to adapt to the show and entertain the audience, and is just as important as the guest's popularity. This is because "entertainment sense" is not commonly found among most celebrities, whose jobs mainly focus on perfecting their performances in singing, dancing, or acting. Hence, although some celebrities with good "entertainment sense" might not be very popular as an individual, they can gain more attention through appearing on shows, while some superstars might not appear as frequently due to their lack of "entertainment sense". A few characteristics of having good entertainment sense includes being able to blend in well with the cast, having good EQ, knowing when to speak up, being able to poke fun at their celebrity image and make jokes at their own expense. Besides having good "entertainment sense", guests can also contribute to the show by showcasing their personal charms and distinctive image that allows them to create a good impression on the audience.

Last but not least, while the cast entertains the audience with lighthearted jokes, the production team takes their job very seriously from pre- to post-production where standards are set high for everyone on the team. In his book, 어차피 레이스는 길다 (Anyway, the Race Is Long, famous producer Na Young Seok, also known as Na PD, states that every personnel on the production team should only work within their designated role so that a one-hour variety show can be recorded within two to three hours. Everyone on the team is expected to perform at their best, and those who cannot keep up, including cast members who are not entertaining enough, will be replaced (Na, 2012). From this account, it is evident that the television producers of K-variety play a crucial part in the making of a successful programme and it is a case of 'survival of the fittest' in this competitive industry.

Key Figures in K-Variety

It is widely recognized that Korean variety shows have been impactful in exporting Korean culture to different corners of the globe. Nevertheless, K-Variety also promotes Korean culture domestically. With the effects of modernisation, traditional culture has become less popular among Korean youths. There are several ways K-Variety can advertise traditional culture, such as through featuring food, traditional games, and historical sites in variety programmes. By doing so, it reminds the younger generation of traditional culture that might otherwise disappear over time and encourages young Koreans to engage in and preserve their traditional cultures. Additionally, by showcasing traditional culture on TV, Korean variety shows also serve as records of these traditions and can be used to educate future generations even if the practice of the culture is eventually lost to time.

Secondly, popular Korean variety shows are often responsible for making trends. Similar to Singaporeans, Koreans are also highly reactive towards emerging trends which makes trend following a huge part of Korean culture. Due to the large population that watches Korean variety shows, K-Variety is capable of promoting trends such as food, fashion, tourism and so on. For example, after being featured on Baek Jong-won's Alley Restaurant, a restaurant complimented by the celebrity chef Baek Jong Won for its pork cutlet received overnight fame and attracted a long queue of patrons (T. H. Lee, 2019).

Thirdly, having one of the most working hours among Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries (OECD, 2019), many working adults in Korea seek time-efficient leisure to take a break from their busy life. K-Variety plays a crucial role in these individuals' lives by offering a quick and casual viewing experience to escape from reality temporarily. For example, in Three Meals a Day, the slow paced life of the cast in a rural village where they farm and cook was captured beautifully, with many magnificent nature shots. The result is a relieving viewing experience which irresistibly calms down the audience, making it a perfect getaway from the hustle and bustle in their lives. ("Analyze the variety show value of "Three Hours, Three Meals" from three aspects: program features, audiovisual language, and life enlightenment", 2021)

Fourthly, K-Variety has been credited for promoting less mainstream art forms such as rap music in Show Me the Money, professional dance in Street Woman Fighter and trot music in Mr. Trot. The rise of these art forms as a result of Korean variety shows are evidently reflected by the trend it generates every time these shows are aired. For example, rap songs released from Show Me the Money have almost always received huge success on music charts upon release, which indicates that the show was effective in promoting rap music to their audience. Another example can be found in trot music shows, as they have been instrumental in promoting trot music to younger audiences. Traditionally, trot music is seen as music from the older generation but Mr. Trot has effectively brought awareness to the genre amongst its young audience. In fact, trot music has gradually become mainstream and is taking up a huge portion of music charts.

Fifthly, K-Variety also serves as a platform for bringing attention to overlooked societal issues. For example, the difficulty of being a minority race in Korea was highlighted in an episode of Hello Counsellor. The episode featured a Muslim woman who brought attention to the challenges faced by minorities in the highly homogeneous Korean society. The show also discusses the relationship, mental health and physical health troubles of ordinary people, which allows the audience, who may be facing similar troubles, to receive the counselling and advice they need.

Lastly, K-Variety can inspire and encourage ordinary people to join the Korean entertainment industry. Korean variety shows, such as singing competitions, often feature young contestants who were trained from a tender age to become singers or dancers. These participants can serve as role models to inspire their young audience to become singers or dancers one day. In fact, idol training often begins at a young age as the idol industry is highly competitive, hence many years of training are usually needed before one can debut.

Evolution of the Television Format Business

The immense popularity and success of Korean variety shows has led to the development of various international television programme franchises built off the format of the Korean variety programmes. The television industry is not new to the business of distributing and exporting television formats around the world but the recent surge in the popularity of Korean variety programmes highlights how the television format plays a central role in the international export of Korean variety as a cultural product.

Defining the Television Format

The television format is described to be a "set of invariable elements in a [television] programme out of which the variable elements of an individual episode are produced ... The format provid[es] an outer shell or organizing framework that permits and facilitates the making of a programme ... As a television producer once put it: 'The "crust" [of the pie] is the same from week to week but the filling changes'" (Moran & Malbon, 2006). The format can thus be understood as the framework and overall concept of a television programme which remains unchanged at the core of the programme, even in its remakes and adaptation. In media studies, the television format is further broken down into specific knowledge components, such as the paper format, which refers to a "detailed written document that presents the initial concept for a television programme format ... [and provides] a description of a programme's basic idea, its content, its layout and its style" (Moran & Malbon, 2006) and the format bible, which functions as a "total manual and reference guide to every aspect of the programme ... [including its] production, marketing, promotion, and distribution" (Moran & Malbon, 2006). When a broadcasting company buys the rights to reproduce any television show, they are essentially exporting the format of the programme and thus, the format is extremely valuable in the television industry.

Growth in Asian Television Programming

In the 1990s, countries in Asia experienced a surge in media liberalisation, which led to the influx of exported television formats from the West. During this time, there was a unilateral expansion of American television formats into the region and homogenization of regional pop culture with the growth in exports of reality TV, game shows, and a range of lifestyle programmes (Cho & Zhu, 2017). These television programme formats were significant for the growth in Asian television programming as they introduced viewers in Japan, China, Taiwan and South Korea to a new kind of entertainment television (Keane et al., 2007). In the case of South Korea specifically, the local television programming was initially influenced by imported American and Japanese television formats which led to concerns over the growing American influences on domestic business and audiences as well as the confluence of American and Japanese television cultures on the local culture (Cho & Zhu, 2017). This shows how television programmes have significant influence as cultural products and emphasises the power of television as a media platform.

However, the development of Asian television in the 1990s was not solely credited to the adaptation of existing foreign television formats for their local settings as the industry was also looking into creating new television programmes with their own original formats, although there would not be any significant success in the global exportation of Asian programme formats until a couple of decades later. Today, the growth of exports in television formats is strongly linked to the globalisation of the international television programming business. South Korea is a prime example of this as the local television industry went from relying on imported foreign television programme formats to exporting original Korean television formats to the rest of the world in recent years. The growth in popularity and success of original Korean television programmes has led to an influx of Korean television formats being exported overseas and remade internationally. This shows that the surge in popularity of Korean variety television programmes has led to the Korean television industry becoming a significant player in the international television format distribution business.

Case Study of Korean Variety Franchises

In recent years, there has been a surge in Korean variety shows gaining popularity and success internationally, leading to its television format being sold and adapted worldwide. South Korea has experienced immense success in transforming their hit variety television programme formats into international television franchises. King of Mask Singer, Running Man and Dad! Where Are We Going? are just a few case studies of Korean variety shows which have found success overseas with international remakes.

The Masked Singer is an American adaptation of South Korea's celebrity singing competition King of Mask Singer, which features celebrities competing one-on-one in a sing-off while wearing elaborate masks and costumes to conceal their identity. The adaptation was highly successful in the US with the premiere of The Masked Singer on American television seeing not just Fox's highest-rated unscripted debut in more than seven years, but the highest-rated unscripted debut on any network in over seven years, with an average of 9.4 million total viewers (Maglio & Maas, 2019). The US's Masked Singer is not the only successful remake of the Korean variety show – King of Mask Singer has expanded to become an international franchise with many adaptations of the format from all over the world.

One of the most popular K-variety programmes, Running Man, which has been touted as one of the most celebrated television variety shows not just in Korea but throughout Asia in recent years (Kim, 2021), has also developed its format into a successful international franchise. Running Man features a fixed cast who team up with new celebrity guests every episode as they take part in a race and compete in various missions and games along the way. The show became popular for mixing elements of different television genres like talk shows, sketch comedy, batsu (Japanese-style punishment game), and sporting competitions (Kim, 2021). Running Man was not just successful domestically as was arguably even more popular overseas among international viewers. In China specifically, the cumulative hits on YouTube of Running Man clips exceeded 1 billion views and the fan meetings of Running Man members in Hong Kong, Shanghai, and Beijing in 2013 caused mayhem (Kim, 2021) and this led to the acquiring of the programme format by a Chinese broadcasting company to produce Keep Running, a Chinese game variety show remake of Running Man. The show featured some of the biggest names in Chinese entertainment television as its main cast and became the most successful remake of Korean-originated entertainment programs in China in recent years (Kim, 2021).

Another successful Korean variety programme format which was acquired by Chinese broadcasters is Dad! Where Are We Going?, a show which features celebrity fathers and their children in the countryside, as they travel to rural places and take part in camping related missions. The Chinese remake Where Are We Going, Dad? was a smash hit, drawing audiences in with the innocent charm of the children and their interactions with the outside world. The show also allowed viewers to reflect on the norms of East Asian culture: the 23 social expectations imposed on men and the supreme value of family (Chen, 2021). In fact, the franchise's popularity in China even exceeded the original programme, which only lasted two seasons in Korea. Where Are We Going, Dad? was renewed for five seasons and it spawned a spin-off mobile game that uses the same logo and branding as the show and reproduces the cast members of the show as cute in-game avatars (Custer, 2013).

A common feature of Korean variety programmes whose formats have been transformed into international television franchises is that the programme tends to enjoy even more success and popularity from international audiences, compared to domestic viewers. The important thing to remember about the international television franchise business is that while each remake or version of the show may be adapted slightly for local audiences, the programme format remains the same.

Korean Television and Hallyu

The Korean Wave, or Hallyu, refers to the sudden growth in interest and exports of Korean popular culture including dramas, films, pop-music, online games, cosmetics, and food to foreign countries (Jung, 2019). The phenomenon of Hallyu originated in China in the late 1990s and over the next few decades, the Korean Wave started to spread across Asia and eventually, the rest of the world. Korean television programming has remained relevant since the onset of Hallyu, as it plays a huge part in popularising the interest in Korean culture internationally, with Korean dramas being the cultural driving force of the first Hallyu wave.

Emergence of the Korean Wave in China

The term 'Hallyu' was originally coined by Chinese media to describe the increasing popularity of Korean cultural products in Asia. The first Hallyu wave, also known as Hallyu 1.0, was triggered by the sudden rise in popularity of Korean dramas among Chinese audiences in the late 1990s. In 1997, the Chinese national broadcasting station China Central Television Station (CCTV) aired a Korean drama What is Love All About? for the first time on Chinese broadcasting networks. The drama was a huge success, leading to CCTV re-airing the programme due to popular demand just a year later in 1998 where it recorded the second-highest ratings ever in the history of Chinese television in a primetime slot (Shim, 2006). Since then, the growth in popularity of Korean dramas among Chinese viewers has increased exponentially, with Chinese broadcasters beginning to export even more Korean television programming over the years.

The popularity of Korean dramas in China was caused in part by the media liberalisation of the 90s in Asia, which led to an increase in foreign media exports across Asia, specifically the export of foreign television programming. In the late 1990s, China and other Asian countries were recovering from the economic depression caused by the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis and had to work within limited budgets to acquire foreign television programmes (Jung, 2019). This was a great opportunity for the growth of the Korean television industry as their programmes were cheaper than their fellow Asian counterparts at that time. During that time, Korean television dramas were a quarter of the price of Japanese ones, and a tenth of the price of Hong Kong television dramas (Shim, 2006), which made Korean programmes highly attractive to Asian buyers. This led to a significant and rapid growth in the exports of Korean television programming from $12.7 million in 1999 to $37.5 million in 2003, a significant increase in just 4 years (Shim, 2006).

It is widely accepted that the popularity of Korean dramas triggered the first Korean Wave, Hallyu 1.0 and the success of Korean popular music, or K-pop, ignited the second Korean Wave, Hallyu 2.0. In recent years, the growing popularity of Korean variety television programmes have led to the major trend of exporting these successful programme formats. In the case of China specifically, the popularity of Korean variety shows among the Chinese audience has led to China's television industry acquiring the television formats of more than 20 Korean variety programmes to date (Cho & Zhu, 2017). As the trend of exporting Korean variety television formats continues to grow exponentially, this suggests that Korean variety programmes may become the main cultural driving force of the third Korean Wave, Hallyu 3.0.

Development of The Chinese TV Remake Trend

As mentioned earlier, one of the major trends within the Chinese television industry is the acquiring of foreign television formats to be remade in China. Although the focus of exported formats is now on Korean variety programmes, the trend of buying and remaking existing foreign television formats in China originated with the exportation of Western television programmes and formats in the 1990s. As mentioned earlier, this was a period of media liberalisation in Asia and there was an influx of exported television formats from the West due to globalisation. Some examples of Western television programmes being remade by Chinese broadcasters include Go, Bing from the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), which was remade into Fortune Lucky 52 (xing yun 52) by China Central Television-2 (CCTV-2) in 1998, Britain's Got Talent, which was remade into China's Got Talent by Shanghai Eastern Satellite Television in 2010, and The Voice Holland, which was remade into The Voice of China by ZheJiang Satellite TV in 2012 (Cho & Zhu, 2017). Through these Western programmes, Chinese broadcasters discovered the advantages of acquiring existing television formats: they came with lower risks as the programme has already been tried and tested before and proved to be successful, and audiences were already familiar with the concept of the programme and the programme could be adapted to tailor to local audiences. Thus, this led to the trend of imported television formats and programme remakes in China.

Up until 2012, the Chinese television industry was still focused on exporting Western programme formats and did not appear to have much interest in the potential of Korean television programmes. However, Korean variety programmes such as We Got Married and Running Man were already highly popular among Chinese audiences, who had to access the content of these programmes through illegal downloads since they were not officially broadcasted in China (Chung 2013). Chinese broadcasters produced a remake of the Korean singing competition programme I Am A Singer in 2013 and the show became a huge success, garnering over 200 million hits on video clips from the programme on the Chinese Internet service portal Tencent (Kim, 2017). In the same year, inspired by the success of I Am A Singer, Hunan TV produced a remake of Dad! Where Are You Going?, which was another hit television programme, reaching the highest viewer ratings among all programmes in the same slot (Chung 2013).

To date, Chinese broadcasting companies have purchased and remade over 20 Korean variety programme formats, which are mostly aired during prime-time slots. (Cho & Zhu, 2017). This further cements that Korean variety programmes have achieved mainstream success and popularity among local viewers in China. The growing popularity of Korean television programmes and the major trend of Chinese remakes shows suggests that the variety programme format as a commodity is developing towards replacing the pivotal role of Korean dramas and K-pop in the growth of Korean popular culture overseas.

Patterns in China's Format Phenomenon

Many of South Korea's successful variety programme formats have been purchased by Chinese broadcasters and remade or adapted for Chinese audiences. The growing number of Korean remakes in the Chinese market has revealed 3 distinct patterns in how Chinese broadcasters are remaking Korean television formats.

Simple Reproduction

In the earlier days of the format phenomenon, Chinese broadcasters would simply reproduce the Korean television format without any attempt to adapt the programme for their local audiences. The Korean television producers did not prepare a format bible and only 27 conveyed the details of the programme to their Chinese counterparts. The Chinese production staff would also travel to the programme's filming sites in Korea to observe the process of the programme's production in-person. Some examples of Chinese remakes which fall under this pattern include I Am A Singer (2013) and Where Are We Going, Dad? (2013). (Cho & Zhu, 2017)

Localised Formats

As more Korean variety formats got acquired by Chinese broadcasting companies, there was more effort being put into adapting the programmes for local audiences. Chinese broadcasters would localise these Korean formats to incorporate and reflect Chinese cultural norms and tastes. For example, television producers may edit the programme's characters and plot points to fit in more with Chinese audience expectations. In this pattern, the acquirement of a television format would include a full-package contract of the programme's format bible, media licences, and 'flying producers', which refer to the Korean television producers of the original programme travelling to the filming sites in China so the Chinese producers can consult them if needed. This pattern also includes more interaction and involvement between the Chinese and Korean broadcasting companies, such as co-productions and the casting of Korean celebrities for the Chinese remakes. Some examples of remakes which fall under this second pattern include We Got Married (2015) and Keep Running (2014). (Cho & Zhu, 2017)

Co-Produced Original Programmes

The third pattern features even more integration between the Korean and Chinese broadcasting companies via joint-productions. The aim of this pattern is for Chinese broadcasters to produce brand new, original programme concepts and formats by working together with their Korean counterparts to mimic the success of the existing Korean variety television formats in China. Chinese broadcasting companies will hire professional Korean television producers and production staff to collaborate with their own Chinese team to come up with a new programme and run it successfully. This pattern has led to the high demand and poaching of Korean producers in China, leading to the well-known 'MBC Crisis', where 8 television producers left their jobs in Korea to sign contracts with Chinese broadcasting companies. A few well-known Korean television producers have also left their jobs in Korea to start their own production companies, with investment from Chinese entertainment businesses (Cho & Zhu, 2017).

Future Forecast of the K-variety Industry

As we live in a rapidly changing world, the Korean variety industry also needs to continuously adapt to the evolving trends of the market. The new phase of the Hallyu wave since the 2010s has been predominantly powered by social media and the internet. This second wave of Hallyu "appears to be more intensive in its popularity" (Jin, 2018) as social media is able to reach a much wider global audience. Previously, K-variety was mostly influential amongst South East Asia but now "not only Asian fans but Western fans in Europe and North America—are able to enjoy Korean popular culture" (Jin, 2018) through the use of social media platforms like Twitter, Instagram and Youtube. This section discusses the emerging trends in the K-variety genre and the possible impacts of globalisation on future content



Decline of Traditional TV

With the recent growing popularity of online content and streaming services such as Netflix, Amazon Prime and YouTube, it is no surprise that the traditional television industry has started to take a hit. One of the emerging trends for television programmes is the movement towards online streaming services as more broadcasters are becoming aware of the impact that online streaming can have on their viewers. As the world enters the 21st century, television has "experienced a media revolution: the decline of the network system, the advent of cable and satellite transmission, deregulation of ownership, commercialization and privatization of public television systems, and the innovation of digital television technology" (Jung, 2019). Evidently, television is slowly becoming outdated with the influx of newer online platforms to view the latest shows from around the world. The growth of online platforms provides more choice of entertainment to the global audience, and has led to the "rapid fragmentation of audiences" (Jung, 2019) since many are no longer as interested in watching programmes available on traditional television when there is such a huge variety of programmes to choose from online.

In order for variety programmes to continue riding the Hallyu wave, having shows available on online platforms allow a wider reach to global audiences and provides higher chances of going viral on social media. The dissemination of popular shows is made easier as social media "speeds up the cultural diffusion of media products" (Jin 2018) thanks to social media's ability to make things go viral. Most variety programmes have a young target audience. Especially in America, the majority of these youths "lived in a dormitory or lived alone and did not have a television set" (Jin 2018) thus they would source for Korean entertainment programmes through the internet and on social media. Thanks to YouTube, a survey of the number of views of K-pop music videos on YouTube found that "countries outside of Asia such as the United States, Canada, Saudi Arabia and France, occupy the top ten places" (Ono, 2013). In an age where social media trends help to draw foreign attention, Korean broadcasting companies have started looking into streaming services as viable platforms for their variety programmes as well as their K-dramas.

Emerging Television Trends

The K-variety genre was quick to adapt to these newer streaming platforms through the creation of hybrid-platform shows. These shows often involve an online element on top of just merely being broadcasted on television, which allows the global audience to also feel a 30 sense of inclusion. This makes the global audience feel more invested in these programmes, thereby maintaining levels of interest for the viewer throughout the programme's runtime.

Online Audience Participation

The K-variety genre that have taken advantage of this tool is the audition programme format, starting with Superstar-K in 2009. As the popularity of Korean idols was on a high, this particular format was able to attract vast amounts of K-pop fans. In fact, the "recent popularity of K-pop has become a primary reason for the growth of the competition shows" (Jin 2016). Audience participation in the search for new talent in the industry lets the audience feel connected to the participants, as though they have played a part in helping their picks realise their dreams. This strategy can be seen as "a means of implicit governance" (Lee 2020), which insinuates that the viewer will feel a sense of ownership towards their participation through online votings.

The launch of the Produce series from Mnet, starting with Produce 101 in 2016 reached high levels of popularity both within Korea and globally. In Korea itself, "10 million votes were tallied during the finale of the second season, meaning that almost one-fifth of South Korea's population participated in the voting" (Lee, 2020). While the international audience initially was unable to vote, later editions of the Mnet survival show allowed international voting due to popular demand. International viewers still contributed significantly to the overall viewership of the series, such that Mnet finally allowed international voting for the fourth instalment of the series. They provided a comprehensive voting website in both Korean and English, as well as directly streaming the episodes to platforms like YouTube so that international fans could keep up to date with the show's progress (Jeon, 2019). The programme also provided english subtitles for all the episodes and bonus content from the trainees that were uploaded to YouTube.

With the global success of the series, "several other networks have also jumped on the bandwagon to produce similar idol audition shows" (Lee, 2020) such as KBS The Unit, JTBC Mix Nine and many other titles. The audition programme phenomenon has also spread to other countries, such as in China, where Produce Camp and Youth With You are receiving positive feedback from viewers - both of which are Chinese remakes of their Korean counterparts.

Multi-Platform Shows

Taking the idea of hybrid-platform literally, MBC has created My Little Television, which features live streaming via Afreeca TV and Kakao TV while the raw footage is edited to be aired on television. Thus the broadcast of My Little Television takes place across multiple platforms, both online and on television, making it the perfect example of a hybrid-platform show. The show features four to six famous celebrities "performing live shows in separate rooms of a television studio" where they would "compete for the highest rating" (Jung, 2017) on their individual live broadcasts.

This concept allows the livestreams to be broadcasted on streaming platforms, thereby increasing audience interactions with their favourite celebrity in real-time. Since it is on the internet, this also gives international audiences the chance to participate and interact with their idols despite being in different countries. Through the edited footage broadcasted on television, viewers are also able to see the behind the scenes preparations that go into the live broadcast that they have already watched, thus providing new perspectives for the viewer. On the financial side, viewers "can give money directly to the content creator with cyber items like "balloons", "chocolates," or "stickers" in Afreeca TV" (Jung, 2017) and this provides an additional source of income for the broadcasting network. It is possible for more K-variety shows to take this route in their development of variety show formats as My Little Television "recorded over 7 to 8% viewer ratings, which means great ratings on Saturday night time slots" (Jung, 2017). Its apparent popularity signifies the start of a new trend towards multi-platform variety shows for Korea.

Streaming on Global Platforms: YouTube and Netflix

Many broadcasting stations are also taking advantage of online streaming platforms such as YouTube and Netflix. SBS has created shows like MMTG and ShowTerview with Jessi which are broadcasted online on YouTube. They are online celebrity talk shows hosted by beloved personalities like Jae Jae and Jessi. In each show, the hosts invite popular idols for interviews and the banter between host and idol appeals to the viewer. Jessi in particular carries more appeal for the international viewer as she is half American and is able to speak fluent English, thus she plays the role of being a bridge for communication between the idol and the viewer. These two shows take advantage of the popularity of Korean idols as many international fans rely on YouTube to watch subtitled interviews of their beloved K-pop idols. The choice of YouTube as the main distribution platform for these shows is largely due to how the "virality of K-pop videos on YouTube played a crucial marketing, distributional and advertising role in promoting K-pop" (Ono, 2013). To date, MMTG episodes reach millions of views and one is able to find comments in both English and Korean for each episode, which is a clear indicator of its popularity amongst the international audience. Jessi's ShowTerview also does significantly well, with 11.3 million views at its peak. As these shows do not involve huge, elaborate sets, the more casual setting of these online shows allow the viewer to see a more genuine, laidback side of their favourite celebrities, which continues to foster connection between the viewer and the idol.

Another major trend of embracing newer platforms is the surge of Korean content coming out of Netflix. Netflix has reached a wide global audience and started its penetration into Asia in 2016. After the continued global success of shows like Squid Game, Netflix is capitalising on the popularity of Korean content and has invested over 700 million dollars in it, with plans to launch 25 new Korean shows in 2022 alone (Frater, 2022). It is not just dramas that are getting the spotlight, Netflix also wants to invest in creating hit K-variety series as well. While the major broadcasters in Korea saw Netflix as potential competition, smaller content creators "realised Netflix is a strong platform to deliver their content internationally" (Kim, 2019). Original content produced by Netflix have been steadily gaining recognition worldwide. As of 2018, "Netflix original content received 112 Emmy nominations, 20 Critics Choice Award nominations and 12 Golden Globe nominations" (Kim, 2019). This sets the stage for original Korean programmes on Netflix to also reach similar heights. The director of Netflix Korea has also stated that "Netflix is trying to become a channel to introduce Korean content to people around the world" (Kim, 2019) which further indicates that Netflix could be the next big platform for Korean variety shows to garner attention from international audiences. As of today, Netflix already boasts a few popular K-variety titles such as Paik's Spirit, Singles' Inferno and Busted.

Consequences of Globalisation on K-variety

Something that sets apart the Netflix K-variety shows from the traditional ones on television is that they are largely inspired by both Korean and Western television. The looser censorship guidelines on Netflix allow the shows produced to be less restricted by the stricter laws on public broadcasting channels. One show taking advantage of this is Single's Inferno, which took social media by storm since its release. It is inspired by Western reality dating shows such as Too Hot to Handle and Love Island, which are well known for being rather promiscuous in their themes. Featuring extremely attractive men and women, Single's Inferno oozed a sex appeal that is practically taboo on public broadcasting channels. Similar to its Western influences, Single's Inferno is a reality dating show where contestants interact and attempt to form romantic relationships with each other.

Since it is being broadcasted on Netflix, the show is a lot steamier than typical reality shows on Korean television, with contestants showing more skin and physical intimacy. The show also has more space to showcase behaviour that is atypical to what traditional Korean culture is like, and suggests that Korea's globalisation has once again allowed Western influences to permeate their society. Single's Inferno promotes a very direct approach to dating where even the female contestants openly chase their desired partner, which is something rarely seen in Korean culture. When it comes to dating, usually "the male partner (in a heterosexual pairing) is expected to show his interest by requesting a second meeting" (Glayzer, 2021). But in the show, both male and female contestants are seen openly pursuing each other. This is a fresh take on the dating scene in Korea and could possibly be one of the reasons why the show has garnered so much attention within Korea as well.

Having the contestants' first interaction on a deserted island is reminiscent of the Korean sogaeting or blind dating culture as well, which then keeps some elements of typical Korean dating culture while adding an extra Western influence as the contestants are given free reign of who they wish to pursue. The programme also continues to break stereotypes about traditional Korean culture where the man is expected to chase the woman, as in the Korean dating scene, it is "usually the man [who] confesses their romantic interest in their future partner" (Glayzer, 2021). One of the show's female contestants is seen breaking this stereotype in a scene where she bravely confesses her feelings to another male contestant. Yet even as the programme attempts to push boundaries, it still takes care to keep to Korean cultural etiquette as there are no direct displays of affections such as on-screen kiss scenes, unlike Western reality dating shows where scenes of contestants making out or even going further is commonplace.

In this way, Single's Inferno serves as an example of how globalisation of the K-variety format will affect the development of future content for broadcasting channels. There is a likely chance of seeing even more K-variety shows adapting foreign television culture into their content in an effort to appeal towards an international audience, thanks to online platforms like Netflix.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, Korean variety programmes are now a global phenomenon that many countries are paying attention to. With the help of the globalising world and social media's influence, K-variety is no longer restricted to only television as its main distribution channel. The genre has come a long way since the conception of television in Korea, and it will only continue to increase in popularity. The Korean variety programme format is extremely valuable and the exponential growth in popularity of the Korean variety television format has the potential to ignite the next Korean Wave, placing K-variety in the prime position to become the main cultural driving force of Hallyu 3.0.

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PROGRESSION OF FEMINISM IN SOUTH KOREA



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INTRODUCTION

South Korea has always been seen as a deeply male-dominated society with a poor record on women's rights. The fight for feminism, which is the belief in and advocacy of the political, economic, and social equality of the sexes (Brunell & Burkett, 2021), has been met with intense backlash. This is only exacerbated by the gender politics commonly used by the leaders of the country. In this paper, we will be discussing the progression of feminism in South Korea, which includes the historical background of the feminist movement in South Korea, the attitudes towards the feminist movement, the solutions, and existing problems that they are facing, as well as the future challenges of the movement.

Historical background of South Korea's feminist movements

The beginning of South Korea's feminist movements stems from the unfair treatment of women in society, which has been influenced by Confucianism. One of the core Confucianism beliefs is conformity and acceptance of social roles, where all human relationships involve a predefined set of roles and obligations. The roles of women were generally thought to be managing a household and revolved around motherhood. They were also required to obey men in their society. The ideal woman from Confucianism texts is based on the hyŏnmo yangch'ŏ, which means "a wise mother and a good wife". These texts also have a common goal of educating women on "how to behave properly in a feminine way", which is based on the Confucianism concept of ye, or the code of conduct (Koh, 2008).

Furthermore, Confucianism also values the three obediences, which are for born females to obey and follow the guidance of their father before she is married, her husband while she is married, and her sons after her husband dies (Ching, 1995). South Korea also had a strict hierarchical division and patriarchal family structure, where men have power over other members of a family, community, and their society. In 1953, the Korean Hoju (호주) system, which is a family registration system under civil law, was created. All members of a family were registered under a "family head", and Korea's patriarchal system meant that male members were usually the family heads, with their sons inheriting the position (Koh, 2008). This combination of factors eventually led to women in South Korea to have unequal treatment and unequal rights.

Such unequal treatment continued in the 1970s, extending to the labour sector of South Korea. During President Park Chung-hee's regime, girls from the countryside were recruited to work in export-related factories. They were given the lowest wages and crammed into small areas for living and working, usually referred to as "chicken coops" (Ching, 1995). Not only were they not protected by labour laws, but they also often face police brutality and sexual harassment. The combination of these factors gave rise to a women's union movement throughout the 1970s. The mass mobilisation of women to address workplace issues resulted in the election of a woman to the position of union president for the first time in 1972. They were quickly shut down only after 6 years by the government (Ching, 1995). Nevertheless, these women continued to fight to keep their union alive, and the women's movement gained traction due to their involvement in the labour and student movements. In 1986, spurred by the rape and torture of female organiser Kwon In-suk by the hands of police in Buchon, the Korean Women's Associations United (KWAU) was created. Besides focusing on women's rights, the KWAU was also directly involved in the minjung movement, and its participation has been credited for the success of the movement in forcing the resignation of President Chun Doo hwan (Ching, 1995). By 1987, women made up 55% of the paid workforce but continued to face gender discrimination. In response, the Korean Women Workers Association (KWWA) was formed and fought for equal roles of men and women in the household. Following democratic and political reforms in South Korea, the women's movement continued to expand and fight for women's rights in various aspects (Ching, 1995).

Neoliberalism, which is the political approach that favours free-market capitalism, deregulation, and reduction in government spending, also helped to give women in South Korea more rights in the workplace. Following the financial crisis in 1997, which required a conditional bailout from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) worth around $55 billion (Pollack, 1997), the government realised the unsustainability of relying solely on men as breadwinners of the family. This led to the labour flexibility policy, which facilitated the entrance of women into the workforce. This change eroded the existing class and gender systems in South Korea. Women were now able to be gainfully employed, which enhanced their voice in society (Cho, 2009). The career-oriented work culture has also resulted in working women marrying much later because the interruption caused by childbirth and child rearing hindered their ability to be successful in their careers (J. Kim et al., 2016). This has led to more female householders and shrunk the space available for men to wield their patriarchal authority.

The investigation of the historical background of feminist movements in South Korea has illustrated the rich history behind women's mass mobilisation. However, the absence of a paradigm shift in attitudes towards women continues to be seen in contemporary South Korea and has led to the revival of feminist movements in recent years.

The feminist movement in contemporary South Korea

There are two types of feminist movements that are prevalent in South Korea — reformists and radical feminists. The reformists strongly believe in the equal rights between men and women; they are usually in support and work together with the government to encourage changes for gender policies in the society. For example, the Korean Women's Development Institute (KWDI) was founded by the South Korean government and placed under the supervision of the Ministry of Political Affairs. KWDI's aim is to "contribute to the establishment of national gender equality policies for realization of gender-equal society" and "enhance citizen happiness" (Korean Women's Development Institute, n.d.). On the other hand, the radical feminists are the ones that are taking a storm in South Korea lately. Compared to reformist feminists who tend to be in the middle-aged group, radical feminists are younger and view women's rights as human rights (A.-R. Lee & Chin, 2007). They mainly focus on issues such as rape, prostitution, workplace discrimination, domestic abuse, sexual harassment, and spy cam, or molk'a (몰카) — an abbreviation of mollaek'amera (몰래카메라), crimes. For instance, the Women's Party in South Korea ride themselves as being the first ever feminist political party. They were recently founded in 2020 and have advocated for different causes, all aimed to battle the patriarchal system in the country (Women's Party, n.d.). Some of their agendas include abolition of the anti-abortion ban, demanding a legislation of an act to criminalize stalking, and fighting against digital sexual crimes (Women's Party, n.d.).

On the whole, both reformist and radical feminists hold demonstrations and rallies to call to attention the importance of issues they are advocating for. That being said, the feminist movement in South Korea is dominated by radical feminism (Barraclough, 2022) — perhaps because of their younger age group, internet savviness, and their advocacy for specific issues that are relevant to the issues that women face nowadays. For instance, the Gangnam Post-It Note Protest in 2016 was organised in response to the Gangnam Station murder case, where a man hid in a gender-neutral restroom and stabbed an unacquainted woman to death. The perpetrator testified that he did it "out of his hatred for women" as they had ignored and humiliated him all his life (Lim, 2016). However, the police announced that it was not a hate crime but one as a result of mental illness (C. Lee, 2016), causing an uproar that led to an anti misogyny movement. The Hyehwa Station Protest in 2018, is also another prominent rally that sought to protest against the widespread use of spy cams in women's bathrooms. This protest was due to the perception of double standards as a result of the swift arrest of a WOMAD user who secretly photographed a nude male model while other male perpetrators went scot-free (H. Jung, 2018). Other movements include the #MeToo movement, which began in 2018 when a female prosecutor came forward and confessed to experiencing sexual harassment (K. Lee, 2018), and the Free the Corset movement, which was meant to challenge the high beauty standards through the boycott of makeup, hair dye, and cosmetic procedures (Haas, 2018).



Against this backdrop of anger over South Korea's spy cam or molk'a epidemic, whose victims are mostly women, and cases of sexual misconduct uncovered in the global #MeToo movement, the 4B movement emerged. The 4B Movement supports and fight for the idea that women do not have to date, engage in sexual activities, get married or even start a family (The Straits Times, 2019). The radical actions and ideas of these radical feminists evoked negative responses. For instance, rapper San E's song Feminist sparked controversy and generated dissent among supporters of the feminist movement (DKDKTV, 2018) because it was perceived to be "sexist and ignorant of what feminism stands for" (Yim, 2018). Although San E claims that the song was meant to be a satire, to criticize the hypocrites who claimed to be feminists but treat women badly (Hong, 2018), other rappers responded with a diss track to counterattack San E's claims in his song (DKDKTV, 2018). This incident illustrated how diverse, and perhaps even polarised, the opinions towards feminism are, which will be explored further later.

While the issues that radical feminists stand for are pertinent in South Korea, some of them tend to be too extreme in their approach, which have sparked debates. For instance, a WOMAD community site user claimed in a post that she had raped an Australian boy and was applauded by fellow users for doing so. While she justified that she was "merely "mirroring" what men did to women with impunity" (Koo, 2020; W. Lee, 2019), it was clear that the feminist ideology has been taken to the extreme such that female chauvinism anti-male beliefs manifest. These extremist actions of mirroring negatively affect the feminist movement and are counterproductive as they perpetuate a negative image of feminists. This has made it difficult for people to support feminism as it is increasingly equated with misandry — the "hatred of men" (Hines & Song, 2021). Those who support the movement are also unwillingly to openly identify as feminist for fear of stigmatisation and avoidance by their peers. Another issue that has sparked controversy was the hand gesture that has been associated with the feminist hand sign. A photo of JaeJae, a popular YouTube personality in South Korea blew up when she was seen sporting a pinching hand gesture (W. L. Lee, 2021). Men's rights activists demanded her to be banned because the hand gesture resembled Megalia's logo (W. L. Lee, 2021). Brands that featured the hand sign were also attacked by these activists. For example, Musinsa, an online fashion shop, Kyochon F&B, and a convenience store were all attacked for including the pinch gesture in their advertisements (W. L. Lee, 2021). Men's activists were offended as they felt that the gesture was referring to their genitals (W. L. Lee, 2021). Some say that they were reading too much into the adverts. However, many pointed out that the feminists were changing their mentalities and their aim, saying that they no longer advocate for women's rights but are focused on bringing down men instead.

The revival of the feminist movement in contemporary South Korea has been both a boon and bane to feminists and women's rights in the country. While it has raised awareness about the plight of women in the country and their vulnerability to human rights violations, it has also led to the undertaking of extreme actions that have stigmatised the movement and drawn criticisms.



Attitudes towards feminism in contemporary South Korea

Indeed, the feminist movement in South Korea has generated a variety of responses to it. As much as there are supporters of the feminist movement in contemporary South Korea, there are also critics. Placing the attitudes towards feminism on a spectrum, the supporters and critics are on two different ends while the fence-sitters are situated in the middle. It is important to note that both the supporters and critics are not homogenous blocs because there exist different beliefs within each group and therefore, the extent of action to take.

Supporters

Within the supporters, there are two general types of feminism, as introduced earlier — reformist and radical feminism but the main wave of feminism in contemporary South Korea is radical feminism. Although majority of the supporters are females, there are also male supporters or men who self-identified as feminists, such as the Ordinary Guys Who Take Action group (행동하는 보통 남자). They recognise that blaming feminism will not be able to solve the common issues that men face, such as housing shortages, job security, and mandatory military service. They also wanted to portray that not all young men in South Korea are stereotypically anti-feminist (Yim, 2022a).

Critics

On the other side of the spectrum are critics of the feminist movement. Their criticisms stem from misogyny, having a post-feminist view or both. While mostly made up of men, particularly those in their 20s and 30s, there are also women who condemn the feminist movement.

Misogyny is the "hatred of, contempt for, or prejudice against women or girls" (Taylor, 2019). The root of misogyny among South Korean men can be traced back to historical beliefs and norms, such as patriarchy, women's subordination to men, and women's roles being confined to the house (Balazan, 2021). Consequently, misogyny drives their contempt for the feminist movement, which seeks to advance women's rights and address issues that were deemed acceptable in the past, such as the objectification of women (Sharp, 2020). However, misogyny is not a feeling that is exclusive to men. Due to systemic gender equality, women can be conditioned by the patriarchal system and thus, experience internalised misogyny. These misogynistic beliefs are equally dangerous because it involves women deprecating other women or even themselves for not living up to misogynistic standards (Malik & Dixit, 2021).

Alongside misogynistic beliefs are the rise of post-feminist views, particularly among men in their 20s and 30s. The establishment of the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family (여성가족부) in 2001 (formerly, the Ministry of Gender Equality, 여성부) is generally viewed by feminists as a first step towards gender equality. However, critics saw it as an indicator of gender equality and hence, took on a post-feminist view. Therefore, the continued existence of feminist movements was astonishing for them. Majority of the male critics believe that they are the victims of gender discrimination because "women's advancement" threatens "their financial security, amid a bleak job market and rising living costs" and they view it as unfair that they have to serve mandatory military service (Rashid, 2022a). The belief that the current feminist movement in South Korea is oppressing and attacking men have driven critics, such as Wangja, an anti-feminist YouTuber, to fight for men's rights. From their perspective, the feminist movement is a "mental illness" and has nothing to do with fighting for human rights or women's rights (CNA Insider, 2021).

On a similar note, some women also perceive the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family to be redundant as gender equality has already been achieved. For example, 47 women's groups, consisting of far-right conservative Christians, formed the Real Women's Sovereign Action (찐(眞)여성주권행동) and called for the abolition of the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family. Their justification was that gender equality is already present, but the feminist movement encourages preferential treatment of women and deepens the gender gap in South Korea (J. Y. Kim, 2022; Rashid, 2022b).

These critics show their unhappiness through the "demonisation of feminist discourse and ideology", such as equating feminism with misandry, and holding anti-feminist protests (Hines & Song, 2021). They crucify celebrities for showing the slightest bit of support, albeit unintentionally, for feminist causes such as reading the feminist novel, Kim Ji-Young, Born 1982, or watching its film adaptation (H. E. Kim, 2019; Sharp, 2020). Critics used Check Femi, a now-defunct website which listed 'verified' and suspected celebrities who are feminists, to decide which celebrities to criticise or boycott (Ko, 2021). They also force gender stereotypes on others. For instance, despite making history with three archery gold medals in the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, An San was criticised for being a feminist because she attended a women's university and has short hair — which are two stereotypical characteristics of a feminist. Critics also called for her gold medals to be stripped (Yang, 2021). Not only do the confrontational ways of critics foster misogyny but they also contribute to the reluctance of women and other sympathisers of the feminist movement to identity as feminists.

Fence-sitters

Lastly, the fence-sitters are generally women who cave into societal expectations of a woman and attempt to negotiate the patriarchal system on their own terms. A study by Kelly Chong (2006) analysed the reasons for the involvement of well-educated, middle-class women in South Korean evangelicalism despite its perpetuation of their subordination. The study found that these women converted to evangelicalism not because they believed in its conservative norms and traditions but because it provided “healing from domestic problems”. They were able to find solace through their belief in a higher entity and in knowing that they were “not suffering alone” (Chong, 2006). Although this brings personal comfort, their consent to patriarchy maintains current gender arrangements, does nothing productive to help enhance women’s rights and bring to light important issues that women still face in society today.

Synthesising the various attitudes

The attitudes towards feminism in contemporary South Korea are very diverse and polarised, particularly along gender lines. The different groups, less so for fence-sitters, tend to congregate on their own community sites, such as Megalia and WOMAD for radical feminists and Ilbe for the critics or anti-feminists. Although these sites serve as good platforms for them to reach out to like-minded individuals, share their experiences, and organise events, they perpetuate hate speech and derogatory remarks about each other. These sites are ultimately echo chambers that continually reinforce their beliefs and contempt, making it difficult for a constructive debate, or even a proper conversation, with each other. The presence of fence sitters is also unhelpful for the feminist movement as they implicitly consent to male dominance and the endurance of sexist crimes against women. As supporters and critics of feminism continue to clash over their ideologies, there is little possibility, and hope, for reconciliation between the two groups.

Despite the despondent state of societal attitudes towards feminism and women rights, there have been governmental efforts to equalize women’s standing in society in contemporary South Korea.

Implemented solutions

Through the years, South Korea has implemented solutions to advance women's rights in many sectors. One particular policy that had a significant impact on modern Korea's journey towards gender equality is the Family Law Reform Movement, which abolished the "family-head system" (Yang, 2008). The rewrites to the family law and abolishment of the "family-head" system in 2005 most notably meant that that the husbands in the household were no longer seen as the "head of the household" (Yang, 2008), and removed a ban time or waiting period before a woman's remarriage, previously of six months (Yang, 2008). Such unprecedented changes came after long years and gradual continuous fights for better women's rights that would contribute to gender equality in Korea. The law reforms dismantled the major entrenched legalities of gender inequality in South Korea and provided women greater "means to gain legal and social equality" (R. Kim, 1994).

Another great accomplishment was the decriminalisation of abortion in 2020. The law was "largely unenforced" from its conception in the 1960s until the mid-2000s, and abortion itself was highly accessible in South Korea (S. Kim et al., 2019). However, the practice was heavily stigmatised, and this worsened after the law was properly enforced, leading to many women suffering health risks from unsafe abortion practices (S. Kim et al., 2019). An estimated 50,000 abortions were carried out in South Korea in 2017 (Bicker, 2019). Unrest towards the law began to pick up in 2017, when feminist groups, united with other communities such as doctors' organizations and disability rights groups formed the Joint Action for Reproductive Justice, and they appealed for safe abortion practices and destigmatising the practice (S. Kim et al., 2019). Some of the opposition towards the decriminalisation included evangelical Christians, and obstetricians, who wanted to emphasise the lack of morality in the practice (Choe, 2010). Due to South Korea's falling birth rate, others found that it was important to increase the number of children that could become the future generation of citizens (Choe, 2010).

Despite the opposition, the "restrictive" law was eventually fully repealed in 2020 (S. Kim et al., 2019), and presented a step forward for South Korea's feminist groups. The legalisation of abortions –– legal until the 14th week of pregnancy "except in the case of a sex crime, or if the health of the mother is at risk, or if the fetus shows signs of severe birth defects, in which case abortion would be allowed up to 24 weeks" (Cha, 2020) –– gave Korean women agency over their bodies, and marked the "first mass movement in South Korea that foregrounded women's reproductive rights and health issues" (S. Kim et al., 2019). It also created more open conversation about "unmarried women's sexual behaviors and activities" (S. Kim et al., 2019). Analysts have concluded that the repealing of such a law removed the government's method of "regulat[ing] women's [reproductive rights,] sexuality and behavior" (S. Kim et al., 2019), and gave women more freedom to enact their sexual and reproductive rights.

While the law no longer discriminates against women's rights especially towards marriage, inheritance or assumes men as the head of the household, culture cannot be easily reconciled with the law reforms (R. Kim, 1994). Women continue to be "confronted with prejudiced attitudes and sexist treatment in various environments" (Tekkas et al., 2020) –– especially as Confucian values remain heavily "culturally embedded" in Korean culture (Moon et al., 2020). This includes patriarchy within the family system, where the default remains that "stereotype men as the breadwinner and the women as the homemaker" (Tekkas et al., 2020).

Such attitudes continue to be embedded in the expectations of familial structures and roles in South Korea. Women are often expected to "give up their careers and choose childbirth" (Song et al., 2018), while men are not socially obligated to participate in child rearing activities and are instead expected to "commit themselves totally to their job" (H.-O. Kim & Hoppe-Graff, 2001). While some women may desire to "pursue their academic and career aspirations without being negatively affected by [...] childbirth" (Song et al., 2018), such social support systems and policies that would allow them to do so are often unavailable, resulting in women viewing this problem as having to choose one or the other. Attitudes that believe in "equal sharing of parenting responsibilities" are emerging (K. Jung & Honig, 2000), but the reality remains that many women choose to "dedicate themselves to child rearing" as their employment is often considered as not beneficial for children's upbringing" (Seo et al., 2020), and many women worry that such "old-fashioned" (McCurry, 2021) views will be imposed on them after childbirth.

The perception of women as homemakers also affects women's position in the workplace. South Korea has the largest wage gap between men and women working in the same position among OECD countries, at 37.2% (OECD, 2021). Historically, such a wage gap existed because men often had higher education levels than women, but this no longer rings true in the modern day (Monk-Turner & Turner, 2004). However, such a gap continues to persist because of the social perception that women must dedicate their lives to raising children, which brings "deleterious impact on women's market opportunities" (Monk-Turner & Turner, 2004). Another reason for this wage gap is because child rearing is seen as a detriment towards work, and companies "do not want to pay for maternity leave" (McCurry, 2021), revealing an economical assessment towards a woman raising a family. This perception of female employees' work being monetarily less valuable than their male counterparts only further reinforces the false assumption that women are meant to be delegated to the domestic sphere.

Future challenges for feminism in South Korea

Although South Korea has made progress towards becoming a society that treats men and women equally, such advancement may be difficult to see in the coming years.

While incumbent President of South Korea Moon Jae-in had been an advocate for gender equality and called himself a “feminist president” during his campaign (Rich et al., 2022), the opposite can be said of incoming president Yoon Suk-yeol. Yoon asserted during his presidential campaign that “structural discrimination based on gender” does not exist (Gunia, 2022). He has capitalised on and is a part of the growing opposition against feminism in South Korea, and instead believes that there has been “discrimination” against men in Korea (Gunia, 2022).

Changes to Moon’s more feminist approach have already begun in the Yoon administration. For example, Yoon has decided against Moon’s gender quota that ensured a more balanced gender ratio for his presidential transition committee (Yim, 2022b). Instead of the 30% minimum of women staff that the Moon administration had recommended, Yoon has 3 women out of a total of 24 staff, which is 16.6% of his staff in total. Such changes and pledges are alarming to Korean women. Despite Yoon being quoted as saying that he has no reason to “divide men and women” (Kang, 2022), South Korean women are uneasy about the changes to come as marked by the unequal gender ratio in the Yoon administration and how it may set the tone for the future of feminism during Yoon’s presidency. While framed as a move towards “meritocracy” (Kang, 2022), such changes seem to only increase the gender discrimination women face in the workplace, from the hiring process to their income level.

Another change that the Yoon administration had planned to enact is the abolishment of the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family (여성가족부), a ministry that works to “reduce gender discrimination and violence against socially vulnerable groups” (Yoo, 2021). Yoon said during his presidential rally that the ministry “[gave] preferential treatment to women” (Rich et al., 2022) and pledged to abolish it to “establish a new organization instead to deal with issues related to children, families and the demographic crisis” (B. Kim, 2022), which was not surprising considering Yoon’s scepticism towards the existence of gender discrimination in South Korea. While it is true that the ministry had “struggled to actualize gender equality” (S. U. Kim, 2007), those in favour of the ministry defended it, citing its help in promoting awareness of and a culture of gender equality. Reports have also said that abolishing the ministry would be difficult as such a large-scale change would have to be approved by Parliament, currently dominated by Moon’s liberal camp (Business Times, 2022).

As of 7 April 2022, Yoon had decided against further pursuing his promise to abolish the ministry, and instead announced that his team would elect its own minister for the ministry (Business Times, 2022). Some have cited this reconsideration as due to the intense backlash Yoon faced and the aforementioned difficulty in restructuring and building a new ministry (Business Times, 2022). Such a drastic walk-back in a heavily politicised “male versus female” fight could be a demonstration of the growing power of feminist agendas in South Korea, which will likely continue despite the hurdles it will face.

CONCLUSION

After analysing the historical culture and treatment of women in South Korea, we can understand why the ongoing fight for feminism is still so heavily opposed to. What we understand to be modern feminist values, such as women's agency and equality, fundamentally go against the Confucian values that continue to remain important markers and integral values within the Korean people. Thus, attempting to integrate such feminist values in Korean society is not just seen as a matter of improving women's agency and power, but are attempts to erase traditional values that form the Korean identity. In addition, there seems to be a lack of concrete understanding of what feminism means in South Korea, and extremist displays of misandry often conflate what is or is not within the fight for women's rights, leading to more opposition towards feminism. It is also because of the other societal and economic challenges that plague South Korea –– such as lack of employment opportunities –– that people view feminism as a threat and has created an even more prominent divider between men and women.

Many are not optimistic about the future and foresee more challenges to arrive with the upcoming inauguration of President Yoon Suk-yeol. However, as feminism has taken centre stage in the political discourse in Korea, we still expect feminist activists and beliefs to gain increased support, accelerating the movement towards gender equality. Nonetheless, given that traditions and perceptions often take time to shift, more permanent, large-scale changes will likely not have immediate effect, but are expected to only take place in the decades to come.



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K-POP OVER THE YEARS



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INTRODUCTION

The first Hallyu wave lasted between 1997 to 2007 and was followed by the second Hallyu wave which persists to this day. There are three significant differences between the two waves. The first difference is the industries focused on during each era. Hallyu wave 1.0 had a strong focus on the Korean film and television drama industry. While the K-pop industry existed in that era, it did not receive mainstream attention and was simply a genre in the Korean music community. It was only in the second era where K-pop became the main industry pushing the Hallyu wave forwards. The biggest and most mainstream K-pop groups which have permeated international pop culture, such as BTS and Blackpink, debuted and are active only in the second era. This ties in with the next difference between the two eras, which is the technological advances found in the modern Hallyu wave. The rise of the internet allowed the K-pop industry to expand its reach beyond a local audience. Video sharing platforms such as YouTube entered mainstream usage and helped spread K-pop music videos internationally, attracting a large global audience for the industry and its artists. The rise of social media usage such as Instagram and Twitter also favoured the industry by allowing international fans to stay connected with their favourite artists, reducing the physical and language gaps between them. This factor will be elaborated further as well. The final difference between the two waves is linked with the previous ones, and it is how the Korean government has been involved in each wave. In the first wave, the Korean government used indirect policies to support the export of cultural goods. This included supporting the export of Korean dramas to other Asian countries. One highly successful example is the 2003 series Dae Jang Geum, which became extremely popular in many East Asian and Southeast Asian countries. However, over time, the government took a more direct stance and focused on intellectual property rights of the creative industries. Policies were made to ensure that Korean companies could capitalise on their local IPs by allowing legal access to them from foreign nations who also had reliable legal systems. As such, expansion into an international market was encouraged and resulted in high profitability. These policies and the rise of new technological advancements thus point to why K-pop was able to spread globally and receive high profits.

Differences in the K-Pop Industry

Looking specifically at the K-pop industry, four differences can be found between Hallyu wave 1.0 and 2.0. These four differences are: sales, industry trends, attention and music.

Sales

The financial success of K-pop in the second Hallyu wave has increased significantly. It now reaches a much larger market thanks to easy access to an international audience, allowing much more sales than before. A comparison between two culturally significant groups from both eras proves this point easily. The groups being compared are g.o.d., a boy group which debuted in 1999, and BTS, currently the most well-known group who debuted well into the second Hallyu wave in 2013. The domestic sales for the groups' debut albums and highest selling albums will be compared.

	Debut album total sales
g.o.d., *Chapter 1*	156,209
BTS, *2 Kool 4 Skool*	439,575

Table 1: Debut album sales

Table 1 compares the debut sales for both groups. g.o.d.'s debut album, Chapter 1, was released on January 26 1999 and contains two iconic songs which left an impact in the industry. An archived webpage from the Recording Industry Association of Korea (RIAK) listed the album as receiving 156,209 cumulative sales ([Album sales statistics of 1999], n.d.). BTS's debut album, 2 Kool 4 Skool, was released on June 12 2013. According to Gaon, the cumulative sales of this album is 439,575, nearly three times as much as Chapter 1's sales. These figures showcase how large the market for K-pop has grown over time. It is important to remember that while BTS is very popular now, they were considered an underdog group during their debut, so their debut album cannot be considered a highly successful one.

	Peak album total sales
g.o.d., *Chapter 3*	1,824,278
BTS, *Map of the Soul: 7*	4,762,802

Table 2: Peak album sales

Table 2 compares the highest selling albums of each group. For g.o.d, this is Chapter 3, which was released on November 3 2000. According to the archived RIAK ranking chart, the album received 1,824,278 cumulative sales ([Album sales statistics of 2001], n.d.). BTS's highest selling album to date is Map of the Soul: 7, which has a cumulative sales total of 4,768,802. This is nearly 2.6 times as much as Chapter 3's sales.

Overall, both tables exemplify how much the demand for K-pop artists and music has grown from the first to second era. The market has expanded so greatly that most successful groups can achieve sales numbers that trump any group of an older era. This is not to downplay the talent and successes of the older generation of K-pop artists, but to emphasise how significantly the profitability of the industry has grown.

However, these figures only compare domestic growth. The rise of a global audience thanks to the internet raises these sales figures into tens of millions. According to Gaon, over 57 million physical K-pop albums were sold globally in 2021 alone (Chin, 2022). This number only accounts for the top 400 albums of that year, so the number could be much bigger. The total number of physical albums sold worldwide has climbed steadily from 25 million in 2019 and 41.7 million in 2020. One reason for the high sales in 2021 is due to the pandemic, as fans are unable to support their artists by going to concerts and live events. These fans turn to purchasing both digital and physical merchandise to support their artists, leading to the significant surge of physical album sales.

Industry Trends

The changes in the K-pop industry can also be marked by the new trends that have appeared. The two trends discussed here are the rise of idol trainee survival shows and the use of photocards.

Trainee survival shows are reality television programs that focus on a group of participants competing to debut in a K-pop group. Most of the early trainee survival shows focus on a small group of participants aiming to debut, such as YG's BIGBANG Documentary which aired in 2006. Many existing K-pop groups have a trainee survival show history, such as Twice, whose nine members come from the sixteen participants in the show, Sixteen. However, the largest trainee survival show franchise would be the Produce series. This series stands out by featuring a mass group of trainees, one hundred and one, and putting them through the typical survival show performance challenges. The twist is that this large group of trainees would be culled down through audience voting, and this would happen weekly. The resulting group would also only be temporary and eventually disband. Their first and second seasons aired in 2016 and 2017 respectively and received international attention. Their resulting K-pop groups, IOI and Wanna One, were also extremely popular acts both domestically and globally. Wanna One had even gone on a world tour visiting 14 countries including Singapore. The success of these shows and groups also influenced other similar shows to appear in other countries, namely China. Idol Producer was released in China in 2018, featuring a massive one hundred trainee participants and using an audience voting system similar to the Produce 101 series. Many spin-off formats of the Produce 101 series have continued to air, and the popularity of such shows and K-pop groups has not waned. These shows are not only highly entertaining, but they also provide the resulting K-pop group with almost guaranteed success. The show draws in large audiences who will have formed an attachment with these idols before their debut, thus ensuring there is a significant fanbase for them afterwards.

Another trend found in the second Hallyu wave is photocards. Photocards are gifts found in physical albums. They feature a selfie photograph of a random member of the K-pop group and are popular among fans as collectibles. While photocards did exist before the second Hallyu wave, their popularity emerged in 2010 after SNSD's album Oh. Photocards are not only fun gifts for a fan, they can also be considered a tool used to combat the music industry's shift from CDs and cassette tapes to digital music platforms. The second Hallyu wave saw the rise of the internet along with major streaming services such as YouTube and Spotify. Domestically, South Korea had streaming services such as Melon and Genie. Due to this digital shift, companies saw dwindling physical sales as fans moved to the newer and more convenient digital platforms. However, photocards ensure that fans continue to purchase physical albums, even enticing them to buy multiple copies of the same album (Yang, 2021). Each album contains the same music tracks, but because the photocards are randomised, a fan may not necessarily get one of their favourite members. Thus, to increase their chances of receiving their favourite member, fans will purchase multiple copies of the album, further boosting physical album sales.

Recently, photocards have also created a whole economic market of their own. This sub-hobby of the K-pop fandom entices fans to start their own photocard collections and thus keeps them invested, ensuring they will continue following the K-pop group and collecting new photocards from new albums. While photocards may not appear to have high value to those outside the collecting community, they can fetch extremely high prices under the right circumstances. Rare photocards from out of print albums can be pricey, making them very attractive to avid collectors and newer fans who wish to own something from a previous era of the group. As such, while these items may just be pieces of printed cardboard, they are given a high value by the community and thus work effectively even today as a tool to ensure continued physical album sales.

Attention

All celebrities want attention. It has long been established that this is not any different for K-pop idols. One of the most popular K-pop idols, Taeyeon, recently mentioned that idols have to be attention-seeking if they want their career to last long (Lin, 2018). As such, K-pop idols are similar in wanting attention regardless of whether they belong to Hallyu wave 1.0 or 2.0. At the same time, the matter of attention varies differently for each wave. The three big differences between the relationship of attention and K-pop idols from Hallyu wave 1.0 as compared to Hallyu Wave 2.0 are: the type of attention they want, the strategies that their companies employ to grab public attention for them, and the level of recognition that they achieve through these strategies.

Type of Attention

The first aspect to explore is the difference in the type of attention that idols in Hallyu wave 1.0 and 2.0 hope to attain. K-pop idols in the former era primarily focused on targeting the Asian market for attention, while those in the latter era target both the Asian and international market. During South Korea's former President Kim Dae Jung's term, he invested in their pop culture as one way of national branding, and it successfully resulted in a demand for K-pop from its neighbouring countries like China and Taiwan, thus fuelling the start of Hallyu wave 1.0 (Yecies & Shim, 2014). Since there was a large enough demand for K-pop from neighbouring countries and idols were receiving sufficient attention, there was little incentive for companies to venture out from the Asian market. However, that mindset gradually changed in Hallyu wave 2.0. In 2012, PSY, a K-pop artist, released the song "Gangnam Style" which became an international hit. The song was so popular globally that it was the first song to hit over a billion views on Youtube, and also managed to peak at second place in Billboard HOT 100, a prominent global music ranking chart (Murray, 2021). Before, companies of K-pop idols were doubtful of their artists being able to break into the global market since global ranking charts tend to focus on Western songs. However, PSY's success was an indicator that venturing into the international market was possible, and that the love for music transcended language ("How did K-pop conquer the world?", 2019). Eventually, in Hallyu wave 2.0, an increasing number of K-pop idols have held concerts and interacted with fans all over the world instead of limiting themselves to just the Asian market.

Strategies of Attention

Moving on, the strategies that companies employ to help their K-pop idols gain attention from potential and existing fans also varies from Hallyu wave 1.0 to Hallyu wave 2.0. As previously mentioned, the primary target for the K-pop industry in Hallyu wave 1.0 was the Asian market that was hungry for Korean pop culture. This market felt that only Koreans could produce that authenticity the market was seeking (Yecies & Shim, 2014). As such, the talent pool in K-pop was largely limited to Koreans. However, in 2006, SM Entertainment was the first to expand its company's pool of talents for K-pop. The company first started holding auditions in neighbouring countries like China and Taiwan, but slowly started expanding their search into Western countries like the United States and Canada. Needless to say, many other companies followed suit (Lim & Lee, 2020) since K-pop was expanding to a global audience at this point. Foreign members help to increase uniqueness to the group and grab the attention of potential fans from the same nationalities. Additionally, in the current age, Korean members are also likely to be sent to learn languages such as Japanese or English (Yecies & Shim, 2014) in an attempt to connect with existing and potential fans that speak that particular language. Overall, for Hallyu wave 1.0, the strategies for K-pop idols to get attention focus on Korea's domestic pool of talents since the target audience was only Asians, but in Hallyu wave 2.0, strategies have to be expanded and tweaked to grab attention of international fans since the target audience is now the global audience.

Recognition from Attention

One of the reasons why K-pop idols want attention is to receive recognition for their efforts and talents. Most of the time, this recognition comes in the form of placing high in music charts and receiving grand awards. That holds true for K-pop idols in both Hallyu wave 1.0 and 2.0. However, the extent of recognition that idols and their companies in each wave aspire for is different. In Hallyu wave 1.0, there was no focus on an international audience. Hence, idols hoped to gain attention through their songs and place high enough on local weekly charts like Melon and win awards at local award shows such as Mnet Asian Music Awards. As the market expanded to include the international audience in Hallyu wave 2.0, local recognition is still crucial for success, but there is also more focus on global charts and annual global awards like Billboard. In the beginning of Hallyu wave 2.0, these were almost impossible to attain for K-pop idols because of the lack of international fans. Wonder Girls (Bell, 2009), PSY (Staff, 2012) and CL (Benjamin, 2016) managed to enter Billboard HOT 100 but this feat was infrequent and rare. Now, it seems more likely thanks to BTS and Blackpink, two of Korea's most popular K-pop groups who are constantly charting in global ranking charts with every song release (Fu, 2021). As such, companies now are aspiring for their idols to also achieve plenty locally and globally to grab attention from both local and international fans.

Music

Another important aspect of K-pop that differs between Hallyu waves 1.0 and 2.0 is the music. K-pop idols either produce their own music or sing songs that are produced for them by the company, and this music is what makes them idols. However, the very essence of K-pop, music, has changed over time, and this change is easily reflected through the Hallyu waves. There are three main differences: English usage in K-pop songs, taboo themes found in K-pop songs and the music videos of K-pop songs.

English Usage

First and foremost, the usage of English across the two Hallyu waves are vastly dissimilar. In Hallyu wave 1.0, Vitagliano (2019) states that the use of English was uncommon and only a small percentage of song lyrics were English. Some also sang translated Western song covers in Korean. However, in Hallyu wave 2.0, it is clear that many songs have English words. K-pop music title tracks are in English, the stage names of many idols are in English, artists use English to better represent taboo themes and sing full songs in English while calling it K-pop. Not only that, a lot of K-pop choruses in the current era largely consist of English words to make them catchy. For instance, the word “more” appears twenty times in the chorus of the song “More and More” by K-pop group TWICE (JYP Entertainment, 2020). There are many Koreans that are displeased about the increasing prevalence of English in K-pop. This trend questions the authenticity of Korean pop culture, and they believe K-pop should be advocating and promoting Korean culture instead of Western culture (Vitagliano, 2019). Regardless, the use of English continues to be pervasive in K-pop songs in both Hallyu waves.

Taboo Themes

Taboo themes are controversial in Korea, and Koreans are especially strict about social taboos which often leads to discrimination and prejudice (Chang, 2020). Some of these social taboos include being LGBTQ+, supporting the LGBTQ+ community and openly discussing one’s mental health. With regards to LGBTQ+ issues, the Korean government has constantly proven themselves to be extremely discriminatory against the community in both the past and present, and there is no law to prevent discrimnation towards non-heteronormative conforming individuals (Valfort, 2020). In Hallyu wave 1.0, anything LGBTQ+ related was extremely intolerable, not only by the government but also by the idols themselves. They were uncomfortable with anything related to the topic. There have even been rumours that the K-pop group K’Population disbanded due to extreme fan-shipping between male members, which was deemed intolerable by the idols and their company. As for mental health, K-pop idols were not allowed to explore such topics in their music (Benjamin, 2019). In Hallyu wave 2.0, social taboos are still causing strains in Korean society, but a huge difference is that K-pop idols are no longer prohibited from touching on these taboo topics in their songs. For instance, there are many more songs with subtle LGBTQ+ lyrics and themes, like “Heart Attack” by Loona’s Chuu which, through the song’s lyrics and music video, tells a story of a woman falling in love with another woman. (Loonatheworld, 2017). Mental health is also increasingly explored as a topic, and one example of such a song is “The Last” by BTS’ Suga (Jeonilysm, 2016) that discusses the struggles of depression. Unfortunately, even though K-pop idols are increasingly comfortable with taboo themes in their music in Hallyu wave 2.0 as compared to Hallyuwave 2.0 as compared to Hallyu wave 1.0, most taboo themes are still bannable on television networks (Writer, 2014), making this a similarity between the two eras.

Music Videos

Music videos are a huge part of K-pop music and there are many differences between those from Hallyu wave 1.0 and Hallyu wave 2.0. Apart from the obvious enhancement of camerawork and video quality, the content of music videos has changed. In Hallyu wave 1.0, most music videos consisted of K pop idols dancing and showing off their visuals. There was little storytelling in these music videos and those that existed would be confined within the music video. In Hallyu wave 2.0, this is still common, and some K-pop groups prioritise visuals over a story for their songs, but there are also plenty of storytelling focused music videos (Louise, 2021). These storytelling focused music videos either portray a story on its own, or expand into a whole connected universe like what K-pop groups such as BTS and Aespa are doing (Lee, 2019). The increase in storytelling music videos is not the only difference between the two eras. In fact, something especially unique to Hallyu wave 2.0 is the inclusion of artificial intelligence (AI) in music videos. It was first started by game company Riot that turned four, now five, game characters into AI K-pop idols. They also hired K-pop idols Miyeon and Soyeon from G-IDLE to voice two of the fictional idols (Watkin, 2020). Not long later, SM Entertainment announced their intention to debut Aespa with their AI counterparts (Yoon, 2020). AI cannot be found in Hallyu wave 1.0 and has only just started being relevant in Hallyu wave 2.0 due to technological advancement. Though there are many more differences between music videos of K-pop songs in Hallyu wave 1.0 and 2.0, the two most striking differences are the increase in storytelling music videos and the increasing inclusion of AI.

The Rise of K-pop in Hallyu 2.0

The K-pop industry transcended into Hallyu 2.0 since 2007 when social media sites started popping up everywhere. With FaceBook launching in 2004, YouTube in 2005, Twitter in 2006, and Instagram in 2010, the ability to reach across the world instantly was made even easier. Twitter has gained popularity over the years, allowing people with similar interests to talk about the same topic, which leads to the topic becoming a trend. If enough people are talking about a certain topic, it appears in the trending section based on Twitter's algorithm. People who do not have knowledge about K-pop become curious about trending K-pop topics. They take interest and thus, this spreads the K-pop agenda to individuals around the world. YouTube quickly became the platform of choice for the dissemination of K-pop content and is considered the backbone of the music industry in Korea (Williams Jolin, 2017). As YouTube became the platform to spread K-pop in 2006, Korea holds the first music market to generate more than half of the revenue from digital music (Williams Jolin, 2017).

The B2B Business Model

With YouTube's launch in 2005, Korean entertainment agencies were one of the firsts to jump onto the newly created media sharing site. Generation of profits were a struggle until the Business-to-business (B2B) business model was introduced to the industry. Essentially, this business model involves the selling of virtual commercial space to multinational enterprises (MNEs) and in turn, lowers the marketing and transaction costs that agencies must bear (Williams Jolin, 2017). Under this strategy, labels, artists, writers, and producers upload content to YouTube for free and the channel owners are able to collect royalties from YouTube based on the number of video views. In the early days of Hallyu 2.0, this was considered a gamble. YouTube was not as prevalent as it is in the present and video views also depended on a number of other factors such as subscriber count. The online traffic for each channel was not much, especially when K-pop was not known internationally back in early Hallyu 2.0.

However, S.M Entertainment pioneered the B2B business model and became the leading model for the B2B strategy, as they garnished about 40 million dollars, equating to about 80% of their total revenue in 2010 (Williams Jolin, 2017).

Social Media

As Hallyu 2.0 progressed, it became evident that social media was going to be a part of everyday life for everyone. To interact with fans even more, Korean entertainment agencies started dedicating staff to tend to social media specifically (Choi & Maliangkay, 2014). They upload a variety of content for fans in diverse formats – video, images, news and many more. Using social media as an outreach strategy started to become the norm, as every group has dedicated channels on every social media platform nowadays. These platforms serve as a gateway to introduce the groups to the world. In addition, all groups also have their own dedicated fancafe. This sacred space is where fans interact with their favourite idols. These are different from social media sites, as they are geared towards the general public whereas fancafes are more private. Fans can upload anything they want whether it be directed to the idols or just to start a discussion with fellow fans. This fancafe is moderated by the agencies themselves regularly, where fans must hold membership to enter, either by payment or showing you are a 'true' fan owning merchandise of the idols in question. They are also subjected to several rules to ensure that it is a safe place for both idol and fan interaction.



Exclusive Content

YouTube remains the platform of choice for the dissemination of video content, even in the present age. Korean entertainment agencies maximise the potential of social media by releasing variety shows featuring the idols and behind the-scenes footage, allowing fans to witness idols outside of their official performances. This stimulates the fans, especially international ones as they do not have many opportunities to see their idols in a real-life setting.

Social media, Pandemic, and Fansigns

With the pandemic rolling around at the peak of Hallyu 2.0, a new normal was adopted in the form of 1:1 video calls via KakaoTalk, a very common social media application in Korea. Fansigns are very common in the K-pop industry, as they are a way for fans to interact with the idols one-on-one. They are limited to Korean residents only. However, social distancing measures came along with the pandemic and fansigns were no longer hosted for safety reasons. These special events were a profit-generating strategy for Korean entertainment agencies. For every album purchased, an individual stands a chance to enter these events. With this, Korean agencies adapted to the pandemic very quickly by introducing 1:1 video calls in replacement of offline fansigns. This allowed international fans to participate as well, giving them a chance to meet their idols from across the world.

impacts of K-pop

The impacts of K-pop and the Hallyu wave spread far and wide. This extends to different sectors of society, including the economy and the political scene.

One of the most prominent ways K-pop has affected society is the normalisation of extreme fans known as ‘sasaengs’. The term comes from Korean pop culture, derived from the Korean words private and life, referring to how much these fans involve themselves into their idols’ personal lives (Mathew, 2021).

Some infamous examples of sasaeng’s misdeeds include when 2PM’s Taecyeon received a letter written in an extreme fan’s menstrual blood. Another incident involved a German sasaeng who pursued Twice’s Nayeon to the point where she posted an Instagram story begging him to go home when he boarded the same flight as her. The story was quickly taken down, but it went viral through people’s sympathy for Nayeon’s fear and desperation.

Many sasaengs operate on a network of information, and make a living in trading or selling information about idols; such as where they live or what their travel schedules are. There is even a service called a sasaeng taxi which aids to this network, where sasaengs can rent a taxi that charges an average of $600 per day, and spend the day following their favourite idols, in the process violating traffic rules in order to keep up.

Of course, while this all sounds horrific enough to attribute the blame to the individuals committing such criminal acts, the fact of the matter is that such extreme behaviour is often enabled by the industry. Idols are controlled to an incredibly intense degree, and they are expected to keep up a certain image. This image often involves the idol flirting with fans as fanservice, which feeds into the ‘unobtainable but-obtainable’ perception. Something else that feeds into their delusions is the fact that idols are often banned from dating, either publicly or at all. Additionally, idols, often female ones, are over-sexualised and objectified. This further reinforces the idea that they are objects of desire to be obtained (Gandhiok, 2020).

Sasaengs are the epitome of what is known as an unhealthy parasocial relationship. Such relationships are defined as the relationship between someone and a person they imagine they know when they in fact do not. Usually, this extends to celebrities and fans. K-pop has capitalised on this sort of relationship to an unhealthy extent in order to profit, and the prevalence of sasaengs in the industry is proof of such actions.

Even without sasaengs, there are still unreasonable fans who have been enabled. Due to the overemphasis on fanservice, fans have a sense of entitlement that often results in unreasonable requests for fanservice under the guise of 'emotional reliance' and 'professionalism'. For example, Joy from Red Velvet was heavily criticised when fans pointed out how little she engaged with them on Bubble, one of the more exclusive fancafe apps offered to fans. She was accused of being unfeeling and unprofessional because she was not as responsive, a phenomenon you never see imposed on Western celebrities. The industry's willingness to provide such platforms for fans and disregard their idols' personal time or lives is a key factor in normalising such unhealthy parasocial relationships (Tuleconghoa1, 2021). Additionally, this is a prime example of the exclusiveness that sasaengs covet, to have a 'private' experience beyond what a normal fan enjoys. Therefore, the idea of content exclusivity is one that the industry uses which encourages sasaeng behaviour.

Another large part of K-pop's influence on society includes the violent fan wars that have become commonplace, both in real life and on online platforms. While social media may have played a huge role in helping catapult this industry to where it is today, it has unfortunately also provided a place for immature and extreme arguments to be carried out or exaggerated. Many of the biggest fan wars about K-pop happened during the second Hallyu wave, and they often escalated quickly into violence – physical or otherwise ("6 Biggest Fanwars In K-Pop History That We're Thankful Are In The Past", 2018).

Economically speaking however, K-pop has also brought South Korea many economic benefits. The revenue brought in by large names like BTS or Gangnam Style is unmatched by other industries, and the tourism revenue spurred by fans of K-pophoping to explore Korea to feel closer to their favourite idols has also contributed very largely to the economy. Gangnam Style generated $8 million in revenue on YouTube alone, and BTS's economic impact is predicted to hit 56.2 trillion won ($49.8 billion) within ten years of their formation (Shadow, 2019). Thanks to these idols and music, 2017 saw a total of 59.83 trillion won in tourism revenue. As such, the economic effects of the Hallyu wave are undeniable (Sajnach, 2021).

K-pop's effects have also been recognised in the political sphere. The Korean government passed a bill in parliament allowing "a pop culture artist who was recommended by the Minister of Culture, Sports and Tourism to have greatly enhanced the image of Korea both within the nation and throughout the world" to postpone his military service in recognition of their achievements ("BTS: South Korea passes law allowing K-pop stars to postpone military service", 2020).

CONCLUSION

To sum up, our paper explores the way in which K-pop and the Hallyu wave has grown and evolved. New generations of artists increasingly use various strategies to garner attention and promote their music, videos, and groups. K-pop is now almost entirely reliant on social media for promotion campaigns, and it is this very tool of the internet which has allowed it to proliferate the online world today and extend its impacts into various aspects of society.



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4

HOW HALLYU HAS IMPACTED SOUTH KOREA'S ECONOMY: K-POP, FILMS, WEBTOONS AND FOOD



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INTRODUCTION

Rise of Hallyu

According to Korea.net (n.d.), Hallyu is known as the “Korean Wave” , and is typically through the rising global spread of popular cultural media like TV Dramas and K-pop that greatly formed the foundation of the Korean Wave.

Moreover, Hallyu has managed to go beyond just popular cultural media - it has had a profound impact on the popularity of other products like webtoons (Sejong, 2021) and food (MartinRoll, 2021), as these products also gained popularity internationally.

Hallyu is known as South Korea’s “soft power”, a term coined by Joseph Nye, a Harvard political scientist, as Hallyu serves as a tool for South Korea to establish its reputation via improving its image (MartinRoll, 2021). The reason why South Korea required Hallyu was because Hallyu served as an effective long-term solution to generate more revenue for rebuilding the economy after the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis and also greatly improve its global image for diplomatic reasons (Srinivas, 2021).

Moreover, as elaborated in the next section, South Korea’s economy has improved drastically, and a good portion of the growth can be attributed to Hallyu, which will be further discussed in the main body of this essay.

Overview of South Korea's Economy

Ranking 4th in Asia and 10th in the world in terms of economic power, South Korea is known for its impressive rise from being one of the poorest countries in the world to being a highly-developed country (Economic and Political Overview in South Korea, 2022). According to The World Bank (2021), South Korea experienced real gross domestic product (GDP) growth of average 5.45% annually between 1988 and 2019. This spectacular performance was enhanced by annual export growth averaging 9.27%. South Korea is the world’s seventh largest exporter of goods and the ninth largest importer in the world.

A study by the Korean Foundation shows that Hallyu’s direct impact on the South Korean economy has doubled from 2016 to 2019 (Srinivas, 2021). As such, this term paper seeks to explore the impacts that four key features of Hallyu – K-pop, Films, Webtoons, and Food – have on the country’s economy.

K-POP

Brief Overview of K-pop

K-pop has become a global phenomenon, with K-pop idols garnering fans from all around the world. Known for its flashy outfits and synchronised music performances, K-pop is more than just a fad. It is a special genre of music where East meets West, creating a Western-sounding melody but with an Asian flair and has transcended geological and linguistic boundaries that has won over the hearts of many people.

From Military Rule to Democracy

The origins of modern K-pop date back to 1987 during South Korea's reformation of its democratic government. During the Fourth Republic under Park Chung Hee's rule, the Yushin Constitution was established in 1972. Apart from granting Park effective control over the parliament and possibility of permanent presidency, this rule also enforced strict controls over the media by imposing tight censorship rules. In addition, during this time, the Korean Central Intelligence Agency placed its operatives in educational institutions, media companies and central and local government authorities to monitor dissent towards the government (Kwon & Kim, 2013). Furthermore, Park mandated that broadcasting stations had to broadcast at least two 'propaganda songs' a day to foster cooperation, hardwork and patriotism amongst the South Korean citizens. Korean pop music was severely censored for its melodies, which were considered "too Japanese" or "too Western-sounding", and its lyrics, were deemed "politically subversive," or "containing improper cultural messages" (Oh & Lee, 2014).

Birth of K-pop

Following Park's assasination and the numerous protests for democracy and freedom of expression, the next few civilian governments shifted their focus from propaganda-building to transforming Korea into a leader of innovation and cultural exports, giving rise to the 'Korean Wave'.

Alongside this change, South Korean citizens had more exposure to Western music which sparked the birth of K-pop and inspired its unique sound. Seo Taiji & Boys debuted on MBC's talent show, performing "Nan Arayo (I Know)" in 1992. Despite the poor response garnered from the judging panel, "Nan Arayo" placed first on music charts and remained there for 17 weeks, selling over 1.5 million copies within its first month of release which earned the group a Golden Disc Award in 1992. By the mid-90s, the K-pop star-formula had become entrenched in South Korea. They sold over 1,819,514 copies for their first album and a total of 8,063,503 copies throughout their career (Korean Sales, 2020). Their success marked the start of modern K-pop, with its integration of English lyrics, hip hop elements, and dance. Seo Taiji music style and inspiration completely deviated from conventional Korean pop music such as trot — a music genre that is known for its repetitive rhythm and vocal inflections. However, Seo Taiji's success and stardom proved that their radical experimentation with different music genres did pay off which would soon catalyse the emergence of many other K-pop groups.

Experimentation with different Western music genres continued with the presence of other emerging young artists who produced music inspired by a combination of different music genres such as rhythm and blues, jazz, rock, and modern folk. This led to the creation of groups like H.O.T, Sechs Kies, g.o.d, and S.E.S. These singers achieved quick, if not overnight, success in Korea.

Technological

Advancements in K-pop

Seeing the success of this new genre of music, Korean music companies wanted to capitalise on it and started to find ways on how to expand the reach of K-pop into regional markets. In addition to the growing popularity of K-pop, technological advancements also influenced the way Korean music companies increased access to music produced by their artists.

They realised that consumers were no longer reliant on physical music storage devices such as MP3s and Walkman, instead, they turned to virtual storage services such as Soribada and WebHard in the early 2000s. However, technological advancements continued to advance which led to the creation of smart devices and social media platforms. This meant that these Korean music companies had to continually adapt and act accordingly in order to establish a stronghold over their consumers who were now streaming music through their devices.

Following this trend, online music streaming services were created. In fact, South Korea was one of the first few precursors to launch their own music streaming service in the world. For instance, Melon was launched in 2004, two years before the creation of Swedish music streaming platform Spotify.

Facing these changes, Korean entertainment companies understood from the beginning the importance of SNS and internet platforms as effective tools for disseminating music under “loose” copyright practice in Korea. They were among the first to establish official YouTube channels as a means to promote newly released songs more effectively. Hence, a large number of (new and old) K-pop songs have become available online. Establishing an internet presence for K-pop groups led to rapid diffusion of their music through these internet platforms as compared to physical albums. As a result, international fans were able to access K-pop much faster and easier.

Furthermore, the interactive nature of social media platforms such as the comments section of YouTube videos allowed entertainment companies to gauge the response of the music produced by their artists. This allowed them to learn about the preferences of listeners or fans around the world which, to a certain degree, have motivated them to produce more internationally appealing music. This change is evident in the presence of groups such as BlackPink and BTS who have both collaborated with internationally-renowned artists like Dua Lipa and Sia respectively. This shows the ability of Korean entertainment companies to grasp and adapt to changes effectively which have led to the increased consumption of K-pop both domestically and internationally.

K-pop as Soft Power

Soft power is a term coined by American Political Scientist Joseph Nye which refers to a country achieving some degree of international influence through persuasion rather than force. And, South Korea has proven to be an excellent case study of effective soft power which can be seen in the rise of K-pop.

The secret to the success of K-pop can be owed to its unique musicality, synchronised dance moves and the alluring image K-pop idols possess. This special formula is unlike conventional music practices, especially in the west which primarily focuses on producing solo artists that focus on vocal prowess instead of performance value that K-pop is known for.

K-Pop represents an opportunity for culture and economic dominance through the collectivisation of artistic expression. Many K-pop songs are a cultural mashup of languages, visual stance and dance, headed by both domestic and international hitmakers. Korean popular cultural content has therefore been far more diverse and creative compared to its history under dictatorship, and is now easily exported to the international market (Oh, 2013).

In the case of K-pop, there is more collaboration/negotiation than struggle/tension between the industry and fans (Choi & Maliangkay, 2017) . For instance, Korean entertainment companies create fan merchandise and settle on an ‘official colour’ for their artists so that fans can identify themselves by holding coloured lightsticks. For example, Big Bang’s official colour is yellow and their lightstick is in the shape of a crown. In fact, G-Dragon from Big Bang was the first K-pop idol to conceptualise the idea of creating a lightstick for fans. All the above mentioned factors help fans to connect with not only their favourite K-pop idols but also with each other. Today, almost every K-pop group has an official colour, personalised lightstick and even merchandise such as posters and photocards that fans can purchase. This ubiquitous practice is a symbol of connection and bilateral influence between the industry and fans.

In the era of the internet, participatory culture has become almost ubiquitous and is a key aspect of K-pop fan culture. Participatory culture is defined as a culture which allows free expression of artistic talent and civic engagement by sharing one’s creations with others (Jenkins, 2006). In this regard, everyone becomes a “produser” (producer and user). By engaging in participatory culture, fans or users establish social connections with each other.

Participatory culture and the emotional labour of fandoms is a symbiotic relationship, one cannot thrive without the other. K-pop fans spend hours streaming their idols’ music in order for the latter to win on Korean television weekly music programmes. In 2021, BTS’s Butter gained over 108.2 million views within 24 hours, breaking its previous record of 3 million views for their song “Dynamite” in 2020. In addition, the heartthrob K-pop boy band was also added to the list of Guinness World Records for having the most-viewed YouTube video in 24 hours by a K-pop group.

Aside from streaming, K-pop fans also create fan accounts across various social media sites to profess their adoration for their idols and to create a creative, dedicated and exclusive social network or to simply advance celebrity-fan alliances. Individuals who self-identify as K-pop fans engage in specialised, managerial, or unskilled labour which is usually unpaid (Sun, 2020). This can be seen in the creation of fan cafes, translation of videos and dance covers, just to name a few.

Impact of K-Pop on the Economy: BTS as Case Study

During the early years of K-pop, Big Bang, Super Junior, PSY or Girls' Generation have cumulatively sold more than 238 million records worldwide. Today, there are at least 115 active K-pop groups with an online presence and amongst these, 92 have debuted in 2010 or later (Martin Roll, 2021).

The popularity of K-pop idols among international fans have led to a surge in visitors before the pandemic. Among total inbound tourists, 13% are estimated to have visited Korea in 2019 specifically for the purpose of experiencing pop culture and attending fan events, with a total spending of $2.7 billion that year, according to KOFICE (Lee & Kim, 2021). While the percentage might not be huge, it is important to note that the entertainment sector is one of South Korea's fastest growing sectors. The number of workers in creative and artistic services grew 27% between 2009 and 2019.

Successful K-pop groups have the potential to boost South Korea's economy and this is evident in the case of BTS. In 2018, the Hyundai Research Institute (HRI) reported that BTS generates an estimated amount of 4 trillion won ($3.54 billion) as economic value to the country per year and 1.42 trillion won ($1.26 billion) as added value per year (Yonhap News Agency, 2018). Furthermore, BTS's contribution to South Korea's GDP in 2018 is almost comparable to that of Korean Aira in the same year. This is a marked difference as compared to Psy's "Gangnam Style" hit which only generated 1 trillion won in terms of economic value. Although not a small sum, the revenue BTS generates is almost four times that of Psy, which proves their unrivalled success.

If BTS' popularity continues to grow, it is predicted that their 10-year economic impact will reach 56.2 trillion won, according to HRI. This number will easily surpass the PyeongChang Winter Olympics 2018 which reached 41.6 trillion won.

According to HRI, 796,000 foreigners visit South Korea annually because of BTS, which in turn helps to boost the local tourism industry (The Investor, 2018). In 2017, there were a total of 10.41 million tourists visiting South Korea and 7.6% of the visits were influenced by BTS. HRI also put forth the fact that one in every thirteen tourists visited South Korea solely because of BTS (The Korea Herald, 2018).

The Seoul Metropolitan Government credited BTS for helping recover Seoul's tourism industry which was negatively affected by the Terminal High Altitude Area Defence (THAAD) ban in 2017. Political ties between China and South Korea soured which led to China tightening controls over outbound tourism to South Korea and prevented the entrance of cultural exports such as limiting airtime of Korean dramas and concerts.

BTS' endorsements with South Korean companies such as LINE FRIENDS CREATOR and VT Cosmetics have also played a part in attracting tourists to South Korea and by extension, made an impact on its economy. In Dec, 2018, HRI also revealed that BTS is responsible for contributing $1.1 billion (1.7%) to the total Korean consumer goods export which was $65.2 billion in 2017 (Yonhap News Agency, 2018). Contributing 1.7% to South Korea's consumer goods export is a significant sum as it is the largest amount to date due to the popularity of a K-pop boy group. Another reason why this is huge is because export goods such as cosmetics, food, clothing (where BTS had a compelling impact) are considered popular exports in South Korea.

In 2019, BTS had an annual effect on the following consumer goods per year: Clothing = $2.026 billion, Cosmetics = $2.8 billion, and Food = $3.96 billion. In the automobile industry, BTS who is currently the global ambassador for Hyundai Motor's SUV "Palisade", generated over 600 billion won in promotional results from the collaboration, proving the power of the "BTS Effect".

Thus, it is evident that K-pop as a soft power has proved to be a boon to South Korea's economy. Arguably, the main aspects of Korean cultural products such as K-dramas and K-pop have led to spillover effects in other areas of the economy especially in the tourism and consumer goods sector.

FILM

As one of the few film industries that has successfully reclaimed its domestic market from Hollywood (Lee, 2019), South Korea continues to break barriers and records worldwide. The release and eventual success of films like Train to Busan (2016) and Parasite (2019) brought international recognition to the country. South Korean films are starting to become global blockbusters on the equivalent of Hollywood films. The South Korean film industry has transformed into an economic powerhouse, taking the world by storm. Further propelled by the hallyu wave, the international success of films and movies is not to be underestimated when factoring in its economic impact.

Korean films did not succeed overnight. With steady growth, most notably beginning in the late 1990s, Klein (2008) suggested that Korea has become a great example as an industry that has managed to reduce Hollywood's economic influence in their domestic market. The proliferation of streaming services like Netflix also aided in the popularity of Korean films and TV shows. In particular, the show, Squid Game, gained an unprecedented cult-like following (Weaver, 2021) when the show premiered, launching Korea onto the national stage. Netflix, the streaming giant, has also invested (US) $500 million into expanding South Korean drama and film content (Choudhury, 2021), further signaling the industry's economic potential.

In 2021 alone, the movie industry's sales revenue in South Korea resulted in approximately 1.02 trillion South Korean won generated with a total of 804 released movies (Statista, 2022). According to Oxford Economics (2018), the film industry makes a significant and direct impact on the economy of South Korea, providing a huge number of jobs and careers. In this section we will focus on a brief history of Korean Films and also examine how the industry grew to become as lucrative as it is today.



Brief history of Korean Film

Korean film had a rocky history and beginning. The film industry faced many tumultuous events and influence by external forces such as the Japanese occupation of Korea, the Korean War, government censorship and the eventual democratisation of South Korea. This section will cover the key turning points in Korean film history before expanding on a certain film's impact.

Silent Film Era (1919 - 1935)

Beginning in the era of silent films, films produced in this era suffered from Japanese censorship and control. However, the release of Arirang in 1926 by Na Un Gyu marked a key milestone in Korean film history (Cho, 2019). Despite its status as a lost film today due to the original reels being missing (Hyun, 2014), upon its release, Arirang was met with nationwide success and confirmed the economic potential of Korean films and is regarded as the first masterpiece of Korean cinema.

Korean War, Liberation and The Golden Age of Cinema (1945 - 1950s)

Following the liberation of Korea from Japanese rule, the state was immediately embroiled in the Korean war with North and South fighting for sole control over the country. Film production suffered during the war, with an entire generation of future domestic filmmakers almost essentially being erased from existence (Doherty, 1984). The Korean War crushed the emerging industry and film production stagnated until the war ended in 1953. The republic's first president, Syngman Rhee attempted to revive the film industry by introducing a tax policy exemption for domestic films (Cho, 2019). This move incentivised many film production companies and resulted in an increase in films. Some notable successful films produced in this era included, Chunhyang (1955), The Widow (1955), Madame Freedom (1956), A Flower in Hell (1958).

South Korean Film Renaissance (1960s - 1970s)

The 1960s began with two political uproars, beginning with the impeachment of Syngman Rhee that resulted in the lift of film censorship (Cho, 2019). In 1961, Park Chung Hee staged a military coup, taking control of Korea. Two major films made during this period are The Housemaid (1960) and Aimless Bullet. Both films left significant impacts and continue to be discussed contemporarily with The Housemaid kick starting the birth of Korean horror. Under Park Chung Hee's government, there was a focus on economic growth, modernisation and urbanisation. Motion pictures were considered to be a strategic industry and under his rule, the Motion Picture Law was established (Kim, n.d).

Second Dictatorship and Film Deterioration (1970s - 1980s)

Following the assassination of President Park in 1979, Chun Doo Hwan staged a military coup, becoming the president in 1980. Film censorship law became stricter under his rule, as he enacted the Fourth Revised Motion Picture Law, limiting the subject and content matter of film to a greater extent. The revised law dictated that film should only portray the bright rather than the dark side of Korean life (Park, 2002). The film industry began deteriorating in 1971, entering a long recession until the late 80s. The emergence of television during this era also resulted in less interest in films. Chun Doo Hwan's implementation of his 3S policy (sex, screen and sports) was also enacted during this era to divert the public's attention. More erotic films were mass produced during this decade and eroticism was the first commercial breakthrough for films during this era. A few noteworthy films were Mulleya mulleya (1984) and The Surrogate Woman (1987).

Wind of Change (late 1980s - mid 1990s)

The June democratic uprising of 1987 signified a new era for not only the state but also the film industry. The democratisation of Korean society and abolishment of the governmental permit system to establish a film company lead to the liberalisation of films. This led to the rise of the Korean New Wave, where films were largely defined by their unabashed criticism of South Korean society and history. A key film would be Chilsu and Mansu (1988). This era also marked the entrance of chaebols (conglomerates) into industry and also resulted in the development of film culture.

Entrance of Chaebols

Samsung was one of the first chaebols to enter the film market in 1992, funding Marriage Story by Kim Ui Sok (Paquet, 2005). The film proved to be a financial success and was well-received, resulting in other big name companies like Daewoo and LG also deciding to invest in the film industry. The entrance of the chaebols had a significant and lasting effect on the film industry. Chaebols pushed for the industrialisation of films, improving the film-making process and structuring film production companies' practices better. Their entrance also resulted in an exponential budget increase, allowing Korean film to be produced on the huge blockbuster level. To minimise a film's risk, a preference for using well-known star actors was formed and films were pushed to appeal to the mainstream audience.

IMF Crisis and Films in the Neoliberal Era (late 1990s - early 2000s)

However, in November 1997, the Asian Financial Crisis resulted in the exit of chaebols from the film industry and also resulted in the restructuring of South Korea's industries (Paquet, 2005). President Kim Dae Jung was elected in December 1997 and recognised the IT industry as a solution to the financial crisis. Under his presidency, he also implemented measures to support the film industry which allowed South Korean film to achieve a full-fledged renaissance in the late 1990s. The success of Shiri (1999) both domestically and internationally also paved the way for the success of commercial films in Korea, while also introducing the term "Korean blockbuster" which described big-budget films (Havis, 2020).

The late 1990s was also the arrival of multiplex cinema and changes in industrial structure. Film consumption was no longer limited to special events and became a normalised part of consumer culture. On average, South Korean consumers watched approximately 4.37 films per capita in 2019. This is one of the highest viewership numbers in the world compared to the U.S. average of 3.51 films (Ahn, 2021). A strong viewership and support from the local audience also helps with the box office success and of course, the film's economic impact.

How Korean Films Profit

The industry is split into the following sections: film production, film distribution, film exhibition, and a range of other film services and online film screening. According to Oxford Economic, in 2018, the South Korean film and television industries supported 78,010 jobs through their direct operations. Of this number, the film industry employed 34,600 people, primarily through cinemas, which employed 19,370 workers. Through this, film production sustained a total of 30,650 jobs in South Korea, directly supporting 11,200 jobs, 5,600 of these being in the animation industry. Film production made a contribution to South Korean tax revenues worth 330 billion Won, the largest share of which came through direct contribution, totalling 180 billion Won.

Combined, the film and television industries in South Korea were responsible for a total of 665 billion Won of exports in 2018 in the international market. Film production made a total contribution to South Korean GDP worth 1,460 billion Won.

Films are also able to profit through licensing deals with on-demand streaming platforms like Netflix, hulu, Viu and more.

Conclusion

The Korean film industry shows promising signs of progress and growth. With the increased global recognition of South Korea's culture in recent years, we may be bearing witness to a new phase in Korea's film history. There is much more that lies ahead for Korean cinema and the recent successes of Parasite and Minari only mark the beginning of this new era. Especially with the advancement of technology, the globalisation and economic impact of Korean films hold much potential.

WEBTOONS

INTODUCTION

Due to the increasing use of the Internet, the influence of webtoons has grown beyond just having local influence - its popularity reached other countries as well due to the genres they address (Jang & Song, 2017). South Korea has since used webtoons as a tool to spur economic growth, and thus it has benefitted South Korea's economic growth as well as providing employment for several groups of people.

Global Influence of Webtoons

Webtoons has gained global influence ever since the rise of open economies and globalisation.

According to Jang & Song (2017), South Korea adopted a more export-oriented type of industrialisation and was becoming more open as an economy after the Cold War, which allowed for greater spread of Asian culture internationally. This likewise also allowed for greater overseas influence of Western culture onto local films and music. This gave rise to a trend of 'glocalisation'1 , which allowed for Hallyu to both be more popular globally as well as infuse other cultures into local cultural media. Webtoons are one such cultural product that has grown in popularity internationally due to the Korean wave (Sejong, 2021).

Thus, it is important to learn how webtoons came about from its predecessor manhwa to further understand its rising importance and influence on international markets, and hence strengthening South Korea's economy.

From Manhwa to Webtoons

Manhwa rose to popularity from the Cold War onwards, as the contents of comics provide relatable content like addressing social issues and that appealed to the masses (Jang and Song, 2017, & McKinney, 2020). Audiences are greatly intrigued by the relatable content which would allow portal sites like Daum and Naver to increase their influence by attracting youth audiences to consume webtoons, as well as encourage both amateurs and professionals to publish regularly (Jang & Song, 2017).

Moreover, manhwa is said to be the blueprint for the rise of webtoons - with manhwa being influenced by Japanese manga which was highly popular among the Korean locals,especially the youth, but does not fail to accommodate adults too (McKinney, 2020). Likewise, webtoons are also popular internationally, where Naver webtoons' US users consist of over 70 per cent who are under 24 (Davies & Song, 2022). These demographics tend to be the group of people that are more tech-savvy, meaning that webtoons would unsurprisingly cater to these target audiences.

Rise of Internet

According to Jang & Song (2017), because of the Internet, there is a rise of web users. Webtoon is able to fulfil that demand, as the platforms give an opportunity for high accessibility with digital comics as smartphones continue to develop (McKinney, 2020). Hence, it can be seen as a form of creative innovation, and is a novel creation that is not just "a digital version of a comic book" (Davies & Song, 2022).

Webtoons may seem to be structurally similar to the conventional manhwa, however due to great digitalisation as well as glocalisation, the design has actually diverged away from the original structure of a manhwa. According to Davies & Song (2022), webtoons are its own version of comics that are created digitally which shows the rise of innovation.

According to Jang & Song (2017), there are a few main key components a webtoon consists of. Non-linear storytelling allows viewers to comment on their opinions for creators to view, Interactive motion allows greater enjoyment and allows viewers to focus, and Sound allowed for senses stimulation and better storytelling and Vertical scrolling and presenting sequences are designed to facilitate better grasp of the plot and makes reading the webtoon feel like a short movie due to the smooth reading flow. Additionally, according to Art Rocket (n.d.), there are other components of a webtoon. Intentional space between panels to create a dramatic effect as it lengthens the suspense of the story. Moreover, the use of colour increases the vividness of the visuals and also depict a sense of time (e.g. flashbacks make use of sepia tones). This implies that webtoons differ greatly from a manhwa as traditional manhwa are usually physical copies and hence are structurally different, and furthermore, manhwa also lack the interactive aspect a webtoon has, which may cause greater limitations of self-expression as well as interaction between creators and audiences.

These components of a webtoon are important as they greatly increase audience engagement and enthusiasm over the story which enables greater interaction between audiences and creators, which will facilitate a better feedback system that can help the creators develop their story for their fans. These two aspects are important especially because the webtoon industry is run via an attention-based economy, where popularity will help generate sales for the creators. This will be elaborated in the next section.

Structure of webtoon industry

Attention-based economy

The webtoon industry is structured based on an attention-based economy, where attention from the audience has become the main source of capital, which means that creators and platforms will heavily rely on the amount of attention given by the audience for the economic success.

According to Kim & Yu (2019), popularity is the “most decisive factor” on how an artist is being commissioned, and is evaluated by view counts, number of subscribers, and ratings from readers (ranging from 1 star [bad] to 5 stars [good]). These would be used for judging which webtoons are the most successful ones. Webtoons can rise the ranks of tiers by how popular and hence “successful” their webtoons are, by the platforms’ discretion.

However, due to the lack of transparency between what the terms and conditions regarding what the criteria for promotion of tiers are across different platforms, creator-friendly policies were introduced by Naver and Daum Webtoons to help provide a more financially sustainable environment for webtoon creators, one of which is to have a “competitive compensation” program that will provide compensation for amateur Webtoonists in the second tiers via “keyword-based adverts” for extra profit from ad revenues.

OSMU Strategy

Webtoons allow greater sales revenue generated due to a financially-sustainable business strategy that can stimulate domestic economic growth. According to Jang & Song (2017), webtoons also promote other Korean cultural products via the a one-source-multi-use (OSMU) strategy, where webtoons promote the sales of other products like mobile games and film adaptations, which allow for greater sales profits, and due to rising popularity of webtoons, OSMU webtoon products are “valued at around 420 billion won ($368 million) and is expected more than double at 880 billion won by 2018” (Lee, 2016, as quoted from Jang & Song, 2017). For example, according to Han (2021), there are webtoon-based drama adaptations such as Sweet Home and Itaewon Class that spiked in popularity in over-the-top (OTT) services like Netflix, which generated sales profits due to greater share values. Hence, this strategy can decrease costs while ensuring revenue by adapting these well-made webtoons into dramas.

The huge economic success, which is elaborated in the next section, are proof that the structure of the webtoon industry as well as the OSMU business model are definitely economically viable. However, there may be some aspects that are lacking, which means there are some attempts by different stakeholders to intervene in order to help with these lacking aspects.

Economic Impacts

Economic Growth and Unemployment

Webtoons have had a profound impact on the economic growth as well as on employment rates in South Korea. According to Jang & Song (2017), the Korean Webtoon market has reached about 357 billion won in 2016. This shows that there is a huge amount of revenue that is churned out from this industry alone. Moreover, Naver webtoon also has 750,000 creators and 82 million active users (Davies & Song, 2022). If we extrapolate the impact to more than just 1 platform, this implies that the webtoon industry can generate a lot of sales revenue due to the attention economy, as well as how it decreases unemployment rate by a significant amount.

Labour

The people who work for the webtoon industry have a different job scope and background than for the manhwa industry. According to Kim & Yu (2019) , In contrast with the traditional manhwa industry, which typically consists of comic artists (which are usually professional in nature) alongside a group of staff members including comic experts and publishers that will help with the creation and publishing of the manhwa, webtoons platforms only have the artists themselves (which consists of both amateurs, who are more casual, and professionals, who do this for a living), as well as engineers who run the platform. Thus, this means that the topics addressed by webtoon creators are solely dependent on the artists themselves, which is precisely how webtoon allows for more diverse content, which gives rise to the great popularity of webtoons.

However, it is because of this very liberal and flexible structure of the platforms that cause more problems - financially and emotionally. According to Kim & Yu (2019) , due to the lack of professional staff that usually help manhwa artists, the webtoon creators have to pick up many digital skills on their own. External interventions are put in place in attempts to help these creators, but unfortunately may be limited in effectiveness.

External Interventions

Policy interventions were implemented to try to help creators with financial stability in their employment. According to Kim & Yu (2019) , to provide a more secure environment for the webtoon creators as well as to respond to the negative feedback over the lack of financial policies to help them, Daum and Naver put in place some creator-friendly policies. Firstly, the monthly minimum wage of all commissioned Webtoonists increased to US$1800. Secondly, there are “competitive compensation” programmes which maximises how much a webtoon comic’s character products and paid content are shown. Thirdly, there are more donation events that can help amateur artists earn some money and to encourage amateurs to keep going via monetising their content. These methods can definitely lower the barriers of entry for amateurs, and stimulate competition, which will definitely motivate creators to keep going for constant improvements and thus allow the webtoon industry to continue thriving. Moreover on an individual level, this can definitely help improve the long-term financial stability of a webtoon creator - across professionals and amateurs alike, which would definitely help with job stability, as well as sustaining this industry as people will remain in this industry.

Next, the Webtoonists’ Trade Union was created in attempts to help creators with emotional stability. According to Kim & Yu (2019), due to the lack of professional staff that usually help manhwa artists, the webtoon creators have to pick up many digital skills on their own, as well as how they have to manage their own emotions when they face comments that are very hurtful in nature. This results in these creators feeling depressed, and sometimes they are unable to cope with these strong emotions. The Webtoonists’ Trade Union was then set up in attempts to help with the artists’ “emotional and legal support”. However, there is limited effectiveness as the main stakeholders webtoon platforms and employees are unwilling to help them so the system in place will not change much to help them.

Concluding Notes

Webtoons serve as a very important aspect of the Hallyu wave, as on top of spreading South Korea’s global soft power influence, they have an equally powerful impact on South Korea’s economy as well. Thus, it is crucial for more policies and governmental intervention to be implemented so as to help with domestic social issues, i.e. helping their labour force cope better with the working conditions and environment.

FOOD

Brief Overview of Korean Food

Food is a form of soft power (Reynolds, 2012). Thus, Korean food is an integral feature of Hallyu, a source of the country's global power. Alongside South Korea's economic development and a rise in standard of living for citizens, people's requirements for food are getting higher and higher (Garrison, 2019). Food is no longer seen as something edible to satisfy our hunger, instead it has already evolved into a food culture.

Korean cuisine is the traditional food of Korea (TriFood | Introduction to Korean Food, n.d.). From the complex rituals of Korean royal court cuisine to the food of inland cities like Seoul as well as the port cities of Busan and Incheon, Korean cuisine is varied, fascinating, and becoming internationally popular.

Korean cuisine largely consists of rice, vegetables, fish, and tofu. Side dishes, also known as banchan, usually accompany the rice and main dish. Banchan dishes are intended to be finished at each meal, so it is small in proportion and replenished as they are consumed. Main dish refers to meat, stew, soup, or seafood.

Popular Korean dishes that are commonly seen in South Korea include cold noodles and Korean barbecue (TriFood | Introduction to Korean Food, n.d.). There are a lot of night snacks, such as spicy fried sausage, fried chicken, spicy chicken feet and octopus. There are many street snacks as well. They include fish cakes and fried rice cakes. Such dishes are unique to Korea, which is why food plays an important role in promoting the soft power of the country. The next section will explain how Korean food has boosted the South Korean economy.

Economic Impact of Korean Food

First, Korean food is portrayed vividly in Korean dramas, films and variety shows. This entices individuals to try out different types of Korean food, be it in Korea or in their home countries. By purchasing Korean food both in Korea and overseas, individuals are contributing to the Korean economy. According to equity analyst Kelly Kim (2019), “in a sense, increasing interest in entertainment content, such as movies, television shows and music, have paved the way for more curiosity about the culture, which then opens the door for cuisine.” The portrayal of consumption of Korean food in the entertainment industry piques the interest of the audience. They are then more likely to try out the different types of Korean food. Fans are willing to travel to Korea just to try the food that they see in their Korean dramas. For example, in an interview with CNBC in 2014, Singaporean Heather Chua shared that she and her friends were going to Korea in July that year to tick “chimaek” off their to-do list (Tang, 2014), thereby highlighting how fans are willing to go the distance for the real deal. Chimaek refers to the pairing of fried chicken and beer (Kim, 2015). Its popularity can be traced back to the popular South Korean TV drama, “My Love from the Star”. This chimaek fever revived chicken farms which had suffered due to H7N9 avian flu concerns and brought about an increase in demand for specialty chicken shops. As such, Korea experienced an economic boost domestically. In addition, Korea experienced an increase in exports due to Korean food’s appearance in Korean dramas, films, and variety shows. Common foods that appear in Korean entertainment content include snacks, instant noodles, and ready-made meals. Based on analysts’ calculation of export data and the top ten Korea-listed food companies’ overseas production, these three categories combined accounted for around 70% of total overseas Korean food sales in the past five years (Morgan Stanley, 2019). As such, it is argued that Korean food has positively impacted Korea’s economy.

Second, fans are influenced by Korean stars’ food consumption patterns and are more inclined to consume those foods as well, thereby increasing Korea’s economic growth. Korean stars, such as K-pop idols, have a significant influence on consumer culture. When these stars consume Korean food, their fans are more likely to try out the same food. As such, there will be an increase in consumption of Korean food. According to a report by Hyundai Research Institute (2019), BTS has an annual effect of $3.96 billion per year on food as a consumer goods export. It is also expected that exports of food (alongside clothing and cosmetics) in South Korea will increase by $312 million USD and around 8,000 new jobs will be created, as a result of BTS’ impacts on consumer culture (Mendoza, 2020). Another case-in-point would be Wonder Girls. Wonder Girls is known to eat purely Korean foods whether they are in Korea or overseas. It is believed by many that their good figures and stamina are related to Korean food (Kim, 2011). Wonder Girls became publicity ambassadors for the ministry and promoted Korean farm produce for a year through a variety of events in Korea and other parts of the world. Undeniably, Wonder Girls helped to raise global awareness of Korean food. As such, there was an increase in consumption of Korean food, allowing the South Korean economy to prosper.

Third, due to the promotion of Korean food as being good for health and dieting, individuals all over the world are giving Korean food a try, thereby contributing to South Korea’s economy. Korean food first rose in popularity outside of Korea after the broadcasting of Daejanggeum portrayed the inspirational story of a female becoming a great chef (Hallyufood, 2017). The audience was amazed by the colourfulness of traditional Korean cuisine and were informed of the health benefits of traditional Korean cuisine. South Korea raked in $40 million worth of exports in the 2000s due to the influence this drama had on people all over the world. As such, healthy hansik has positively impacted South Korea's economy. Moreover, restaurants in Korea began providing similar traditional Korean cuisines due to the Daejanggeum fever. For example, a Korean restaurant located in Seoul’s Lotte Shopping mall paid special tribute to the drama by naming itself Daejanggeum and serving cuisines similar to that in the drama. This attracts people, both locals and tourists, to the restaurant and in accordance with the circular flow of income, their spending generates income for the restaurant owner who will further spend on other consumer goods, thereby boosting the domestic economy (Corporate Finance Institute, n.d.). In addition, the most popular dish in Korean cuisine, Kimchi, is known to be nutritional and universally palatable. It has also been acclaimed to be Korea’s original health food and a dish that can possibly prevent SARS and bird flu (Hans, 2011). As Kimchi is seen as nutritious, there has been an increase in consumption of Kimchi. According to the Korea Customs Service, exports of kimchi leaped by 10.7% to $159.9 million in 2021. Due to the Hallyu wave, many foreigners are gradually taking interest in Korean food.

Fourth, with the rise of Hallyu in the globalisation era, individuals all over the world are increasingly exposed to Korean food and there has thus been a surge in Korean food exports. From 2020 to 2021, Korea experienced a net 7.7% increase in its agri-food export to other countries (Whitehead, 2021). Shipments of processed chicken have also increased by 59.5% to $21 million in 2020, marking a new high. Similarly, exports of Korean condiments, such as gochujang, increased by more than 25%. According to the Korea International Trade Association, increase in exports of late can be attributed to the rising popularity of Korean culture which has boosted global awareness of Korean food, thereby spurring many overseas to purchase imported Korean food. Specifically, in China (Korea’s biggest export market), there has been an increasingly strong demand for Korean food products, allowing Korean food exports to enjoy robust growth in recent years in the form of a compound annual growth of 19% (Morgan Stanley, 2019). As such, with the surge in exports, South Korea has experienced sustained economic growth.

CONCLUSION

The cumulative effects of the Hallyu wave has resulted in a massive economic contribution to the South Korean economy. It has also overall bolstered the country's soft power and country image to the world. Hallyu has assisted in cementing South Korea's position both culturally and economically and its ubiquitous presence is proof of its large impact. A reason as to why Korean culture has been able to stand the test of globalisation can be attributed to its multifaceted approach through K-pop, Films, Webtoons, Food. Hallyu covers not only certain aspects of the Korean lifestyle but rather is an amalgamation of the Korean identity – from language to music and in essence, the celebration of South Korean culture.

South Korea's economy has the potential to grow even further but that is of course taking into consideration Korea's ageing population. With a shrinking number of the working-age population (The Economist, 2022) the country's low birth-rate is slowly catching up and it is projected that by 2050, the number of elderly will account for close to 43.9% of the country's population (Yonhap, 2021). More must be done to combat this in order to ensure the economy is able to progress and support their growing ageing population.

Hallyu has managed to open many doors of opportunity for South Korea and paved the way for the country to stay culturally relevant and recognised worldwide. The sky is truly the limit with the current momentum South Korea has as of today.

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SOUTH KOREA AND TOURISM



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Current Trends in South Korea Tourism

South Korea occupies the southern part of the Korean peninsula and is a developed country ranked seventh in the world according to the Human Development Index (HDI) in the Asia and Oceania region. The population in South Korea is set to reach 51.82 million by the end of 2021. Apart from the increasing population, the economy is also growing rapidly, with a GDP of $1.8 trillion in 2021. South Korea has also developed attractive cities and experiences the four seasons. Other than the structural changes, one cannot ignore the growing popularity of the South Korean popular culture, globally expanding the “K-pop” trends. With such a high growth rate, development and attraction in the country, it is not surprising that South Korea has transformed into a comprehensive attraction to foreign attention which led to the boom in the tourism industry in the country. According to the OECD library, tourism is a significant economic driver to South Korea. In 2018, it accounted for 4.7% of GDP and is estimated to support 1.4 million jobs, representing 5.3% of total employment. Travel exports represented 15.5% of total service exports in 2018 (OECD Library, 2020).

1.1 Tourism Revenue Statistics in South Korea

The revenue for tourism has been increasing since South Korea opened their doors to foreign visitors and when it caught global attention through the hosting of the 1988 summer olympics. The average tourism revenue South Korea earned was USD$12.9 billion per year and it peaked in 2019 at an all-time high of USD$25.5 billion. 2019 was also the most profitable year for South Korea when it comes to the tourism scene. However, after 2019, tourism revenue fell to its lowest of USD$11.8 trillion. This was largely caused by the travel restrictions in place due to the global Covid-19 pandemic outbreak where most countries were forced to close their borders to the tourism sector.

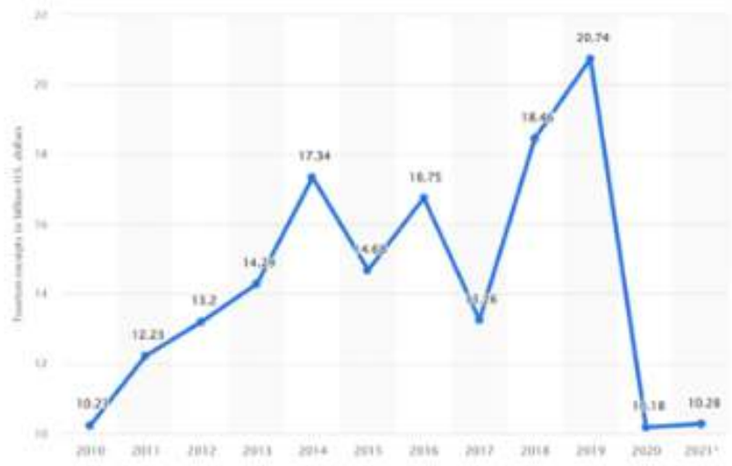


Figure 1: Tourism Revenue in South Korea

1.2 Inbound Tourism Statistics in South Korea

In terms of inbound tourists to South Korea, it has been increasing year by year. The average number of inbound tourists visiting South Korea is 13.3 million per year and the highest number of inbound tourists happened in 2019 where it reached a peak of 17.5 million visitors that year. From the growth in inbound tourists, it can also be concluded that South Korea is attractive, and tourism is set to continue being a revenue driver in South Korea.



Figure 2: Number of Inbound tourists to South Korea

1.3 South Korea Tourism Rankings

Due to the popularity of South Korea as a tourist hub, the reputation of South Korea also grew positively. As a result, in 2019, Seoul ranked 23rd among the world's most popular cities with 9.11 million tourists. Jeju was in 100th place with 2.28 million tourists (WorldData, 2020). Furthermore, when comparing the number of tourists per resident when it comes to considering the size of a country, with 0.049 tourists per resident, South Korea ranked 144th in the world. In East Asia, it ranked 3rd (WorldData, 2020). According to Numbeo, a data aggregator of city and country statistics, Korea has the highest overall safety index in the world, with a score of 85.69, and it ranked number one among the 117 countries stated. It is also important to note that South Korea held that title for 3 consecutive years (Lee, n.d).

1.4 South Korea Inbound Foreign Tourists Demographics

International tourists come primarily from nearby countries in Asia. Japan, China, Hong Kong and Taiwan together account for roughly 75% of the total number of international tourists. In addition, the Korean Wave has brought increasing numbers of tourists from Southeast Asia and India. As we see from the trend, the majority of the inbound foreign tourists arrive from other Asian countries and this is mainly due to how South Korea mainly follows an Asian culture which provides a sense of familiarity to the inbound Asian tourists yet at the same time they are able to have new experiences at the same time.

The top 12 nationalities of international visitors for all purpose are:[116]

Rank	Country	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015
1	China	6,023,021	4,789,512	4,169,353	8,067,722	5,984,170
2	Japan	3,271,706	2,948,527	2,311,447	2,297,893	1,837,782
3	Taiwan	1,260,493	1,115,333	925,616	833,465	518,190
4	United States	1,044,038	967,992	868,881	866,186	767,613
5	Hong Kong	694,934	683,818	658,031	650,676	523,427
6	Thailand	571,610	558,912	498,511	470,107	371,769
7	Vietnam	553,731	457,818	324,740	251,402	162,765
8	Philippines	503,867	460,168	448,702	556,745	403,622
9	Malaysia	408,590	382,929	307,641	311,254	223,350
10	Russia	343,057	302,542	270,427	233,973	188,106
11	Indonesia	278,575	249,067	230,837	295,461	193,590
12	Singapore	246,142	231,897	216,170	221,548	160,153
	Total	17,502,756	15,346,879	13,335,758	17,241,823	13,231,651

Figure 3: Nationalities of inbound tourists to South Korea

What makes South Korea an attractive travel destination?

2.1 Medical Tourism

With the slogan “Medical Korea”, South Korea has been actively attracting foreign patients over the past decade. The total number of patients who visited Korea as of is approaching three million (Statista, 2022). In 2020, over 117,000 foreigners visited South Korea as a medical tourist, one of the lowest numbers in the past ten years. This was a decline as compared to trends before the covid-19 pandemic restrictions. Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic affecting South Korea, according to statistics, the number of medical tourists has been increasing steadily with its peak in 2019 at more than 497 thousand tourists. The main tourists visiting Korea for the sole purpose of medical tourism largely arrive from China, U.S, Japan, Russia and Mongolia. The Japanese visit South Korea for their preference in aesthetic and crucial health treatments, while the Chinese show a high demand for simple treatments, aesthetic and healthcare services (Yu & Ko, 2012), inclining towards internal medicine. South Korea has been a popular destination for their medical tourism since it offers advanced medical technology and relatively lower costs as compared to other countries. South Korea medical tourism also ranks sixth among nine major Asian destinations; Thailand, Singapore, India, Malaysia, the Philippines, Korea, Jordan, the United Arab Emirates, and Israel (Kim et al., 2019). Here are three main reasons which drove South Korea’s popularity as a medical tourist destination.

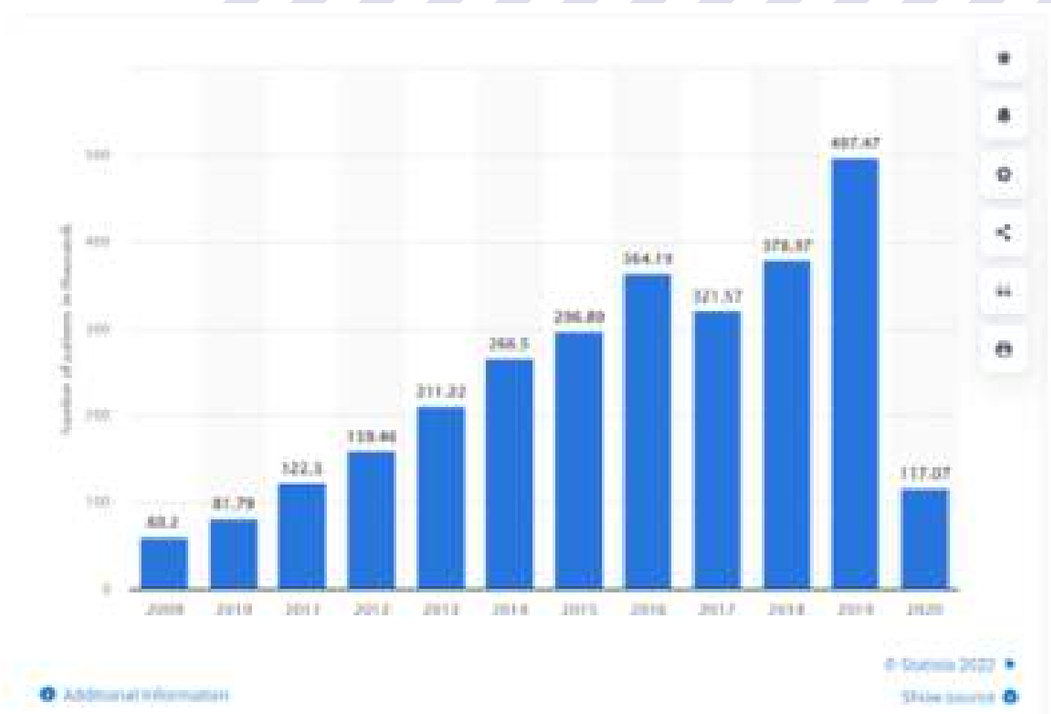


Figure 4: Number of Medical Tourists Visiting South Korea

2.1.1 Lower Healthcare Cost

Comparatively to other countries and states, Korea has lower healthcare costs when it comes to procedures and surgeries. This has led it to be an attractive place to get surgery done as compared to one’s domestic country. Even as an employee, for example, in the United States, employees can get a hip replacement surgery done in South Korea for less than half the cost in the United States. Also, a spinal fusion surgery, which is done for $100,000 in United States hospitals, can be done for $23,000 in South Korea Centers of Excellence. This means cost savings of 50-90 percent for self-funded organizations (Medical Tourism Magazine, n.d.).

Procedure	USA	Germany	Korea
Breast cancer surgery	Starting $23,078	Starting $11,000	Starting $8,500
Heart Check-up	Starting $1,200	Starting $870	Starting $500
Knee replacement	Starting $49,500	Starting $15,000	Starting $17,000
Tummy liposuction	Starting $8,400	Starting $5,000	Starting $4,000

Figure 5: Differences in Healthcare Pricing across Countries (Kazina, 2017)

2.1.2 Good Medical Safety Reputation

South Korea’s medical reputation has also been known to be good and safe globally as compared to other countries. It ranked 12th in the world for quality of healthcare. In 2015, South Korea ranked first in the OECD for healthcare access. On top of that, satisfaction of healthcare has been consistently among the highest in the world – South Korea was rated as the second most efficient healthcare system by Bloomberg. South Korea also has high success rates in the medical services they provide. According to OECD, it has the highest colorectal cancer survival rate at 72.8%, ranked second in cervical cancer survival rate at 76.8%, hemorrhagic stroke 30-day in-hospital mortality per 100 hospital discharges was the OECD's third lowest at 13.7 deaths, for Ischemic stroke, it ranked second at 3.4 deaths and South Korean hospitals also ranked 4th for MRI units per capita and 6th for CT scanners per capita in the OECD. It also had the OECD's second largest number of hospital beds per 1000 people at 9.56 beds (OECD Library, 2022). In terms of choice, The South Korean model offers a high freedom of choice regarding health care services (8th). In particular, its freedom to choose health care services within the single-payer system ranked 2nd in the subsection (Dornauer, 2020). Thus, South Korea medical services encapsulates quality, accessibility and choice which makes them attractive.

2.1.3 Medical Tourism Agency & Packages

The presence of medical tourism agencies also eases the process of one visiting South Korea for the purpose of medical services but also helps them to be able to tour the place at the same time. They are also known as medical tourism facilitators, which are the organisations specialising in arranging suitable foreign hospitals and treatment, transportation and lodging during recuperation (Gan, L.L.; Frederick, J.R., 2011). The medical tourism agencies' websites provide information which is useful to medical tourists, such as accredited hospitals, affordable prices, exceptional experiences, time advantages, high quality and reliable care (Cormany, D.; Baloglu, 2011). There are currently about a total of 21,507 healthcare organizations in Seoul with most providing medical services to tourists (KOSIS, 2015). In South Korea, these are prominent in attracting medical tourists as in tandem with their good reputation and with existing physical follow-up care centers in selected countries, it makes the whole process and experience of visiting South Korea for medical purposes more seamless.

South Korea also provides and offers exclusive medical tourism packages which allows medical tourists to South Korea to have customised tourism packages which allows them to choose their preferred places to travel and live in followed by a customised schedule planned around their medical schedules to allow time for recuperation and recovery period. These medical tourism packages thus makes it attractive to choose South Korea over other countries since they are able to provide them with both medical services, which was their main purpose, and entertainment, which is an advantageous co purpose. Furthermore, coupled with South Korea's good reputation for safety, tourists also feel safer to travel under the considerations that the packages already have in place for them since they have taken care of their post surgery and recuperations considerations.



Figure 6: Example of Medical Tourism Packages (VIP Travel, 2022)

2.2 Korean Wave

South Korea has enjoyed the increased global popularity of its culture since the 1990s, and it is mainly attributed to Korean dramas and films, as well as K-pop. This section aims to explore the different factors that make Korean dramas and films, together with K-pop, attractive to many overseas, which helped to boost tourism rates in South Korea.

2.2.1 Korean Dramas and Film

One of the main components of the initial Korean Wave is Korean dramas and films. Some reasons for the popularity of Korean dramas and films include the filming locations, the portrayal of universal themes and attractive characters.

Firstly, viewers of Korean dramas and films are drawn to the places shown in the backgrounds and foregrounds of the film or television production. Prospective tourists would then visit the filming sites shown in the dramas or films. The process of visiting actual filming locations is likened to a pilgrimage, where television and film production helped to develop the filming locations into mythic and ritual spaces (Kim et al., 2009). Jumunjin Breakwater (Figure 7A) and Yonsei University (Figure 7B) are some popular filming locations, where Korean dramas such as Guardian: The Lonely and Great God and Extraordinary You are filmed respectively (Soriano, 2021).

A



B



Figure 7: Filming locations A) Jumunjin Breakwater, B) Yonsei University

The portrayal of universal themes in Korean dramas and films is also a reason for its popularity. Korean dramas and films tend to portray themes like sudden sickness, accidents, love affairs, illegitimate children, envy, intrigue, betrayal and all manner of interpersonal entanglements. This has allowed South Korea's dramas and films to attract a significant transnational audience, not only the domestic Korean audience when the productions are distributed beyond national boundaries (Kim et al., 2009).

Lastly, Korean dramas and films have attractive characters that are able to captivate audiences. Actors and actresses have appearances that are pleasing to the eye. Female characters are usually either strong and independent or passive and infantile. Male characters, on the other hand, are typically sensitive, emotional and alluring. These characteristics altogether are able to attract people who seek external and internal fulfilment (Trolan, 2017).

2.2.2 K-pop

As the Korean Wave progressed, it grew from Korean dramas and films to include K-pop. Solo artists, girl and boy bands such as BoA, Girls' Generation, Kara, Super Junior and Big Bang further contributed to the Korean Wave (Trolan, 2017). Some reasons for the popularity of K-Pop include attractive performers, K-Pop as a stress reliever and source of comfort, as well as it providing a sense of belonging.

Firstly, many overseas saw South Korea through the image of beautiful boys and girls, which motivated them to act and dress like their idols (Trolan, 2017). This ultimately led to the popularity of Korean fashion, when fashion trends are started by influential people like K-pop idols (Park, 2011). Fashion trends that were popularised by Korean idols in recent years include bucket hats, crop tops, oversized jeans and athleisure, which combines athletic and leisure clothing (Figure 8A & 8B) (Verma, 2021).

A



B



Figure 8: Korean fashion trends A) Blackpink's Rosé sporting a bucket hat, cropped top and oversized jeans B) Blackpink's Rosé wearing athleisure clothing

On top of attractive performers, K-pop is also a stress reliever and a source of comfort for many fans. K-pop idols exemplify a degree of pop perfectionism with addicting tunes, slick choreography and good singing (Lie, 2012), which enabled them to produce some of the greatest hits. Some of the most popular K-pop songs are Gee by Girls' Generation and Fantastic Baby by Big Bang. Additionally, K-pop songs are a source of comfort for fans, especially when they contain inspiring and relatable lyrics.

Lastly, K-pop provides an opportunity for fans to feel a sense of belonging through being a part of a fan club of their favourite idols. As members of fan clubs participate in activities together, such as donation activities, online voting and attending concerts, fans are able to feel like they belong to a group of like-minded people, which satisfies their individual needs (Ding & Zhuang, 2021).

2.3 Attractive Aspects of South Korea

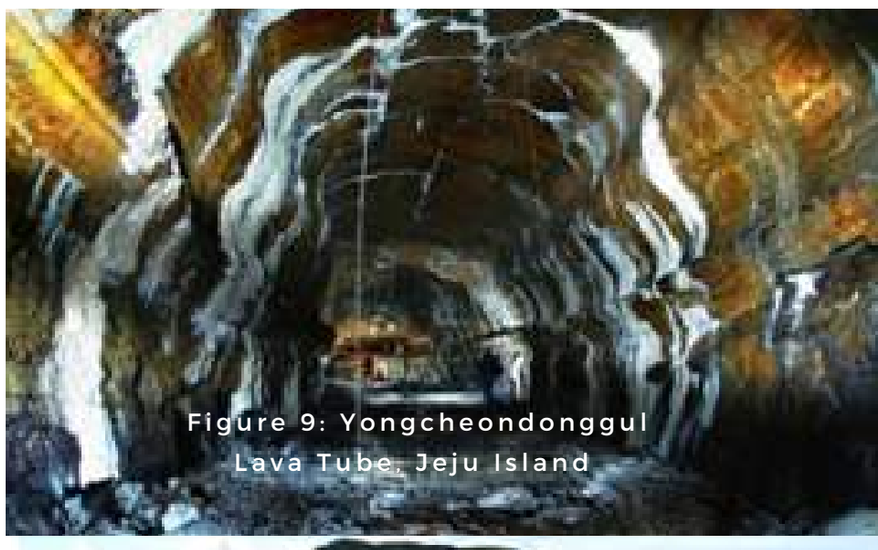
While the Korean Wave has greatly contributed to the influx of tourists into South Korea each year, there are also other attractive aspects of South Korea that are appealing to tourists.

2.3.1 Nature

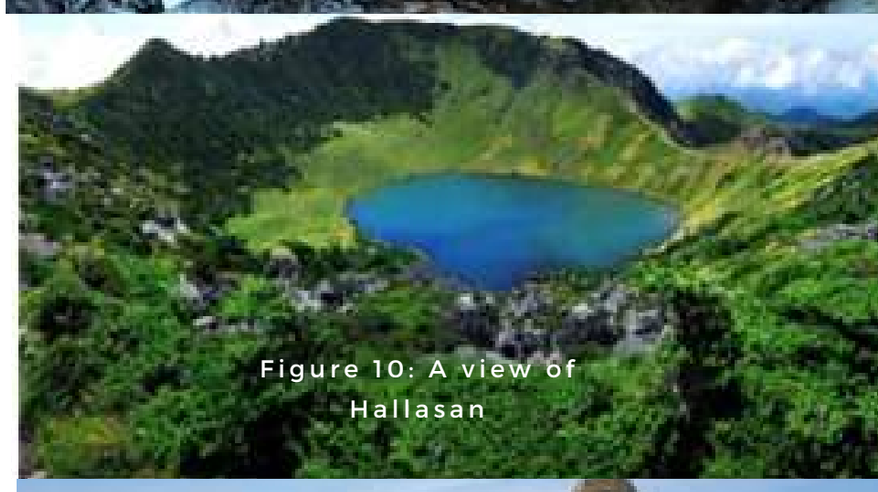
With numerous mountains and water bodies situated within the country, it is unsurprising for South Korea to have many stunning natural attractions. Some places of interest in South Korea are Jeju Island, the Han River and Seoraksan National Park.

2.3.1.1 Jeju Island

An interesting fact about Jeju Island is that it is the only place in the world that has three United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) designations. The island was named a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve in 2002 (UNESCO, 2018), a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2007 (World Heritage Centre UNESCO, n.d.) and a UNESCO Global Geopark in 2010 (UNESCO, n.d.). Jeju Island is a volcanic island that was formed approximately two million years ago. Being an island that is rich in history, some attractive features of Jeju Island include lava tubes, Hallasan and Dol Hareubang.
Jeju Island has some of the finest lava tube systems of caves (Figure 9), with multi-coloured carbonate decorations adorning the roofs and floors, as well as dark-coloured lava walls, partially covered by a mural of carbonate deposits (UNESCO, n.d.)


Figure 9: Yongcheondonggul Lava Tube, Jeju Island

Jeju Island is also home to South Korea's tallest mountain, Hallasan (Figure 10), which has a height of 1,950m above sea level. The mountain possesses immense scientific value as it is a veritable trove of plants and animals. The views of nature on Hallasan constantly change forms and colours according to the season. In fall, the mountain is covered with red colour fall foliage, while the snow-covered mountain in the winter surpasses all views of the island (Visit Jeju, n.d.).


Figure 10: A view of Hallasan

As the main symbol of Jeju Island, Dol Hareubang (Figure 11), literally meaning 'Stone Grandfather' statues, are carved from volcanic rocks and can stand up to three metres high. The sculptures usually have bulging pupil-less eyes, grim or slightly smiling faces, their hands rested atop bellies and mushroom-shaped hats. The statues are often considered to be the guardians of the island who ward off demons and evil spirits, and more recently, figures that also represent fertility gods (Talylor, 2018).


Figure 11: Dol Hareubang in Jeju Island

2.3.1.2 Han River


Figure 12: A view of the Han River

The Han River (Figure 12) is a major park running through the city of Seoul. There are a total of 12 parks located along the Han River: Yeouido Hanggang Park, Nanji Hangang Park, Seonyudo Park, Gwangnaru Hangang Park, Ttukseom Hangang Park, Ichon Hangang Park, Gangseo Hangang Park, Mangwon Hangang Park, Banpo Hangang Park, Jamsil Hangang Park, Jamwon Hangang Park and Yanghwa Hangang Park (Trazy, n.d.).

People from all walks of life can engage in various park activities such as cycling, picnicking, riding duck boats and cruising. One can rent a standard bike for approximately ₩3,000 for the first hour and ₩500 for every succeeding 15 minutes. Additionally, visitors can explore the Han River on a duck boat, which renting a manual duck boat costs around ₩15,000 for 40 minutes. Three types of cruises are also available for visitors to choose from depending on their preferences: Daytime Cruise, Han River Starlight Cruise and Moonlight Music Cruise (WAUG, 2021).

2.3.1.3 Seoraksan National Park

Located in the north-eastern part of the country, Seoraksan National Park (Figure 13) is one of South Korea's most famous tourist destinations. It is designated as Korea's first UNESCO Biosphere Reserve in 1982.

With Daecheongbong Peak as the main peak of Seoraksan, the mountain also has 30 other grand peaks and hidden scenic views of Biryongpokpo Falls, Ulsan Peak and Heundeulbawi Rock (VisitKorea, 2021). Seoraksan National Park is rich in flora and fauna, with at least 1,292 species of flora, 44 mammal species, 109 bird species, 10 amphibian species, 19 reptilian species, 43 fish species and 1,683 insect species (UNESCO, 2018). Depending on the preferred difficulty level and duration, tourists can choose from a variety of hiking trails while enjoying the scenery.


Figure 13: Seoraksan National Park

2.3.2 Historic Sites

While most people are initially attracted to South Korea through its culture and entertainment exports, many will also find that South Korea is worth exploring because of its rich history and tradition. Some of the popular historic sites visited by tourists include Hwaseong Fortress, Gyeongbokgung Palace and Bukchon Hanok Village.

2.3.2.1 Hwaseong Fortress

Hwaseong Fortress (Figure 14) is a piled-stone and brick fortress located in Suwon city. It was built in the late 18th century by King Jeongjo for defensive purposes. The massive walls of the fortress are 5.74 km in length, and they are equipped with defensive features such as floodgates, observation towers, command posts, multiple arrow launcher towers and bunkers.

Hwaseong Fortress, which combined military, political and commercial functions, has had a great influence on the development of Korean architecture, urban planning, landscaping and related arts. It represents the pinnacle of 18th-century military architecture, incorporating ideas from some of the best examples in Europe and East Asia. Due to its high historical value, Hwaseong Fortress was designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1997 (UNESCO, n.d.).



Figure 14: Hwaseong Fortress

2.3.2.2 Gyeongbokgung Palace



Figure 15: Gyeongbokgung Palace

Gyeongbokgung Palace (Figure 15), the 'Palace Greatly Blessed by Heaven', is the oldest and largest royal palace in Seoul out of the other 4 palaces: Changdeokgung, Changyeonggung, Deoksugung and Gyeonghuigung. It is built in 1395, three years after the Joseon Dynasty was founded by King Taejo (Gyeongbokgung Palace Management Office, n.d.).

Admission fees are affordable, which contributes to the high number of visitors to the palace. Free guided tours that are conducted in various languages: English, Japanese, Chinese, Vietnamese and Indonesian, are also available for tourists (Gyeongbokgung Palace Management Office, n.d.). Additionally, visitors can wear hanbok, which are traditional Korean clothes, rented from nearby hanbok rentals while touring the palace and the surrounding villages. Visitors can rent the hanbok for a few hours or even up to a day or two, in which admission to the palaces in Seoul is free for visitors wearing hanbok (Yong, 2018).

2.3.2.3 Bukchon Hanok Village

After touring the Gyeongbokgung Palace, visitors can also visit Bukchon Hanok Village (Figure 16), which is located between the two royal palaces, Gyeongbokgung and Changdeokgung.

Bukchon Hanok Village, where the name Bukchon literally translates to 'northern village', is home to hundreds of traditional houses called hanok, dating back to the Joseon dynasty. Today, many of these hanoks operate as cultural centres, guesthouses, restaurants and tea houses, providing visitors with an opportunity to experience, learn and immerse themselves in traditional Korean culture (VisitKorea, 2020).

Figure 16: Bukchon Hanok Village



2.3.3 Entertainment Venues

South Korea is a vibrant and exciting country, that besides having a tremendous number of natural attractions and historic sites, also has various entertainment venues such as Lotte World, Everland and N Seoul Tower.

2.3.3.1 Lotte World

Operated by Lotte Group, Lotte World (Figure 17), which is a theme park located in Seoul, is a great place for entertainment for Koreans and international tourists alike. Lotte World is divided into two parts, indoor Lotte World Adventure and outdoor lakeside Magic Island. Lotte World Adventure is the world's largest indoor amusement park with high-quality rides, terrific parades and performances (VisitKorea, 2021).

The theme park has various amenities such as a shopping mall, folk museum, ice rink and hotel. The folk museum displays miniature models of Korea throughout 5,000 years of history, and there is the Lotte World Star Avenue which is the perfect place for Korean drama and K-pop fans to meet their favourite celebrities (VisitKorea, 2021).



FIGURE 17: AERIAL VIEW OF LOTTE WORLD

2.3.3.2 Everland



Figure 18: European Adventure Zone in Everland

Everland (Figure 18), located in Yongin city, is South Korea's largest theme park. It entertains visitors through an array of attractions in the five themed zones of Global Fair, American Adventure, Magic Land, European Adventure and Zootopia. One of the most popular rides in Everland is T-Express, Korea's first wooden rollercoaster. T-Express is a must-ride for daredevils as the ride features a drop angle of 77 degrees and reaches a speed of up to 104 kilometres per hour (VisitKorea, 2019). The amusement park is also decorated according to different themed festivals throughout the year, including Tulip Festival, Rose Festival and Halloween Festival, giving visitors more to explore each time they visit (VisitKorea, 2021). .

2.3.3.3 N Seoul Tower

Whenever the city of Seoul is mentioned, N Seoul Tower (Figure 19) would likely be one of the many things that come to mind as it is commonly regarded as a symbol of Seoul. N Seoul Tower is the city's highest point, where visitors can get a 360-degree view of the entire city of Seoul at the observatory. Besides being an observatory tower, N Seoul Tower is also a broadcast tower that serves media outlets like Korean Broadcasting System (KBS), Munhwa Broadcasting Corporation (MBC) and Seoul Broadcasting System (SBS). Equipped with the latest LED technology, N Seoul Tower offers a fascinating sight at night with light art that constantly changes colours and patterns (N Seoul Tower, 2014). Visitors to N Seoul Tower can also enjoy various amenities such as restaurants, gift shops and arcades (VisitKorea, 2021).



Figure 19: N Seoul Tower at night

2.3.4 Korean Food

South Korea has been increasingly known for its food, mainly through Korean dramas and films viewed by international audiences. Some popular foods that tourists can enjoy in South Korea are Korean barbeque, Korean Chinese food and Korean street food.

2.3.4.1 Korean Barbeque

Korean barbeque (BBQ) (Figure 20) is popular among tourists as it offers a unique experience for diners where cooking and eating are done simultaneously. Korean BBQ is a Korean cuisine method of grilling meat such as beef, chicken or pork on gas or charcoal grills inlaid into the dining table itself. Korean BBQ is traditionally eaten in ssam form, where ssam means wrapped. Fresh lettuce and perilla leaves are usually wrapped with a small piece of grilled meat and topped with some sauce called ssamjang, which consists of ingredients like soybean paste (doenjang), red chilli paste (gochujang), green onions and garlic. Common side dishes consumed with grilled meat are kimchi, stir-fried zucchini and stir-fried anchovies. Soju is also a traditional beverage that complements Korean BBQ (Le, 2021).



Figure 20: Korean Barbeque

2.3.4.2 Korean Chinese Food



Figure 21: Tangsuyuk, Jjamppong, Jajangmyeon (left to right)

GKorean Chinese cuisine is a hybrid Korean cuisine derived from Chinese dishes. Since Korea and China share a rich history that goes back several centuries, it is not surprising for the two nations to have exchanged culinary traditions. Korean Chinese food is often ordered for food deliveries in South Korea, but Korean Chinese food restaurants are also as popular. Some of the most popular Korean Chinese food items are Jajangmyeon (black bean sauce noodles), Jjamppong (spicy seafood noodle soup) and Tangsuyuk (sweet and sour pork) (Figure 21)

2.3.4.3 Korean Street Food

As with most countries in the world, street vendors are a common sight. However, South Korea is especially known for its delicious street food sold by vendors. Korean street food (Figure 22) is considered an important part of popular culture in South Korea, and it can be found all over the country, from big cities to small countryside towns. Street food vendors usually sell a wide variety of Korean street food and some of the most famous food items are Tteokbokki (spicy rice cakes), Sundae (blood sausages), Kimbap (seaweed rice rolls) and Odeng (fish cakes) (You, 2021).



Figure 22: Street vendor in South Korea selling a variety of Korean street food

2.4 Tourism Marketing Strategies

In the 1990s, the Korean government created a plan to enhance the standing of the Korean entertainment industry. Universities were tasked with producing the next generation of directors, producers and actors (Trolan, 2017). In particular, the Korea National University of Arts (K-ARTS) was established in 1993 by the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism (MCST) of Korea as the only national university of arts to serve as a leading institution that cultivates artists (QS Top Universities, n.d.). This initiative was successful as there were several notable alumni from K-ARTS, including Kim Go-eun, Lee Je-hoon and Jang Dong-gun. On top of grooming young talents for the entertainment industry, film studios were also actively promoted by the government and money was spent on creating agencies that primarily focused on promoting tourism based on Korean culture. Exportation of Korean film and television programmes was also done to reach transnational audiences, which helped South Korea catapult to success (Trolan, 2017).

After South Korea gained more recognition due to the Korean Wave, the Korean government viewed the Korean Wave as a marketing and business phenomenon and not just as a cultural export. With the help of social media and streaming platforms such as Netflix and Disney+, South Korea was further promoted as the “Hollywood of the East”. The 2021 Korean drama, Squid Game, is a good example of how Netflix can enable South Korea as a country to be more recognised internationally.

Additionally, the Korean government was heavily involved in the promotion and penetration of cultural products in the overseas market through the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism (MCST). Hallyu agencies under the MCST were created to focus on promoting Hallyu through food, sport or celebrity events, but especially through music concerts. Leveraging the popularity brought about by the Korean Wave, prominent actors and actresses were used by governmental agencies to promote South Korea as a tourist destination. Moreover, South Korean brands such as Samsung, LG and KIA/Hyundai used K-pop idols to promote their products, which helped improve Korean business profits. Cultural centres were also opened in many foreign countries like Australia, Spain and the Philippines to promote Korean popular culture, which includes the Korean language. All in all, the Korean government viewed the Korean Wave as a stepping-stone from increasing the popularity of Korean dramas and K-pop to the purchase of cultural products and other attractive products, and eventually, an overall positive impression of South Korea (Trolan, 2017).

Impacts of Tourism on South Korea

3.1 Economic Impact

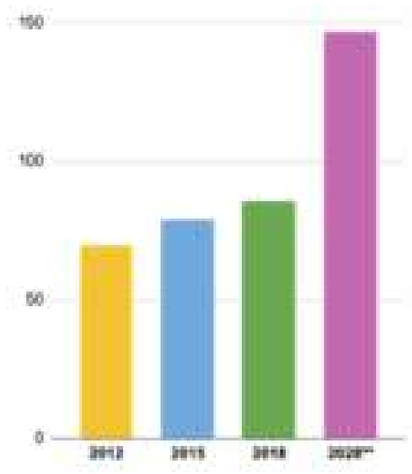


FIGURE 23: TOURISM'S CONTRIBUTION TO SOUTH KOREA'S GDP (IN TRILLION WON)

Tourism is a growing industry in South Korea, and has contributed to an increasing proportion of South Korea's annual Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Making up 4.7% of South Korea's GDP in 2018, the numbers are expected to almost double by 2028 (OECD, 2020). Furthermore, the expansion in the tourism industry has also brought forth business and employment opportunities for the locals in South Korea.

Around 1.4 million jobs have been created as a result of this expanding industry, making up approximately 5.3% of total employment in South Korea (OECD, 2020). Generally, this has also improved the quality of lives of many locals and has proliferated the growth of small family businesses to large corporations.

3.2 Cultural Impact

3.2.1 Cultural Dilution



Figure 24: Fusion of Korean and Mexican Food

With the growing number of tourists entering South Korea, the country's businesses have also begun to accommodate these tourists' needs to stay competitive in their own respective industries. This means that the goods and services that are produced are gradually inclined towards foreign influence (Srinivas, 2021). This is especially harmful when the tourists' perceptions of Korea are mostly shaped by what they understand of K-pop and KCulture, where tourists often equate Korean culture to mainstream pop culture.

Secondly, traditional Korean food has also gone through modifications to suit the taste buds of tourists. Some examples could be the infusion of foreign cuisines, such as Japanese or Western ingredients, into local cuisine to create new flavors that are more palatable for the tourists (Srinivas, 2021). Korean food names have also been changed on the menus for tourist-frequented restaurants such that tourists are able to pronounce them more easily. In urban areas such as Seoul and Busan, there has also been an increase in the number of western cafes and western fast food restaurants.

As South Korea continues to maintain its global hallyu image for potential tourists, their culture has been compromised as a result to align with these tourists' expectations. As such, Korean Culture is no longer just Korean culture. Rather, it has become a amalgamation of traditional Korean culture and what the tourists wishes to see in Korea.

3.2.2 Loss of Cultural Value



Figure 25: Tourists wearing the Hanbok

International tourists often visit South Korea for its culture. However, this has also led to the commodification and the loss of local cultural values. In South Korea, it is a common practice for tourists to rent and don on the traditional costume, Hanbok, and visit the key tourist destinations such as the Gyeongbukgung palace. Similar to the rituals and cultural sites that tourists visit on their trips, most do not understand nor appreciate the history or origins of the traditional costume. Instead, it has been commodified as a touristic experience and product for their personal enjoyment and benefit. In this sense, these "authentic" experiences of tourists often lead to the loss of local culture (Hurt, 2017).

3.3 Social Impact

Modern tourists often travel to look for “authentic” experiences that a country has. Unlike the homogenous urban areas such as Seoul, Tokyo and New York, tourists turn to suburban and rural areas to observe and experience the daily lives of the locals. These pursuits of authentic experiences are made easier with services such as AirBnb, which allows tourists to stay in the homes of the locals instead of luxurious hotels.

Recognising this pursuit of less modern and more “localised” experiences, the Cultural Revitalisation Programme was started in the 1990s to promote local growth. Known as a form of place-making strategy, features of underdeveloped neighbourhoods were intentionally preserved to create tourist demands. For example, small alleys and old-style houses serve as popular tourist destinations. This strategy was initially viewed positively by the locals, as they found it helpful in restoring a sense of community and revitalizing cultural identities that may have been lost amidst globalisation and mass urbanisation in the past few decades. These previously marginalized and underdeveloped neighbourhoods have also grown to become more appreciated and recognised by international tourists, stimulating local economic growth and improvement in businesses (Kim, 2020).

However, it must be recognised that this “authenticity” is an illusion curated by authorities for the tourists. These representations of authenticity are often not truly reflective of the locals’ lives, and the tourists who possess purchasing power and reside there temporarily do not fully experience what the locals themselves go through. Furthermore, the tourists’ perceptions of “authentic Korean neighbourhoods" are often shaped by mainstream media, where films, music and television shows often portray and romanticise these underdevelopment as authenticity.



Figure 26: Ihwa Mural Village

For example, the Ihwa Mural Village that is situated in the heart of Seoul still possesses the oldest housing types in South Korea despite being surrounded by the concrete jungle. Not only that, the housing are kept in well-preserved condition, with the intention to attract tourists who wish to get a taste of the authentic Korean neighbourhood experience. It is hence we observe that such staged authenticity serves the purpose of fulfilling tourist demands, and underdevelopment has been romanticised as a result. These tourist visits often also intrude into the everyday lives of the residents in these areas (Kim, 2020).

Tourism and COVID-19

COVID-19 had a devastating worldwide impact, causing countries to isolate within themselves. Korea was no exception to this, with international and domestic tourism being heavily impacted. Lockdowns imposed throughout the world and especially in Korea, it causes the sharp decrease in short and long term of this pandemic. The lasting effects of this pandemic would give rise to the change in how Koreans viewed tourism especially within the country (Jeon, 2018).

4.1 Coping Methods with COVID-19

To help cope with the increasing rapid spread of COVID-19, Korea utilized the knowledge that they learned from the previous pandemic of Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) in 2015. They were able to be more prepared for the effects of pandemic and have a quicker response to try and contain the spread. They formed an effective detection, containment and treatment plan. Some measures such as wearing a mask in public spaces, was already common because of air pollution, and became a social norm early in the pandemic (Kim, 2021). Social norms is also a method to prevent the spread, as it affects how Koreans collectively view and assess the situations that might impact their individual safety and attitudes towards the pandemic.

4.2 Change in Mindset

Due to the isolation and desire to keep to themselves in fear of catching or spreading the virus, the citizens began to reconsider their old habits in exchange for safer options.

With the blurring line between work and rest, increasing workload and confinement to their own homes with the strict restrictions, the desire to travel for leisure was at an all-time high. These impacts were causing Korean citizens to face the ‘Corona blues’, as a result of the increasing stressors that they were put under (Bae, 2020). When restrictions began lifting, people were excited though hesitant to travel again. The uncertainty that hung in the air about travelling, even within the country, had left doubts on people’s minds.

Additionally, the consumption patterns changed because of the drastic change in mindset. This caused the service industry to alter how they catered to customers, increasing and introducing more self-service options to accommodate these changes. Self-service counters became a staple alongside the regular counters, online and contactless payment were highly recommended options to reduce the use of cash, and videoconferencing to aid in facilitating customer service to name some examples of these changes (Bae, 2020).

4.3 Rise of ‘untact’ Tourism

This led to the adoption of untact: a new term that was coined. Untact is combination of “un-” and “contact” referring to minimizing face-to-face contact. To be more specific, the definition of untact tourism is a behavioural disposition to minimise direct contact between people (Bae, 2020). This form of tourism became popular in Korea to meet the demand for leisure and travelling while reducing the risk of infection. However, the risk perception can be swayed depending on the norms and the individual’s perception.

People's perceptions of risk play a big role in their tourism decisions. Risk perception refers to a person's beliefs and judgments about uncertain situations that arise as a result of a specific risk (Bae et al., 2021). They must consider their families and how to have the best experience possible while remaining safe. As a result of this, many face the conflict of wanting to travel with the need of considering the added risks before embarking on the travel plans. First emerging after the restrictions had loosened, it is a mindset that continues even till now. By adopting this mindset and understanding the benefits that untact tourism has in protecting the individual as well as the people around them, it aids in increasing domestic tourism. This results in an enthusiasm to travel around the country once again.

This excitement can be seen in the increase in bookings of domestic travel. Over 200,000 travellers visited Jeju Island, Korea's most popular tourist destination, during the holiday week in late April and early May 2020 (Min, 2020). In comparison to 2019, the reservation rate for local accommodations climbed by 48.9% over this time period (Lee, 2020).

Additionally, in 2021, the Korea Tourism Organization released a list of 100 untact attractions that would help tourists to plan their trips while keeping safety and hygiene as the top priorities in addition to having fun. The 100 Untact Attractions were chosen based on the following criteria: they had to be less well-known, have themed attractions for single travellers and families, be outdoors, and only admit a limited number of people in order to maintain social distancing (VisitKorea, 2021).

4.4 Adoption of ‘untact’ as the Norm

With these, we can see how COVID-19 has impacted tourism and changed the way people travel. Domestic tourism in Korea is the simplest way to fulfil the criterion of safe travelling with minimal contact to others. Untact tourism is a phenomenon that has bloomed from this pandemic and will continue to be a fun and feasible way to travel, even when the pandemic is no longer around. It allows people to have more options in deciding how they want to travel as well.

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THE POLITICAL IMPACT ON SOUTH KOREAN CINEMA



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ABSTRACT

The phenomenal success that South Korean cinema earned today did not come easy. The operation and structure of the industry have been strongly motivated by various political forces in its history. From Japanese colonialism to the various authoritarian regimes, South Korean cinema has always been subjected to harsh and despotic ruling. Thus, the ebbs and flows of South Korea's politics are synonymous with important turning points in the nation's cinema. As different administrations take on varied political viewpoints, films reflect the evolving stances and transmutations between different periods. However, these cusps are essential in understanding how the combination of effects led to her present-day achievements. The history of South Korea will be split into five chronological periods: The Beginning (Before 1955), The Golden Age (1955-1969), The Dark Era (1970-1988), Korean New Wave (1988-1997) and Renaissance (1997-Present) to help contextualise the political effects on films produced in each era. Together with the study of themes and genres present in South Korean films for each period, this paper aims to highlight the significance of the nation's evolving political climate on South Korean cinema.

The Beginning (Before 1955)

The Origin of Film in Korea

The first introduction of film exhibition is widely recognised and regarded to be when American cinematographer, Burton Holmes, visited King Gojong at Kyŏngbok Palace, Seoul in 1899 (Film Reference, n.d). These early film screenings and exhibitions were exclusive to the imperial court circles, however, they soon garnered the public's interest and thereby expanded to become widespread mass-entertainment events. As early as 1903, these film screenings were widely advertised across the country as newspaper companies, sponsored by western tobacco companies, circulated and marketed the motion picture screenings. The public screenings were so widely sought after by the masses that companies started to open movie theatres to cater to the growing audience, such as the Seoul Electric Company that reconstructed its garage in Dongdaemun into a formal movie theatre within months of the first few screenings (Film Reference, n.d).

However, while the exhibition records in Korea are relatively well-recorded, it is hard to determine the exact exhibition date of the first Korean film due to the Japanese colonial control over Korea from 1910 to 1945. Japanese colonialism caused the loss of records of early Korean films, including the destruction of all Korean narrative films filmed before 1943 as Japanese authorities burned over 200,000 Korean historical documents (Blackmore, 2020).

Japanese Colonialism over Korea (1910 to 1945)

Between 1910 to 1945, Korea was ruled as part of the Japanese Imperial Empire under the Japan-Korea Treaty of 1910 until the Japanese were defeated in World War II in 1945 (Blackmore, 2020). During this period, the Japanese Occupation of Korea underwent several phases where it was relatively benign but often very oppressive. Yet, the Korean film industry managed to assert itself and reflect the challenges faced such as strict censorship laws imposed, promotion of Japanese propaganda films and suppression of Korean expression and culture. However, despite the challenges, the domestic films produced during this period were crucial in portraying the realities of the period and comforting the masses, paving the way for future developments in Korean films.

1910 to 1919

In the early years of the Japanese Occupation from 1910 to 1919, Korea was governed by Japan's Military Police, as Japan instituted a military police system in June 1910, marking the period to be known as the Military Police Reign Era. During this decade, the Police had full authority over the country and was in control of the media, government and law through physical means and policies. They imposed a harsh stance against the Koreans, restricting and suppressing their freedom of expression and culture. This led to rising Korean nationalistic movements to resist the Japanese through widespread protests and uprisings.

This sparked off the 'March First Independence Movement', otherwise known as the'Sam-il Movement', on 1 March 1919 which proved to be a key turning point and breakthrough for the Korean film industry. The movement inspired numerous nationalist protests and resistance sentiments against Japanese rule with more than 1,500 demonstrations. Although the movement was violently suppressed by the Korean Colonial Government's military, the Governor-General, Saitō Makoto, started to relax Japanese administrative control over Korea's cultural and artistic expression. As such, individuals such as writers, actors, filmmakers, producers and other artistic field professionals utilised the opportunity to express the nation's culture, increasing cultural nationalism sentiments (Yecies, 2014).

While it is difficult to determine the exact first Korean film, the 'Righteous Revenge' directed by Kim Do-san in 1919 was recognised to be the birth of Korean cinema (Lee, 2019). Although it was a kino-drama, a transitional form combining motion pictures and theatrical play, the homegrown film was considered to be the first film and starting point as it triggered further development in films. Furthermore, in 1962, the government would officially recognise and celebrate the film's premiere date as the anniversary of Korean cinema.

1920s to 1930s

With the relaxation of Japanese control, Koreans were able to experience and be trained in film production, which gave rise to multiple domestic films that fully occupied the cinemas. Silent feature films were slowly introduced with the first silent feature produced in 1923 and over the following years, more Korean film production companies would emerge.

The most well-known film of the decade was considered to be ‘Arirang’, which was produced and directed by Na Un-Kyu in 1926. This film describes a mentally-impaired man who murders the son of a wealthy man linked to Japanese police. The film’s aesthetic elements and hidden political messages inspired the anthem of the Korean independence movement and young filmmakers looking to produce films based on similar themes of realism and resistance to Japanese control. Arirang established the standard for over 80 films produced from 1926 to 1934 (Doherty, 1984).

As such during the period between 1926 to 1936, the Korean cinematic industry was vibrant and booming, resulting in the decade to be named the ‘First Golden Age’. Coupled with the production and exhibition of domestic films, there were also foreign films distributed and exhibited such as American, British, Chinese, French and more (Yecies, 2005). In this decade, most domestic produced films struggled to compete against foreign films as American Hollywood films overwhelmingly dominated the market. However, this resilience will eventually pave the path for the Korean filmmaking renaissance. As Hollywood films outreach expanded globally, Korea became an important territory for film exhibition, whereby more than 6,700 American and 630 other countries’ feature and non-feature films could be approved and screened without much censorship (Yecies, 2005). The lack of censorship by the Japanese was to circumvent Communism and later socialist ideological themes.

However, the Japanese Department of Home Affairs started banning imports of foreign films and the Governor-General, Minami Jirō, intensified the suppression of Korean culture due to the escalating tensions between Japan and China in 1937. He introduced an assimilationist policy ‘Japan and Korea as One Body’ (naisen ittai in Japanese or naeseon ilche in Korean), removing any expression of Korea's indigenous culture to draw Koreans into the Japanese way of thinking and living, promoting cultural hegemony over Korea.

This greatly impacted the booming film industry as it dwindled to producing less than a handful of films in the following decade as Japanese authorities banned the official use of the Korean language and names. Furthermore, sound technology was introduced in the mid-1930s. However, with the suppression, it stagnated the growth of the film industry to establish its own national identity during the early sound era. The Korean Colonial Government prohibited Western entertainment films and utilised locally produced feature films and promoted pro-Japanese propaganda.

Despite the censorship and suppression, Korean filmmakers still attempted to produce films to challenge the suppression such as Chunhyangjeon (1935) and The Town Across the River (1935) and Oh Mong-nyeo (1937) which all held hidden political themes to resist the suppression. Silent films were more popular than sound films due to the higher freedom of expression.

1940 to 1945

By 1940, the Korean film industry had been completely absorbed by the Japanese as authorities imposed the 1940 Korean Film Law, otherwise known as Chosun Film Decree. The law resulted in films being subjected to strict censorship, whereby scripts could be banned and removed from production if they had misrepresented the Japanese and its ideological movement in Korea.

As such, Korean filmmakers moved to partner with their Japanese counterparts to produce films. It was to promote unity between the two nations and reaffirm the Korean loyalty to the Japanese Empire, however in reality, it subtly undermined the Japanese as the Korean directors attempted to undercut the propaganda by foregrounding other concerns while superficially obeying the censorship directives. This resulted in famous films such as Angels on the Streets (1941) and Spring in the Korean Peninsula (1941) and Suicide Squad in the Watchtower (1943), which all held hidden messages that undercut Japanese influence.

With the defeat of Japan in World War II, Korea was liberalised into the Allied Powers, which continued its peace until the Korean War.

The Korean War (1950 to 1955)

The Korean War broke out from 1950 to 1953, when North Korea, backed by the USSR, invaded the US-occupied South Korea. In this period between the US occupation of Korea and the end of Korean War, only 5 films managed to survive as most of the film infrastructure was destroyed during the war and filmmakers were relegated to filming newsreels and war documentaries instead (Pacquet, 2017). The centre of the industry had to be moved to Busan due to the invasions. Out of the 5 films remaining, the most famous was 'Hoorah! Freedom!' (Chayu Manse!) produced by Choi Un-Gyu in 1946. The film was the first film made after independence from the Japanese and it was widely received as it held strong patriotism and anti-Japanese sentiments.

After the armistice agreement in 1953, President Syngman Rhee would revive the film industry through the exemption of taxation and the influx of foreign aid will provide the industry with technology and equipment, laying the foundations for the rebirth and golden age of Korean cinema in the late 1950s to 60s.



The Golden Age (1955 - 1969)

Cinematic Boom

The rise of Korean cinema started in the late 1950s. Film taxation was implemented by then-South Korean President, Syngman Rhee's government as an attempt to rejuvenate the industry. It was the post-war era and a period of revival, paving the way for the golden age of cinema in the 1960s. The significant growth of the industry laid out the foundations for the current industry. Quality and quantity of films increased rapidly by the end of the decade despite instability after liberation from Japan (1910-1945) and the Korean War (1950-1953), with films increasing from 18 in 1954 to 111 in 1959 (Kwak, 2020).

The film industry started to flourish from all the public interest and began to cover wider-scaled genres: Action, Melodrama, Comedy, Crime thrillers and Period films. These films adopted modern elements to cater to mass entertainment (Kwak, 2020). Out of 30 films produced in 1956, 16 were period dramas, films like The Flower of Relief (1956), King Gojong and Martyr An-Jung Geun (1959) were highly grossed. Comedy films like Hyperbola of Youth (1956) and Three Brides (1959) portrayed life with satire and humour. It was one of the most notable genres, appealing to a greater public that was unaccustomed to free expression. Crime thriller films like The Hand of Destiny (1954) and The Boxes of Death (1955) also appealed to the public. Themes on Korean war and division were also typically ideologically unambiguous, depicting an indictment of the Communist regime of North Korea (Martin, D.,2014). Piagol (1955) was one of the most important Korean War films in the 1950s. Though it caused a huge scandal after its release, it was still considered an anti-communist film (Scanlon, 2019).

High grossing films Chun Hyang Story (1955) and Madame Freedom (1956) spurred a great cinematic boom. The film ChunHyangJeon (1955) drew 180,000 viewers in Seoul, setting a new box office record and was a notable film in pioneering the golden age of cinema. It also opened a genre of historical films and set a foundation for the revival of the industry (Korean Film Archive, n.d.). Madame Freedom (1956) depicted the social changes in the phenomenon of 'liberal women' and modernization as a result of massive consumption of US culture. The screening of this film drew more than 150,000 female movie-goers just in Seoul alone (Yoon & Yim, 2015).

Both movies contributed much to the title "Chungmuro Era", which still exists as a powerhouse in the industry today. The success of Chunhyangjeon sent many filmmakers, screenwriters and actors flocking to the small district. Though Chungmuro is just a small neighbourhood in northern Seoul, it housed many film companies. By the end of the 1950s, more than 17 film companies were gathered on the 3rd street of Chungmuro Road (Lee, 2007). Till today, Chungmuro is still considered a symbolic centre of the film industry in South Korea (Kwak, 2020).

Turning point: April 19 Revolution

1960s filmmaking was mostly influenced by political and social factors. It was a decade that showcased many key works and saw an uprising of a new generation of directors producing works that were hugely popular and cinematically daring (Koreanfilm, 2018). The April 19 revolution was a turning point for South Korea and the film industry. On April 19, 1960, student groups staged mass protests on the streets to overthrow the authoritarian government of Syngman Rhee. The movement led to Rhee's resignation and gave South Korean society little space for greater freedom of expression (Koreanfilm, 2018). This success led to changes in attitudes and perceptions of younger Koreans.

The fleeting period of free expression in the early 1960s witnessed some critically acclaimed works, Yu Hyun Mok's Obaltan, Aimless Bullet (1961) and Kim Ki Young's The Housemaid (1960) covering sensitive themes (Hyun Jin & MinHwa, n.d.). Aimless bullet (1961) covered on a range of social issues from the division of the peninsula to prostitution on US army bases (Korean View, 2021). Filmmaker Kim Ki Young, being cited as a cult figure in South Korean cinema, used the film The Housemaid (1960) to depict topics of infidelity, social structure and cultural invasion of the Korean Society then. The film was a monumental cinematic achievement, leaving a legacy as one of the best Korean films ever made. Inspiring generations of Korean directors, one being Oscar-winning director, Bong Joon Ho (Lo, 2020).

The military regime: Park Chung Hee's government

A military coup in May 1961 led to the accession of dictator Park Chung Hee, changing the film industry scene. The military government laid out systematised administrative control over film production, distribution and exhibition. Forcing film producers to expand survival strategies. The regiment began with the initiation of the Ministry of Public Information, the National Film Production Centre (Research et al., 2012). With tasks to coordinate films, print and radio broadcasting media campaigns as well as produce newsreels and cultural films. Later in 1962, A Motion Picture Law was enacted in an attempt to increase domestic film productions by imposing limits on foreign film imports. The Motion Picture Law covered areas of production control, the import quota system, film censorship and producer registration scheme (Research et al., 2012). The enacted law only allowed film companies to import foreign features for every three local movies produced. South Korean directors of the era worked in a frenzy under enormous pressure to meet their film quota. Films then were shot within a couple of weeks, with more popular filmmakers filming up to 8 films per year. In just 1967 alone, director Kim Soo Yong shot up to 10 features. Even so, the completed movies had to face hard censorship. The government censorship board would often ban or delay films based on their social or political content, pro-communist sympathies or themes revolving around sexuality (Koreanfilm, 2018).

Though many restriction measures were put in place, South Korean directors in this era still produced films that covered a wide range of genres and introduced many innovative cinematic techniques (Hyun Jin & MinHwa, n.d.). War films, family comedies, youth-oriented dramas and action movies were staples of the time. Melodramas were the most popular genre of the time. Notable films produced during Park Chung Hee's regime included Barefooted Youth (1964), Red Muffler (1964), Flame in the Valley (1967) and Mist (1967) (Koreanfilm, 2018).

Barefooted Youth (1964), was known as an "adolescent film" that gained large popularity in South Korea during the 1960s. It reflects the nation's stark contrast in class division and generation gap. The events portrayed in the film hardly seemed controversial but it struggled to get a release. Its commercial success paid off the initial struggle and stands out as a representative film of the generation. Portraying the energy and idealism of youth. Red Muffler (1964) was a film directed by Shin Sang Ok, a scandalous figure in the industry, known for his wide range of film genres. In this movie, he covered themes of war (Koreanfilm, 2018). Flame in the Valley (1967) was one of the 10 feature films director Kim Soo Young released in 1967. The movie covered themes of Korean war with anti-communist messages included in the story. Images of striking depth and beauty were shot through Director Kim's lead. His effort for visual experimentation can be felt through the film. Mist (1967) was also one of Kim Soo Young's most notable films. It was labelled as one of the highlights of 1960s South Korean cinema. Though the movie was portrayed in a pessimistic tone, it strongly portrayed people who look for new paths instead of the old traditions. The message of this movie spoke strongly to the generation of Koreans that seeks to pursue self-fulfilment and freedom of choice. Director Kim Soo Young managed to capture a timeless aspect of modern life (Koreanfilm, 2018).



The Dark Era (1970-1988)

The Decline in Film Production

Under military governance, the harsh censorship brought destruction to the robust film culture that thrived through the 1960s. The 1970s was the darkest period in South Korean cinematic history in volume and quality. Directors were given less artistic freedom, producing limited genres and styles under the government policy (Koreanfilm, 2012). Distributors wanted to make cheaper films faster, leading to deteriorating quality of local films that could not compete with the scale of American blockbuster films (Kalbi, 2015). People also started to seek for new means of entertainment such as television which was introduced to the masses during that period of time, with distribution rates for television sets skyrocketing to 89.1% in 1969. Scenario rejection rates shot up to 58% in 1973 and 80% in 1975. The harsh censorship vigilantly spotted and deleted depictions that were anti-authority, socially realistic or politically conscious. Amidst these circumstances, the "extinction" of creativity for filmmaking became inevitable. This resulted in an increase of "apolitical, idealist genre films" such as action films, melodramas or propaganda films (Kim, 2019).

One of the notable directors during this era was Director Ha Kil Chong. He produced many socially and politically critical films, countering the laws imposed by Park Chung Hee's government. He was also noted for his artistic involvement with global films of the era. Labelled as a 'martyr' of tragic times, many in the industry admire his courage to persevere in releasing sensitive content through his works. Some of his works such as The Pollen Of Flowers (1972) and Fidelity (1973) were censored heavily and boycotted for his politically critical tone, but he still managed to screen these works. Though both of his works did not manage to claim commercial success, his misfortune portrayed the reality of South Korean cinema in the 1970s and remains a testimony to the stringency of Park Chung Hee's regime to this day (Kim, 2019).

Some notable films in the 1970s included The Pollen (1972), March of Fools (1975) and Rainy Days (1979). Pollen (1972) and March of Fools (1975) were both directed by Ha Kil Chong. Pollen was his first film, the theme of the film reads as an attempt to depict the true, ugly face of authoritarianism. Though the movie was heavily censored, it still managed to screen (Koreanfilm, 2012). March of Fools was Director Ha's most famous work. The film acquired legendary status among the leading directors of the next decade. The film focused on the lives of university students of the era, though initially lighthearted, the mood turns darker as the characters start to question uncertainties of their future living amidst a compressed society. The March of Fools could also not escape harsh censorship, resulting in some film content being cut from airing. This film was, however, a commercial success and was also well-received among the press (Kim, 2019). Rainy Days (1979) was a film favouring an anti-communist viewpoint. The film deals with themes of the Korean war and the scars left in the Korean psyche for subsequent generations from the division (Koreanfilm, 2012).

Seoul Spring: Peek into democratisation

As mentioned by Kamiya (1980), South Korea was at a "historic turning point as the decade of the 1980s begins" (p. 744). After a longstanding 18.5 years of tight dictatorial power over the nation, President Park Chung Hee's assassination on 26 October 1979 created a state of political vacuum. The collapse of a military powerhouse also came at the expense of political and social instability. Many were hoping for the fade out of Park's dictatorship, which will lead to the realisation of democracy. Thus, the term "Spring of Seoul" came about as people were basking in the post-Park freedom, seemingly coined as the spring of democratization at the end of the winter republic (518 Archives). Prior rigid rulings during Park's regime were repealed and nationwide demonstrations for reforms such as the end of martial law, human rights, freedom of the press and fairer working conditions, were on the rise. In the absence of Park, almost 700 civil rights activists and opposition leaders, like Kim Dae Jung, were freed from his restraints. Better still, politicians in the cabinet were seen arguing for the rewriting of the constitution (Breen, 2010).

Filmmakers took advantage of this short period of democratisation from late 1979 to early 1980 to produce films that could discuss topics and themes that were previously invariably crushed by Park's media censorship policies. Notable films produced during the Seoul Spring include A Fine, Windy Day (1980), Pursuit of Death (1980) and The Last Witness (1980).

A Fine, Windy Day tells the story of three young working-class friends from the countryside, who came to Seoul to make a living. Through their lives and conversations, the film makes a satire of the South Korean society, reflecting the emotional drained sentiments due to the military regime and rapid industrial development in the 1970s (Cho, 2019, p. 50-51). In addition, Pursuit of Death (1980) reflects the futility of ideology, through the seemingly-eternal chase between a North Korean partisan and South Korean policeman. In retrospect, this film is also worthy to be studied further to learn more about its director, Im Kwon Taek. Despite being an eminent director, he was restricted to creative restraints due to his North Korean-supporting familial ties. Thus, Im always had the pressure to produce anti-communist films to produce his ideological innocence and patriotism for his country. It was only in the period of Seoul Spring that he could produce a film that touched on political differences.

Coup d'état of December Twelfth and May Seventeenth

This outburst of democratic disputes after decades of repression appeared to be the beginning of optimism for South Korea, but it was viewed as a catastrophe by military officers like Chun Doo Hwan, leader of the Defence Security Command in charge of investigating Park Chung Hee's assassination. Chun's belief that Park's assassination was part of a larger national security threat, eventually led to the arrest of Chung Seung Hwa, the martial law commander on 12 December 1979. This "coup" was received well by the nation, believing that this was milestone progress towards democracy they were deprived of. However, these ceaseless events of reforms, protests and opposition resistance in early 1980 were alarming evidence of internal conflicts to Chun. Thinking of broader motivations, Chun felt that these events threatened South Korea's sovereignty and weakened South Korea's propensity to "withstand the nationalistic lure and military threat of North Korea" (Breen, 2010). Chun's phased assumption of power was eventually sealed in the 17 May 1980 military coup. He informed the cabinet that he would be taking over and effectively vetoed martial law across the nation. He banned political activities and university protests, arrested opposition leaders and reimposed media censorship. These protocols were eventually challenged by student protests in Gwangju, resulting in the massacring Gwangju Uprising.

3S Policy: Sex, Screen and Sports

To distract the public from the harsh reality of "low pay, authoritarian political rule and limited democracy" (Kwon and Kim, 2013, p. 520), Chun Doo Hwan reduced many restrictions, such as the broadcast censorship, from the previous Park government and implemented his infamous "3S policy: Sex, Sports, and Screen." This policy engendered the popularity of baseball leagues in South Korea. More relevantly, there was a massive promotion of nudity in films. While films with political messages were still censored, nudity and sex scenes were condoned and encouraged (Kim, 2013). Hostess melodramas of the 1970s gave way to eroticism (Google Arts and Culture), which was a commercial breakthrough for South Korean cinema which suffered from a recession in the 1970s. The creation of explicit films thus became a source of entertainment for the public. Erotic movies -- both modern and traditional -- were the most produced genre in South Korea during the 1980s and the proportion of erotic films increased from 40% (1970s) to 55% (1980s). Kim explained this "relaxation" in media censorship distracted audiences with a falsified sense of freedom, something they were previously deprived of in Park's military regime. Films like Madame Aema (1982), Eoh Wu Dong (1985) and Prostitution (1988) were within the top 10 local highest-grossing films in the 1980s. Eroticism was able to dominate the South Korean film industry as kiss and sex scenes were the focus and took up the majority of the screen time. It was, therefore, the genre with the biggest profit margin due to the major reduction in production cost but the highest box office tickets sold in that decade.

Korea New Wave (1988-1997)

National Cinema Movement

In spite of the strict regulations under the military regime of Chun Doo Hwan (1980-1988), there was a rise in a cinephilia culture where a new generation of hopeful artists and filmmakers were interested in arthouse, experimental and auteur films. By distinguishing themselves from earlier generations of filmmakers, this generation was particularly interested in contesting the current oppressive nature of filmmaking (Yecies and Shim, 2011, p. 4). Perhaps due to the deprivation of space and liberty to express and explore new “aesthetics and narrative models”, budding filmmakers were forced to find new avenues to reinvent the form, style and purpose of cinema. New Wave films were largely defined by their outright critique of issues in South Korean societal and political history (Cho, 2019, p. 53). References were drawn from third cinema and modelled after problems like the demand for democracy and the belief in reformation, through actual events like the Gwangju Uprising -- a result of the implementation of Martial Law and the 1987 Movement. Films produced were usually social commentaries that had realistic portrayals of lives in South Korea at that time, with themes revolving around socio-economic issues like poverty, class and cultural practices.

The emerging trend of “underground” viewing practices of foreign films was a result of government censorship. Black market trade of videotaped films and screening gatherings at the French and German Cultural Centres in Seoul were created so that like-minded cinephiles could get together, bounce off each other’s ideas and discuss the study of cinema (Kim, 2007, p. 259). These embassies serve important functions in exposing Koreans to the diversity of film culture, which spawned the nation’s leading directors, producers, critics, festival organisers and cultural policy advocates. The eventual deregulation of the media after 1988 allowed the surfacing of cinephiles as new directors (Yecies and Shim, 2011, p 1-15), who were ready to incorporate influences of other cinemas into domestically-produced films, introducing a new brand of national cinema in the late 1980s. Some of the notable personnel include Chung Ji-young, Chung Sung-ill, Huh Moon-young, Jang Gil-soo, Kang Han-sup, Kim Hong-Joon, Park Kwang-Su and Shin Chul.

Chilsu and Mansu (1988), Taste of Heaven (1986), Sopyonje (1993) and City of the Rising Sun (1999) are classic New Wave films that engage with the South Korean social consciousness. These films reflect the political climate and frustrations felt by the working class due to a lack of understanding of the repressive state. Through subtle symbols and motifs, directors were critical of the existing political and entertainment systems in place by challenging and poking fun at the previous authoritarian rule via the characters. In Chilsu and Mansu, the film becomes sobering as the audience watches on. Chilsu’s compulsive lying to forge a rich identity to impress a girl that he was wooing, appears to be Director Park Kwang Su’s strategic attempt as a narrative device to sustain comedy. However, it eventually becomes the film’s manifestation of its discussion of restless youth, unfulfilled ambitions and lost identities. Thankfully, this film remained uncut as it was released in November 1988, 7 months after the end of Chun’s regime. These New Wave films would have been subjected to political censorship had it been released earlier. As such, nuances in political content and pessimistic portrayal of South Korean society through these films would not have seen the light of day.

Influx of Foreign Films

Pressure from the United States to open up the South Korean manufacturing sector was one of the main driving forces that changed the dynamics of the local film market. The Motion Picture Export Association of America (MPEA) filed a formal complaint under Section 301 of the US Trade Act, penalising any country that failed to liberalise its market for American commodities (Yecies, 2007, p. 7). This complaint was largely motivated by their interest in pursuing the global entertainment market as the media and entertainment industry was the second-largest export for the United States (Kim, 2000, p. 362). In the lead up to the 1988 Seoul Olympics which placed South Korea in the international limelight, President Roh Tae Woo also wanted to maintain trade status with the United States. The import quota was subsequently abolished as a result of two bilateral film treaties signed in 1985 and 1988 (Messerlin and Parc, 2017, p. 59), which meant that permits that required prior government approval to establish a film production company in South Korea were abolished. Importing foreign films was liberalised and major US studios -- Twentieth Century Fox, United International Pictures -- could directly distribute their films into the local market without going through the local distribution channels anymore.

The effect of an open market was disastrous for the local film distributors. Domestic distributors lost the incentive to invest in local films and the South Korean market share plummeted from 39.9% (1983) to 20.2% (1989) to 15.9% (1993). It was extremely difficult for local films to compete against the dominance of already established Hollywood studios and their unlimited importing of films. Coupled with the growing appetite for foreign culture and entertainment, locals were purchasing tickets for foreign films more than locally produced ones. Deep Blue Night (1985), the top local grossing film, only had 495,000 admissions - which pales by comparison to the 925,000 admissions attained by the top global grossing film, The Killing Fields (1984).

Rising Investments in the Nation's Cultural Sector

Both Roh Tae Woo (1988-1993) and Kim Young Sam (1993-1997) saw the potential of cultural products -- films, music and gaming -- to enhance economic growth and revitalise South Korea's electronic and IT industry (Kim, 2007). During Roh Tae Woo's government, South Korea gradually opened its economy to imports of cultural products. Caused by the expansion of the middle-income class and the relaxation of censorship for television dramas, films and music started to deal with political and social themes. The repeal of the Basic Media Act and the establishment of the standalone Ministry of Culture in 1990 was one of the many contributions to the development of South Korea's cultural sector in Roh Tae Woo's regime (Kim, 2012, p. 140-168).

The first civilian government after 30 years of military regime led by Kim Young Sam saw a further reduction in censorship and greater promotion of South Korea's cultural industry. Kim Young Sam provided tax breaks for production companies under National Film Production Fund and increased film budgets from 500 million won to 1.5 billion won from 1992 to 1996 (Kwon and Kim, 2013, p. 527). The film industry was also reclassified from "Service" to "Semi-manufacturing", further exemplifying the significance of the industry to South Korea's exports. Choi (2011) noted that the overwhelming success of the Hollywood film Jurassic Park (1993) which garnered almost US$85 million in ticket admissions was a pivotal force amongst the government officials, in recognising the potential of South Korea's cultural sector to contribute to the national economy. In addition, the Motion Picture Law 1995 was amended to reduce pre-screening censorship meaning that rules were relaxed and a more diverse array of films could be shown in cinemas. Screening for locally produced films was reduced to 106 days (1996) from 146 days (1985) a year, meaning that there would be a healthier competition between local and foreign films, resulting in higher quality of local films made in South Korea. Overall, South Korean cinema saw a rapid increase in the number and type of cultural products that could publicly criticise political corruption and social injustice.

The entry of Chaebol into the film industry was a motivating force. Conglomerates involved in VCR productions wanted to venture into new avenues to promote sales of their hardware through the production of content. They saw the feasibility of using film as a tool to boost the popularity of their hardware. However, distribution rights to Hollywood films were extremely expensive and usually exclusively distributed by Hollywood studios. Therefore, Chaebols saw the need to produce and secure distribution rights to their own content, which led to the birth of concept films. Their system of vertical integration of investment, production, distribution and exhibition offered a corporate approach to the film industry, while local film production companies executed the process. Concept films, which were genre-specific and highly commercialised, were easy to produce and had high profits. Marriage Story (1992) was a film invested by Samsung Entertainment Group, a subsidiary of Samsung Group, and a production company, Shincine Communications (Cho, 2019, p. 55). Through intensive market surveys conducted on newlyweds, this film was developed with judicious strategy and topped the box office upon release. The support from the Chaebols helped revitalized the South Korean film industry, which at that time was running out of funds (Kalbi, 2015).

1997 Asian Financial Crisis

On 3 December 1997, The International Monetary Fund (IMF) announced the approval of a US$57 billion bailout package to stabilise the South Korean economy after a credit and currency crisis was exacerbated by Chaebols who went bankrupt after excessively borrowing large amounts of funds for their investments. The devaluation of the won and the massive amount of debt ultimately liquidated South Korean banks and many financial institutions went bankrupt. The crisis caused many Chaebol groups to offload their film subsidiaries, as part of President Kim Dae Jung's radical and painful initiatives to rescue South Korea (Yecies and Shim, 2015, p. 160-164). 43 films were released in 1998 during the IMF restructuring program -- the lowest recorded number since 1957.

There was a change in mentalities as a result of the devastating financial crisis. Pessimism and the repercussion of a crisis-psychologically damaged society prevailed among the minjung. The crisis led mass psychology to align with historicism, "shifting viewer preferences from grand narratives to smaller stories with deep connections to the current milieu" (Moon, 2006, p 36-59). Peppermint Candy (1999) was produced shortly after the IMF crisis. It parallels the analysis of the human condition against the cruel stages of industrialized life -- especially the failing economic state of South Korea in the 80s and 90s.

Renaissance (1997-Present)

Birth of K-Blockbusters

Despite the Chaebol's exit, they played a pivotal role in restructuring the previously crumbling film industry. New business-savvy techniques, such as market and audience research and explosive growth in film culture were imperative for the film industry to sustain through the downtime. Collaboration with independent, young and creative directors from prestigious film schools around the world, resulted in new leading production companies emerging across the decade. The Korean New Wave which was seeded in the mid-1990s began to thrive and gain recognition through directors like Bong Joon Ho, Park Chan Wook, Lee Chang Dong and Hong Sang Soo, who came of age as the newly liberalised South Korea "started to blossom culturally and artistically" (IndieWire, 2014). Thus, established workflow and ideals stemming from Chaebol's involvements -- prior to their exit -- have already laid a solid foundation for the renaissance of the industry in the early 2000s.

At the same time, Koreans, both audiences and filmmakers, were hungry for alternatives to western films. The new cohort of producers and filmmakers was able to occupy a "newly industrialized playing field" through the restructuring of the film industry after the IMF Crisis. New conglomerates like CJ Entertainment, the Orion Group (Showbox), and Lotte Entertainment emerged to become the biggest players in the South Korean movie industry. Once again, this transition in South Korean cinema birthed the new age of K-blockbusters, which were large scale commercial "Hollywood-benchmarked" films that has an added flavour of Korean locality (Cho, 2019, p. 58). New-age directors in the renaissance era were keen to retain auterial expressiveness over their film's themes and styles (arthouse) while weaving them into mass culture (genre films). This was a new benchmark for South Korean cinema as it embodied unprecedented visual and technicalities (eg. visual effects, CGI) facilitated by the neoliberal financialization of the IMF Crisis. Hye (2011) recalled Bong Joon Ho's black comedy and sci-fi film The Host (2006) incorporating the advancement of CGI technology while touching on dysfunctional family structure. His use of stylistic and narrative devices was referenced from Hollywood genre films such as Steven Spielberg's Jaws (1975) and Jonathan Dayton's Little Miss Sunshine (2006). The term, K-Blockbusters, became synonymous with successful films which broke box office records. Swiri (1999), an action film that illustrates a love story between a South Korean secret agent and North Korean spy, is a classic example of that. In 1999, it reached 6.2 million audiences, surpassing the top-grossing Hollywood films like Titanic (1997) with only 4.3 million audiences (Yecies, 2007, p. 11).

Notable films in the early 2000s include films that discusses themes like the Korean War, family (particularly dysfunctional/collapse of traditional family structure), sci-fi fantasy and horror. Joint Security Area (2000) discusses the inter-Korean relationship, where politics was mixed with humanity and friendship. My Sassy Girl (2001) tilts away from the mainstream patriarchal relationships, containing misogynistic undertones and romanticized violent and physically abusive relationships dressed as a joke. A Tale of Two Sisters (2003) discusses the above mentioned theme of dysfunctional familial ties with a blend of horror/thriller. This was especially poignant after the IMF crisis when the labour market was reorganised, leading to the collapse of a traditional family nucleus (Cho, 2019, p. 60).

Mid-2000s Stagnation

The success of South Korean cinema meandered in the mid 2000s. Due to inflated actor salaries and a fixation on casting big stars, it resulted in a decrease in quality of Korean films (Kalbi, 2015). Nonetheless, political changes also impacted the film industry. Screen quota was further reduced from 146 days to 73 days a year in 2006 as the Free Trade Agreement between South Korea and the United States were signed. The market share of foreign films thus rose to a whopping 53.4% in 2010 from 26.2% in 2006. Notable films in this era include Haeundae (2009) and Speedy Scandal (2008). However, it was also argued that the screen quota policy from 1996 to present was largely considered a "paper tiger" as imposing the reduction in mandatary amount of days for the exhibition of South Korean films would incentivise Koreans to watch them (Parc, 2014).

Resurgence in South Korean Cinema

At an attempt to attract the local and international audience again, better quality and wider range of genre films were produced in the 2010s. Films started to touch on unconventional subjects and uniquely Korean themes that Hollywood movies could not offer, once again tapping on Korean locality and nostalgia to evoke sentiments in their local audience. In 2014, there were more than 100 million viewers for the third consecutive year and South Korea's annual admissions per capita were recorded to be the second-highest globally at 4.19. South Korea was also gaining international film recognition through local and international film festivals.

Locally, film festivals such as Bucheon International Fantastic Film Festival (BIFAN), Pusan Film Festival and Jeonju International Film Festival received overwhelming success due to increased cinematic appreciation and cultural activism. These festivals were a salient driver for the local discourse of South Korean cinema and themes present in films. Outside of South Korea, the Korean film industry has gained recognition from the international film community by winning a number of awards at the international film festivals (Kalbi, 2015). It helped solidified South Korea's position in the competitive global film industry, attracting media and film distributors to South Korean films. Riding the wave of the Hallyu phenomenon, exports of South Korean films jumped from US$400K in 1996 to US$75 million in 2005.

Political Spectrum of Films

Films in the late 2010s continue to flourish in the local and international space. However, it is noteworthy to discuss how the portrayal of similar themes in films was still dependent on the leadership style of the president in power. Following through Lee Myung Bak and Park Geun Hye's administration, films were largely conservative and patriotic-oriented. This could be explained through their political standpoint, as North and South Korean relationship deteriorated during their presidency. Returning to cold-war like confrontation meant that films produced in that period were effectively drivers of South Korea's stance at that time. Hence, films often depicted social conditions and trends of the times, spotlighting the tangible impact that politics have on South Korean cinema (Lee, 2016). Moreover, Post-IMF Korea produced many patriotic films in a bid to reinforce strong nationalistic sentiments among the majority of Koreans, with campaigns and political addresses to further emphasise the unity and values of Korean Culture (Ok, 2009, p. 38). These films "The Admiral: Roaring Currents" and "Ode to My Father" are films that depict South Korea's superiority with intentions to ensure the loyalty of its citizens.

However, after the inauguration of Moon Jae In who is politically liberal and a human rights lawyer in 2017, left-leaning films that speak about South Korea's fractured political past were on the rise. Perhaps due to the abolishment of discussing taboo and political events in film, films produced during Moon's presidency demonises previous conservative governments, particularly military rule from the 1960s to 1980s. North Korean characters in these films were also humanised, with relationships that transcends the physical Korean division. Films in this epoch deal with sensitive topics but attempt to approach the psych and relationship between characters, instead of making judgments of the incidents. Ultimately, political films based on contemporary films were proven to be a box office hit as they find resonance with the Korean audience.

Nonetheless, films in the 2010s constantly strive to challenge the nuances in South Korea. The Handmaiden (2016) combines elements of art-house, mainstream, and exploitation/cult in the film while presenting messages regarding society and humans through violence, eroticism and extreme scripts. A Taxi Driver (2017) depicts a reenactment of a real-life story that happened during the Gwangju Uprising in 1980. It was also the first few movies aired after the ban on making films regarding democratic protests were lifted. Parasite (2019), a four-time Oscar award-winning film, uses sociological storytelling and surrealist commentary to depict the current consumerist society that we live in. As the first non-English film to win Best Picture awards at the Oscars, this film has certainly alleviated South Korean cinema once again. Minari (2021) tells the experience of immigrant families in 1980s. Once again, this film has won international accolades, such as Best Foreign Language Film at the 78th Golden Globe Awards, along with 3 Screen Actors Guild Award nominations, 10 Critics' Choice Movie Awards nominations, and 6 Independent Spirit Award nominations.

CONCLUSION

Beneath the flourishing South Korean cinematic scene lies a long history of painstaking efforts put in by countless pioneers. They endured the test of time and strived for the creative expression of the arts. In this age of rapid media consumption, people are so quick to follow trends that they overlook historical significance of films. There is a lack of in-depth appraisal and appreciation for the film culture of the past. Gordon B. Hinckley says “You can’t build a great building on a weak foundation” (BrainyQuote, n.d.). The success of South Korean films today should be accredited to the great pioneers. It was them who braved through the political evolutions and harsh restrictions, leaving a legacy and setting an example for generations to follow

The many years of ups and downs have left a number of impactful works today. The ever evolving state of expression through films has also enabled a wider spectrum of genres. Efforts to research and implement technology into films have led to a surge in the production of visually pleasing films through the years. With the help of new technology, films today are widely distributed on major streaming platforms and gain massive popularity around the world. Nonetheless, some are still reluctant to watch these films due to language barriers. Even so, films such as Parasite (2019) managed to gain immense popularity around the world, even bagging the prestigious Oscars. Bong Joon Ho, director of Parasite once said: “Once you overcome the 1-inch-tall barrier of subtitles, you will be introduced to so many more amazing films.” (Adams & Adams, 2020). The success of the South Korean films did not come easy, yet the efforts put in by many proved it possible. The whole world now looks on with anticipation at what fresh and unconventional ideas the Koreans could offer in this ever-changing cinematic scene.

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KOREA-SINGAPORE RELATIONS



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INTRODUCTION

Alongside Hong Kong and Taiwan, Singapore and South Korea make up the Four Asian Tigers, a group of countries that underwent rapid economic growth and development between the 1970s and 1990s. Today, apart from their positions as economic powerhouses in Asia and globally, Singapore and South Korea continue to share many similarities in terms of their cultural and societal development. This report seeks to examine the history of the relations between Korea and Singapore, including those that were shared with North Korea as well as ongoing diplomatic ties with South Korea. In addition, this paper will investigate and outline South Korea and Singapore's political, cultural, and societal developments in order to study the similarities and differences between the two nations and their respective societies.

2. NORTH KOREA-SINGAPORE RELATIONS

2.1 Political

2.1.1 Development of political relations

Singapore has had a long history of a cordial relationship with North Korea, which goes back more than 50 years. It first started when the Singapore government allowed North Korea to set up a trade office in the country in 1967, which was widely regarded as a diplomatic move that benefited the two countries (Young, 2018). The recognition from a large communist country like North Korea helped solidify Singapore as an independent country and proved the country's neutrality stance where it was neither aligned with the Western camp nor the Communist camp. On the other hand, North Korea had the distinction of being the first Communist nation to establish such an agreement with Singapore, despite official protests by South Korea, which already had a trade office in Singapore. Relations between the two states remained cordial and pleasant and by 1969, consular relations were established, two years before Singapore did the same with South Korea (Fan, 2018). Subsequently, Singapore established formal diplomatic relations with North Korea on 8 November 1975 (Fan, 2018). To date, North Korea maintains an embassy in Singapore while the latter has no diplomatic representation in North Korea.

However, Singapore subsequently suspended trade relations officially with North Korea in 2017, a move that was under UN sanctions and in line with international consensus to resolve North Korea's nuclear issue with economic sanctions (Reuters, 2017). Prior to the suspension, there have been various events that led up to it. In 2016, a Singapore-based shipping company, Chinpo Shipping Company (Private) Ltd, was fined S$180,000 for facilitating a shipment of arms to North Korea in violation of UN sanctions. The shipment originated from Cuba and carried disassembled radar systems, missiles, MiG fighter jets and engines (Ungku, 2016). The biggest factor to the suspension of trade relations was North Korea's nuclear tests, specifically the sixth and biggest nuclear test in September 2017 (Reuters, 2017), that eventually led to further UN sanctions imposed on the state. All work permits held by North Koreans were also subsequently revoked by Singapore in 2018, a move that was in line with the enhanced sanctions in the UNSC Resolution 2397 (The Straits Times, 2018).

2.1.2 2018 Trump-Kim Summit

Out of the multiple potential countries, Singapore was selected as the location to host the historic summit between then U.S. President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un on 12 June 2018 (Young, 2018). Analysts often cite security and neutrality as main reasons for the selection of Singapore, although this view neglects the long history of cordial relations between Singapore's government and the Kim family regime, as mentioned earlier above, and Singapore's long-standing good relations with the US government as well. The outcome of the summit was a signed document outlining North Korea's commitment to the complete denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula with Washington's pledge to stop joint military exercises with Seoul (Yong & Wei, 2018).



2.2 Economic

2.2.1 Economic relations

Before Singapore's suspension of trade relations with North Korea in 2017, Singapore was actually one of North Korea's largest trade partners, ranking 10 th and 8 th in 2010 and 2016 respectively (Team, 2018). Various businessmen from Singapore have expressed interest in North Korea's economy and the country's market if it became more liberalized and opened up, with some expressing confidence in the opening up of North Korea if the state was given a chance (Sim, 2018). North Korea has also made attempts to attract Singaporean businesspeople for foreign investments. In 2008, the Singapore Business Federation laid down a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to allow for and facilitate business exchanges with North Korea that are aimed at promoting bilateral trade between the two countries (Singapore Business Federation, 2008).

2.2.2 Chosun Exchange

One of the most notable business networks in North Korea is Chosun Exchange, a Singapore-based NGO that was founded by a Singaporean, Geoffrey See, in 2007 (Chosun Exchange, n.d.). The organisation focuses on supporting entrepreneurship in North Korea, where North Koreans frequently visit Singapore for its training programmes on economic policy, entrepreneurship, and law. Since 2007, the organisation has trained more than 1,000 people in North Korea and almost a hundred in Southeast Asian countries (Fifield, 2015).

2.3 Social

2.3.1 Traveling between North Korea and Singapore

In the area of tourism, North Koreans were able to enter Singapore without a visa before mid 2016, where the rules were changed by Singapore imposing visa requirements as the Singapore government's plans to implement the UN resolution that was passed earlier that year (Byrne, 2016). Before the change in policy, visa-free travel granted to North Koreans allowed several North Korean elites to travel to Singapore for services like medical care and shopping (Kurlantzick, 2018). On the other hand, Singaporeans that are intending to travel to North Korea have to first obtain authorization from the North Korean government, followed by applying for a visa in order to visit the country for both business and tourism (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, n.d.).

2.3.2 Singaporean Influence

A visible Singaporean influence in North Korea can be seen in the citizens' consumption in the capital, where items such as beer, soft drinks, and other processed foods are imported from Singapore. Supermarkets and fast food restaurants in the country were also set up by Singaporean businesspeople. One of the more notable links between the two countries is the Samtaesong , also known as 'Three Big Stars', the first American fast food chain in Pyongyang, which was opened by Singaporeans Patrick Soh, Quek Chek Lan, and Timothy Tan back in 2009 (Wong, 2018). To date, the chain has expanded to four more dine-in outlets and established twenty takeaway units. The name of the restaurant, Three Big Stars, supposedly refers to the previous head of state Kim Jong-il, his father Kim Il-sung, and his mother Kim Jong-suk respectively. The restaurant mainly serves burgers and fast food staples such as fried chicken, french fries, hotdogs etc.

3. SOUTH KOREA-SINGAPORE RELATIONS

3.1 Political

South Korea and Singapore have recently marked more than 45 years of strong bilateral relations. The strong relations between both countries can be attributed to the similarities of their past challenges and political landscapes, albeit under slightly different contexts, where both Singapore and South Korea has endured geo-political strife both internationally and internally. Strong bilateral relations have allowed both countries to effectively support each other and allowed smooth discussions with regard to policies. While both countries are amicably working together, a comparison of their political landscapes show that both countries are nevertheless run under different political systems. Furthermore, despite their similarities, South Korea is currently witnessing an unprecedented uncertainty with relation to their political landscape, while Singapore's political landscape has experienced continuous stability through the years.

3.1.1 South Korea's political landscape

South Korea is run under a semi-presidential system. Such a system is widely used, with over 50 countries in the world operating under a semi-presidential constitution. It consists of a mix of parliamentarism, with a prime minister-led cabinet, and a single executive presidentialism system led by a publicly elected president (Sedelius and Aberg, 2019). Known as the "National Assembly", it consists of 253 members elected in local constituencies, with members representing various political groups, and 47 members elected through proportional representation. (Korean Cultural Centre, n.d.)

On 9 March 2022, South Korea held their 20 th presidential election, where the race became "neck and neck" between the top two contenders (Kim, 2022). Presidential candidate Yoon Suk-yeol from the conservative People's Power Party narrowly edged out Lee Jae-myung from the liberal Democratic Party of Korea, by 48.56% to 47.83% (Yoon, 2022). After Democratic Party representative Moon Jae-in's landslide victory of 41% to the next closest 24% by Hong Jun-pyo in 2017, the 2022 elections marked a shift in political power back to the conservative parties although Moon Jae-in's win was seen as a transition into a two-party system with strong liberal sympathy after the previous president Park Geun-hye's scandal in 2016. He was seen as a "clean" candidate that could end the trend of corruption and revitalize the economy (Phippen, 2017). However, Moon Jae-in's opinion rigging scandal has yet again shaken the public's opinion on their country's politicians (Yonhap, 2021). This can be further seen in how close the 20 th presidential elections were, foreshadowing the uncertainty that the South Korean public had towards their nation's political outlook (Cho, 2022).

The swing vote from democratic sentiment back to a conservative one is mainly due to the youths of South Korea, who have been frustrated by the efforts of the Moon administration in tackling social issues. With the rise in prices of public housing, which priced youths out of owning proper homes, as well as a lack of job opportunities and an immense widening of income gaps, all exacerbated further by the Covid-19 pandemic, most youths have lost their patience with the Moon administration (Choe, 2022). Furthermore, with the population having to choose between 2 unfavorable candidates, voters were in disarray as to which candidate would be a suitable leader to lead South Korea out of uncertain times. It can be said that the public had reverted to their "safety" net, voting for the conservative party candidate in line with their past trends, with South Korea being mostly a conservative represented country. In total, the conservative parties have led South Korea for a much longer period of 54 years compared to the 16 years that the liberal left-wing parties have been in power.

According to Shin (2021), "Korea's liberal democracy is on the line, as democratic backsliding has now become an undeniable reality". With the inexperience of both of the presidential candidates, neither of which have any legislative experience, and the Korean public's division on various social issues such as ideology, class, and gender, the reaction and work done by Yoon Suk-yeol following his presidential win will be imperative in restoring the faith of the public in Korea's politics and democracy. The failure to do so may spell the start of the end of Korea's liberal democracy.

Singapore is run under a unitary parliamentary democracy, with the absolute power of the country belonging to a single, central agency – the Government (Britannica, n.d.). While the central government usually creates local governments to aid in the convenience of governance, Singapore as a small island state does not require branching out by the central government. Singapore's government is modeled after the Westminster system, with 3 branches making up the government, with a clear hierarchy – The Legislature , comprising of the President and Parliament; The Executive , comprising of the Cabinet Ministers and officeholders led by the Prime Minister; and The Judiciary (Parliament of Singapore, n.d.). Singapore, since independence, has been led solely by the People's Action Party (PAP), with the party consistently dominating the political landscape in Singapore. Furthermore, speaking towards Singapore's political stability is their consistency, with Singapore only having had 3 Prime Ministers throughout their independence, Lee Kuan Yew, Goh Chock Tong and Lee Hsien Loong.

While not formally a "one-party state" like China or Vietnam, Singapore has had one party win consistently, with the trend showing that the greatest confidence has been given to one party for a majority of the time. This is due to the ability of the PAP to lead Singapore out of troubled times, such as during the separation from Malaysia right before gaining independence. This is further compounded by the fractionation of opposition groups, where they usually offer more of an oppositional stance to the ruling party rather than a viable and legitimate alternative (Aravindan and Geddie, 2020). This can be seen from the recent fake news scandals, where opposition representatives were sued in for libel, due to their use of banners that contain fake news against the PAP.

However, in recent times, as the opposition parties changed their structure, they have gained prominence over the last decade. Singapore's 2020 elections saw the best result for the opposition party's influence, with the Workers' Party (WP) winning 10 seats. While this most recent general election saw no obvious change in power, with PAP still comfortably returning to their rule, albeit with a reduced majority, this saw a change in the voice of the opposition party. Now, the opposition party has a slightly more influential voice in Parliament. Furthermore, the 2020 general election marked a shift in how voters voted. Historically, voting for the opposition party in Singapore is not mainly due a genuine support of them, but mainly as a protest vote against the PAP for voters to show their displeasure. WP has now given Singaporean voters a viable alternative government that they can vote for, pushing Singapore further away from a "one-party state", which is essential for the growth of a more vibrant and representative political landscape.

South Korea and Singapore, due to their strong bilateral relations, enjoy frequent high-level exchanges with regards to economy, culture, and tourism with each other. South Korea and Singapore have had multiple prominent agreements over the years like the Korea-Singapore Free Trade Agreement (KSFTA) and most recently the Korea-Singapore Digital Partnership Agreement (KSDPA).

The KSDPA is a result of not only the two countries' strong bilateral relations, but also alignment in both their goals, with digitalization at the forefront. While mainly being an economic agreement, the agreement allows both countries to collaborate together to continually improve their progress in the digital world, with concepts like Artificial Intelligence being looked at and both countries looking to improve government data and transparency to their citizens and each other (MTI, n.d.).

Both South Korea and Singapore are actively looking for agreements together in regard to medical and biotech, smart cities, and cyber security, while also actively looking to improve the already agreed upon free trade agreement so as to improve trade between economies (Ho, 2019). This will ensure that both countries will be the pioneers of the next step in advancing towards the digital frontier, allowing both countries to progress faster and remain relevant through their collaboration.

This can be further seen by the swift agreement to the vaccinated travel lane (VTL) after overseas travels were banned due to the Covid-19 Pandemic. With both countries being one of the first to be able to agree to a VTL with each other, it not only speaks towards the amiability of both countries, but also provides a ray of hope for both sets of citizens who, rightly so, have been jaded by the long-drawn-out battle against Covid-19 and its variants.

These almost seamless agreements between the two countries show the strong and amicable political ties that they enjoy, with aligned goals and similar pasts boosting their relatability with one another, not even allowing political differences and internal strife and chance to affect the relationship the two countries have.

3.2 Economic

This year marks the 47 th anniversary of the forming of diplomatic ties between Singapore and South Korea. Over the past years, both countries have collaborated with each other on various occasions, creating policies and schemes to enable a plethora of economical exchanges and links (Ministry of Foreign Affairs Singapore, n.d). The success of the economic relations between South Korea and Singapore is evident from the value of exported goods that amounted to billions of dollars between both countries and the economic policies that were put in place. Just in 2020 alone, South Korea had exported $11 billion worth of products to Singapore while Singapore had exported $9.66 billion worth of products to the former, with the most frequently exported product being integrated circuits for both countries. Over the last 25 years, the two nations have seen the value of exported goods rise at an increasing rate (Gaulier & Zignago, 2020).

3.2.1 Korea-Singapore Free Trade Agreement (KSFTA)

The most prominent policy implemented was the Korea-Singapore Free Trade Agreement (KSFTA) which was put into place on March 2nd, 2006. The process was long and tedious, and even involved the inauguration of a joint study group between the two countries to investigate the feasibility of the free trade agreement (International Enterprise Singapore, n.d.) The aim of the agreement was to increase investment between the nations and moderate trade in goods and services. At the same time, the agreement seeks to put in place a structure to improve the relations of the two countries' economies and also set up a favourable environment for businesses and encourage conditions of fair competition in the free trade area. (International Enterprise Singapore, n.d.)

A benefit under the KSFTA is the removal or reducing of tariffs on exported products, this condition is applicable for 91.6% of the exported goods originating from Singapore to South Korea (Enterprise Singapore, n.d.). The reduction of tariffs allows exported goods to have a cost advantage and gain a competitive edge by being the earliest to break into the market. Singapore's local produce such as freshwater ornamental fish, cotton materials and their products from their largest economy such as electronics, chemicals and electrical equipment get to experience the benefits mentioned above. These reduced tariffs do not only benefit Singapore exporters, but benefit Koreans as well. For instance, manufacturers in Korea are able to obtain parts for their products at an affordable cost owing to the reduced tariffs under KSFTA (International Enterprise Singapore, n.d.). Thus, the implementation of this policy can not only improve intra-company trade but also boost the economy for each country respectively.

Another benefit of the KSFTA is the reduction of technical barriers with respect to trade. Technical barriers cause a rise in cost in exporting goods due to the requirements of testing or certification processes that help to safeguard the health and safety of consumers (Kamal, Y., & Zaki, C, 2018). Through the KSFTA, there is mutual agreement in reducing of technical barriers for electrical, electronic and telecommunications equipment between the two countries. This helps to prevent duplicative testing, decreases cost and reduces time for products to enter the market (Ministry of Trade and Industry, n.d.). By reducing technical barriers for products, this would also entice more manufacturers to export their goods over and break into international markets.

Other benefits include service industries in Singapore obtaining access to South Korea's service markets such as education, courier service sectors for logistics and environmental services. For the investment sector, the KSFTA seeks to protect investors and investments from both countries through comprehensive rules. Additionally, distributors from Singapore would not be subjected to discrimination when auctioning for South Korea's government procurement tenders (Ministry of Trade and Industry, n.d.).

3.2.2 Korean companies in Singapore

With the success of the KSFTA, many companies and investors from South Korea have been seeking to invest in Singapore. As such, there has been an increase in number of South Korean companies setting up factories or facilities in Singapore. One example would be the Hyundai Motor Group in Innovation Centre (HMIGCS) in Singapore. Situated in Jurong Innovation District, the centre is expected to finish construction by the end of 2022. The facility had cost approximately $400 million to build and is expected to manufacture 30,000 vehicles yearly by 2025. Although Singapore lacks an industry in vehicle manufacturing, Hyundai still chose Singapore due to Singapore's strive to have all its vehicles operate on renewable and cleaner energy in the future. Besides a car manufacturing factory, the facility in Jurong also serves as a research and development centre to create new automotive technologies (Lim, J., 2020). Singapore's Prime Minister Mr Lee Hsien Loong had previously stated that he hopes the opening of this facility can create new growth areas in Singapore's economy and provide more job opportunities for locals, especially for data scientists, engineers and digital supply chain strategists (Lim, J., 2020). Essentially, this collaboration between South Korea and Singapore serves as a vital milestone, as it would invite more Korean companies to invest in Singapore and collaborate with local suppliers and local educational institutions (Lim, J., 2020).

Hyundai is not the only company who has expanded in Singapore. In 2008, a 300-mm microchip manufacturing plant invested by Samsung and Siltronic started its operation in Singapore. Serving as a joint collaboration between Korean company, Samsung Electronics, and Siltronic AG from Germany, the plant seeks to consistently produce high-quality 300-mm semiconductor chips (Mutschler, A. S., 2008). Located in Tampines Industrial Park, the factory is the first of its kind as Singapore's first ingot-pulling and 300 mm substrate fab. The joint venture was Siltronic's greatest expansion then and Samsung's first manufacturing investment in Singapore. Not only will the 300 mm wafer fab meet the industrial-wide demand for 300 mm semiconductor microchips, but also increase Singapore's semiconductor value chain and usher Singapore into new heights of the wafer technology (Siltronic, 2022).

Apart from the automobile and electronic industries, there were also collaborations between Singapore and South Korean companies in the entertainment industry. One such project was the collaboration between Singaporean company, Peach Blossom Media and Sunwoo Entertainment, a leading animation company in South Korea (Infocomm Media Development Authority, 2004). The two companies had worked on "Wild Baby Animal", a 2D animation based on a well-received pre-school magazine by National Wildlife Federation of USA. Sunwoo Entertainment had also set up an animation studio in Singapore (Prime Minister's Office Singapore, 2018). As such, collaborations between countries increase the market reach of Korean companies and supply more job opportunities for locals. Even in special cases, companies can also forge cross borders and cross cultural partnerships in Singapore (Prime Minister's Office Singapore, 2018).

3.2.3 Upcoming economic collaborations

With numerous joint ventures between the two countries over the past decades, it is no doubt that more collaborations are underway in the future. One such example is the new digital economy agreement between both countries, also known as the Korea-Singapore Digital Partnership Agreement (KSDPA). KSDPA is not Singapore's first digital economy agreement for the country but would be the first with an Asian country. Aims of KSDPA include allowing smoother data-flow between the two nations and also to set up a dependable and secure digital environment for corporations and consumers. Though not much has been confirmed yet as the agreement had only concluded negotiations recently, it is said that KSDPA seeks to strengthen cooperation in the digital economy between the two countries and put in place regulations and standards to develop interoperability between the digital systems of both nations (Ministry of Trade and Industry, 2022). Through this agreement, businesses are able to transfer information safely between systems and permits corporations to decide where to keep and process data. Additionally, the KSDPA could also help promote jobs and growth for small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) by allowing them to access sites that can connect them to global suppliers, customers and business associates (Begum, 2021)

3.3.1 Tourist numbers and bilateral tourism

South Korea's popularity as a holiday destination to Singaporeans has grown in recent years. In 2017, Singapore was ranked 13th in terms of the number of individuals and travellers bound for South Korea (Euromonitor International, 2018). According to South Korea's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the country received a historical high in terms of tourist numbers in 2019, among which 245 736 were Singaporeans. Despite the difficulties posed to leisurely travel during the Covid-19 pandemic, South Korea and Singapore's respective tourism organizations continue to collaborate. For example, Singapore Tourism Board (2020) announced their three-year partnership with CJ ENM's Studio Dragon Corporation, which has produced popular and influential dramas such as Guardian: The Great and Lonely God and Crash Landing on You. This partnership would facilitate the filming of K-dramas in Singapore in the future and subsequently promote Singapore as an attractive destination through the use of "branded content" (Singapore Tourism Board, 2020). Leveraging "Hallyu tourism", a phenomenon in which travellers and foreigners visit Hallyu tourist attractions because of the influence of the Korean Wave, including the filming locations for K-dramas (Bae et al., qtd. Lee 2011), such collaborations aims to increase South Koreans' awareness of Singapore as an attractive tourist destination and encourage them to visit Singapore.

More recently, in November 2021, Singapore Tourism Board signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Korea Tourism Organization. Apart from establishing the South Korea-Singapore Vaccinated Travel Lane, the partnership aims to boost bilateral tourism by encouraging the co-promotion of both destinations and developing technological solutions (Singapore Tourism Board, 2021). Such partnerships are indicative of South Korea's leveraging of its culture as a means of asserting soft power. According to Joseph Nye (1990), soft power is defined as the use of cultural and ideological attractions to influence one's perception of a particular country. Today, the Korea Tourism Organization's office in Singapore continues to operate its information center at Samsung Hub, providing free travel information for prospective travellers, as well as facilitating exchange and learning through language classes and cultural activities (Lim et al., 2013).

3.3.2 Korean cultural imports in Singapore

Apart from travelling to South Korea to experience its culture, aspects of South Korean lifestyles have been integrated into the daily lives of many Singaporeans. Due to the widespread influence of the Korean Wave, cultural products ranging from everyday necessities to luxury goods and services have become more widely available. For example, NTUC FairPrice doubled its stock of K-food between 2008 to 2013, while Giant increased its selection of products by 40% between 2011 and 2013 (Lim et al., 2013). Additionally, Lim et al. (2013) writes that Etude House, a street beauty brand, saw a rapid expansion from 2 stores islandwide in 2009 to 18 stores in 2014. During the same period, local lifestyle retailers, such as Guardian, began to display Korean brands in stores during this booming demand for Korean beauty, makeup, and wellness products. The higher demand for South Korean cultural products in Singapore has also led entrepreneurs such as Luke Yi to provide authentically Korean experiences in a variety of ways, from food to beauty and hair services offered by South Korean stylists (Stewart, 2021). As the owner of Leekaja Beauty Salon, a café-meets-salon, Walking on Sunshine, and fast-food brand Chicken Up, it is evident that Singaporeans' are interested in experiencing the South Korean way of living in every way possible.

3.4 Social

3.4.1 Singapore and South Korea's work culture

Singapore and South Korea are both known for their demanding work cultures. According to Hijzen & Thewissen (2020), South Korea ranks 2 nd in the world in terms of actual weekly hours worked. Furthermore, the number of hours worked by Koreans is 20% above the average of that of OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development) countries. Apart from official hours in the office, the culture of hoesik , or company drinking sessions, further lengthens the workdays of South Korean employees. While most do not enjoy attending hoesik , this deeply ingrained culture of drinking is still widely practiced as a necessary means of socialization with one's colleagues and superiors (Çakar & Kim, 2015). In response to these long working hours, South Korea has reformed its labor laws and reduced its 68-hour workweek to 52 hours, inclusive of paid overtime, between 2018 and 2021.

Notably, Singapore has overtaken South Korea in terms of annual working hours per worker since 2003 (Giattino et al., 2020). This is despite Singapore's official 44-hour workweek, which first appears to be less strenuous and much shorter than South Korea's. However, according to Singapore's Ministry of Manpower, employees can work up to 72 hours of overtime per month on top of the weekly cap of 44 hours. Additionally, overtime pay does not apply to those in managerial and executive roles. Such policies, compounded with the lack of worker unionization and the government's stance on work-life balance, have been identified as the cause of the normalization of long working hours in Singapore (Lim, 2010).

3.4.2 The importance and value of education

In a UNESCO report on lifelong learning in Japan, Singapore, and South Korea, Yang and Yorozu (2015) identify that all three nations are heavily influenced by Confucian beliefs and philosophy, resulting in the "extremely high" value that is placed on education. Specifically, South Koreans' contemporary view towards education is a relic of the historical civil service examinations, which guaranteed social and financial success for the families of those who passed the exams and became scholars of the Joseon dynasty's court (Koo, 2014). As such, apart from formal education in schools, private tutoring is common and even highly sought after in these two high-income societies (Gopinathan & Ramos, 2018). Private tutoring often takes place in the form of individual or group tuition classes in Singapore, and in hagwon or cram schools in South Korea.

However, while private tutoring is common in both countries, South Korean students are arguably under greater pressure due to the continued emphasis on grades as the absolute indicator of their success and the primary determinant of their future. Classes at hagwon can last till 10 p.m. (Koo, 2014). Furthermore, the average South Korean student spends 13 hours a day on schoolwork, both for their formal schooling and for private classes, causing sleep deprivation to be common amongst high school students (Koo, 2014). Comparatively, most tuition classes in Singapore occur once a week and last for only two hours.

South Korea's standardized College Scholastic Ability Test for entrance into universities, also known as the suneung, is so critical that it warrants the diversion of flights on the day of the exam to reduce possible distractions and noises. Contrary to the continued emphasis on standardized graded tests in South Korea, Singapore has recently begun to turn away from examinations. With the removal of mid-year examinations from schools at the primary and secondary levels by 2023 (Ang, 2022), Singapore appears to be moving away from grades as absolute indicators of its students' ability. Instead, other means of assessing students' capabilities, such as the expanded Direct Admissions Programme (DSA), would allow junior colleges to "admit up to 20 per cent of their non-Integrated Programme intake through DSA, double of the current 10 per cent" (Ang, 2022). Therefore, rather than admitting students based solely on their grades in the examination, Singaporean students' co-curricular activities and leadership capabilities will also play a part in their application to schools and tertiary institutions of education.

3.4.3 Confucian values, ethics, and the family

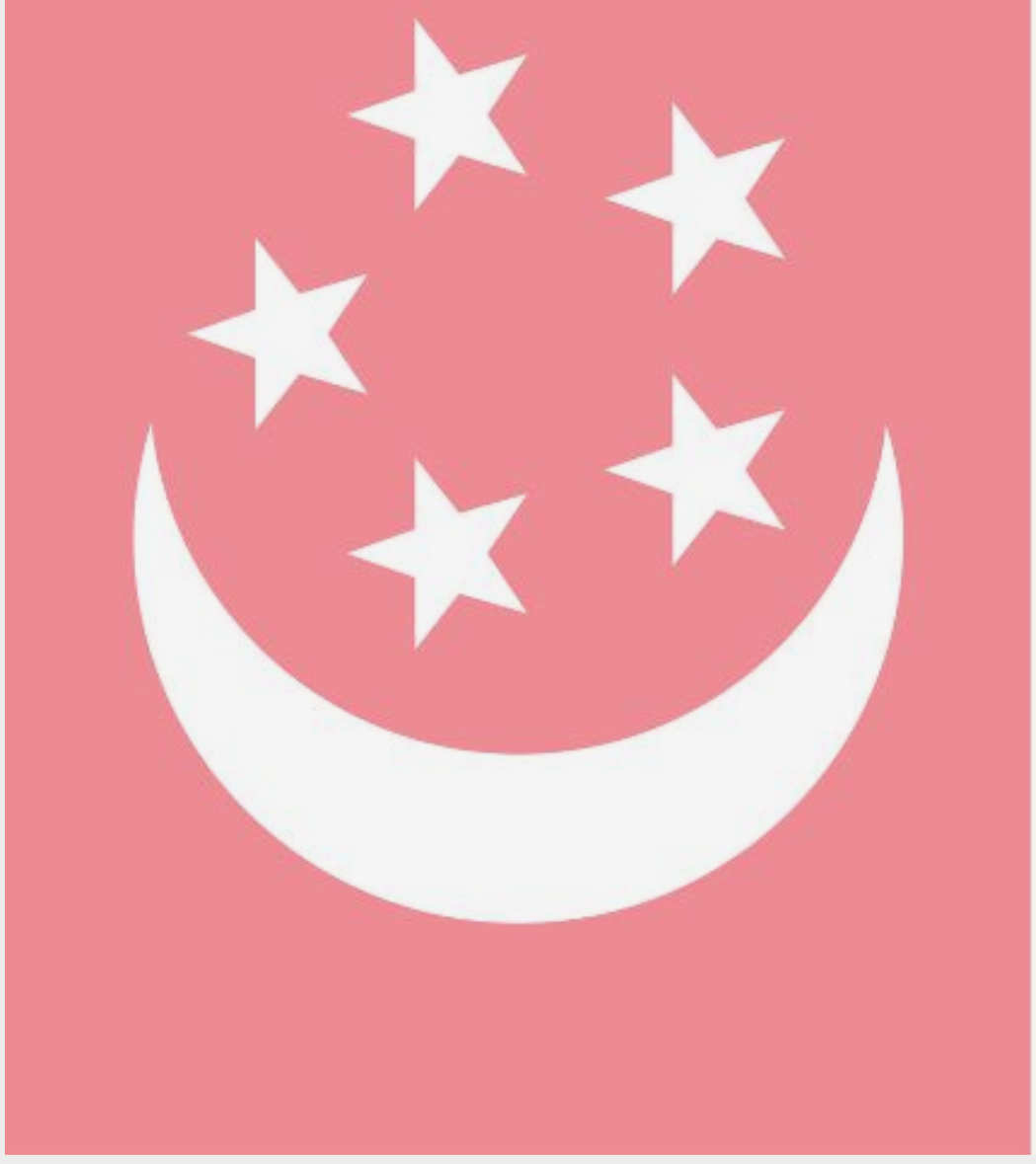
According to Park & Cho (1995), Confucianism posits that the family is the fundamental building block of Korean society. It is suggested that “Confucianism may be viewed as a familial religion, and it seems that no other cultures have placed such emphasis on the family as have the Confucianist cultures of East Asia” (Park & Cho 1995, qtd. Lee 1989). Similarly, Singapore believes in the importance of the family unit. As revealed in Deputy Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong’s speech on a potential national ideology, one of the core values of Singapore society is the family as the “basic building block of society”, a value derived from Confucianism but “revised to fit an urban, industrial society” (Parliament of Singapore, 1991). This idea was later formalized as part of Singapore’s national Five Shared Values (Lim, 2013).

While Park & Cho suggest that the inculcation of Confucian values in Korean society came from its religiosity, Singapore’s belief in Confucian ethics is one of political indoctrination. The public housing system and public policies are broadly constructed on a specific image of the nuclear family, one which is “composed of the brain breadwinner rather, the supplementary income earner mother who also works the second shift, and ideally two children then in the 1970s, and now three or more if you can afford it” (Goh, 2018). Nevertheless, with South Korea’s fertility rate of 1.09 and Singapore’s at 1.15 in 2021, both nations’ societies are marked by ultra-low birth rates currently and have the 2nd and 3rd lowest birth rates in the world (CIA, 2022).

4. CONCLUSION

Given South Korea and Singapore's recent economic collaborations and agreements, which seek to develop each country's digital and technological capabilities as well as boost the manufacturing sector, it is likely that such agreements will remain as a cornerstone of Korea-Singapore relations. Initiatives such as the agreements between Singapore Tourism Board and Korea Tourism Organization, as well as that signed with CJ ENM's Studio Dragon Corporation, also suggests that Singapore is taking a new and bold approach towards marketing itself as an attractive tourist destination. It remains to see whether Singapore succeeds in emulating South Korea's use of their cultural exports and tourism as a means of achieving soft power.

In addition to the upcoming digital partnership agreement between South Korea and Singapore, there have been more collaborations springing up between the two countries recently. At the three-day Asia Pacific Maritime trade show in March 2022, the shipbuilding and offshore sectors of both countries have also agreed to work together to create new products and solutions and aim to transition to using more environmentally sustainable fuels. The two nations have also put in place carbon reduction targets for their respective maritime sectors by 2030 (Teo, G., 2022). Though little has been confirmed, these up-and-coming collaborations serve to reflect the similarities in goals between the two countries. It is also with hope that not only would these collaborations be successful, but pave the way for potential projects between South Korea and Singapore in the future as well.





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THE PHENOMENON OF KOREAN VARIETY SHOWS



TAN GIN YEE
LEE MING HAN
WONG GIN YING FELICIA

History of TV in South Korea

And the rise of entertainment programmes

History of *Korean TV*

- TV broadcasting began in 1956 with HLKZ-TV but it was not widely received due to lack of access
- Popularised in 1961 with KBS, as the government saw TV as a way to indoctrinate people and provide entertainment
- Korea was still under military rule, so KBS was government controlled
- Commercial TV stations became available in late 1960s (MBC-TV and TBC-TV)
- As Korean economy picked up from 1960-1980, *"a great majority of Korean houses (79.1 percent) owned a TV set"* (Lankov 2011)

History of *Korean TV*

- TV drama became extremely popular amongst Korean households in 1970s, with KBS, MBC and TBC competing with each other in soap operas
- Entertainment programmes such as *Korea Sings (KBS), Sunday Night (MBC)* gained a foothold in Korean culture after 1980s when General Chun Doo Hwan came into power
- Mystery of his 3S policy: Sex, sport, screen

  > *"To my knowledge there have been no official documents to support that it was chosen by the government of the time," said Cho Joon-hyoung, a senior researcher at the Korean Film Archive in Seoul*

- It is still true that media guidelines were relaxed during General Chun's rule, allowing more genres to shine
- In 1990, high quality cable TV became widely available and more broadcasting companies sprang up

Entertainment Programmes and The *Cultural Debate*

- In the 1970s, many Korean cultural critics "blame television for the introduction and popularization of Western culture" (Kang 1982)
- Worries about the "contamination of authentic culture" (Kang 1982)
- TV was seen as "primarily a medium for entertainment and culture" (Kang 1982), so other than dramas, entertainment programmes was seen as a possible outlet to promote authentic Korean culture

Entertainment Programmes and The *Cultural Debate*

- "The widespread popularity of reality television in the late 1990s accelerated a transnational process of program format adaptation" (Jin 2016)
- And since late 2000, Korea started "to diversify their exports of new programs, including reality shows and game shows in addition to dramas" which is "considerably different from the first stage of the Korean Wave" (Jin 2016)
- "Korean broadcasting corporations have especially become active in formatting entertainment programmes" in order to promote Korean culture
- These formatted shows were perceived as "ideal solutions to deal with the resilience of national cultures" (Jin 2016)

Popular Variety Shows *from 1990*



Gag Concert
1999-2020
(Comedy)



Korea Sings
1980-2020
(Music)



The Clinic for Married Couples: Love and War
1999-2014
(Talk show)

The Appeal of K-Variety Show

Why are we focusing on Variety shows?

The K-Variety *Appeal*



- Talk shows and reality shows provide the sense of an unscripted, more genuine connection between the audience and the participants
- American shows *"primarily focuses on competitions among participants in a cruel way"* while Korean shows have a more friendlier, positive tone as they *"do not like this kind of aggressiveness"* (Dal 2018)





Genres of K-Variety

The various genres for each audience

K-Variety *Genres*

Game Shows



Running Man



Knowing Bros



Infinite Challenge

Reality Shows



I Live Alone



Return of Superman

Singing Shows



Immortal Songs



King of Mask Singer

Survival Shows



Produce Series



Kingdom/Queendom series

Food Shows



Baek Jong-won's Alley Restaurant



Youn's Kitchen

Dating Shows



Single's Inferno



We Got Married

What makes K-Variety *Unique?*

The formula for the success of K-Variety

Characteristics of K-Variety

- A show is typically made up of different genres
  - e.g. Knowing Bros (Game + Reality + Comedy + Talk Show)
- Authenticity
  - Mostly unscripted (or appears to be)
- Distinctive editing style
  - Sound & text effects
  - Reactions are highlighted (e.g. show emotions & build anticipation)

Key Figures in K-Variety

- Show host (MC)
  - Nation's MC - Yoo Jae Suk
- Guests
  - Selective casting in guests - typically idols, artists & comedians
  - Guests need to possess good *Yenenggam* (예능감) - The ability to adapt to the show and make others laugh
- Producer (PD)
  - PD is the core of the producing team
  - e.g. Na Yeong Seok (Na PD) & Kim Tae Ho PD

Domestic Influence of K-Variety

The importance of K-Variety to local audience

Roles of K-Variety in Korea

Introduce younger audience to traditional Korean culture



Traditional Korean cuisine featured on Running Man

Trendmakers (introduce product, style, places of interest)



Fried burger featured on Sixth Sense

Allow audience to escape from reality of fast paced life



Three Meals a Day - A show which casts live in rural village for 3 days and cook 3 meals a day

Promote less mainstream arts (e.g. rap music, band music, dance etc.)



Street Women Fighter brought dancers into limelight

Raise awareness of societal issues



Muslim woman discusses challenges being a muslim in Korea on Hello Counselor

Promote entertainment industry



Young contestants in audition shows serve as role models to encourage kids to join the entertainment industry

Development of the Television Format

TV Format : overall concept of a television programme

Growth of *Asia's Television Programming*

- Media liberalisation in Asia in the 1990s led to transmission of new TV formats from the West
- New form of entertainment TV for Asian viewers - reality TV, game shows, lifestyle programmes
- Television programming in Asia focused on adopting foreign TV formats into local settings and inventing unique new TV programmes

South Korea's Television Programming

- Influence of American and Japanese TV formats on local programming and culture
- Recently, the surging popularity of Korean TV shows has led to the growing transmission of these formats overseas and international remakes of Korean programmes

Korean Variety : *International Remakes*

King Of Mask Singer	Running Man	Dad! Where Are We Going?
		
		
The Masked Singer (USA)	Keep Running (China)	Where Are We Going, Dad? (China)

International Remakes : *Same TV Format*



KING OF MASK SINGER
(THE MASKED SINGER)

Masked singers compete in 3 rounds and the eliminated reveal their identities. The final winner challenges the current Mask King to become the new Mask King.



RUNNING MAN
(KEEP RUNNING)

Cast members take part in a continuous race while competing in multiple missions to become the overall winner(s) at the end.



DAD! WHERE ARE WE GOING?
(WHERE ARE WE GOING, DAD?)

Five celebrity fathers and their children travel to rural places and go on camping missions.

The Emergence of Hallyu in China

How Korean culture gained popularity in China and the trend of Chinese remakes of foreign TV formats

The First Wave of *Hallyu in 1990s China*

- Coined by Chinese media to describe the increasing popularity of Korean cultural products in Asia
- Sudden rise in popularity of Korean dramas among the Chinese audience in the late 1990s
- Media liberalisation swept across Asia - increase in foreign media exports
- Korean programming was cheap - quarter of the price of Japanese ones, and a tenth of the price of Hong Kong television dramas (Lee 2003)



Cultural Driving Force of The Korean Wave

Hallyu 1.0 : K-dramas

Hallyu 2.0 : K-pop

Hallyu 3.0 : K-variety?

The Trend of *Chinese TV Format Remakes*

- Started with Western variety programmes - Chinese broadcasting companies purchased foreign TV formats such as *The Voice, American Idol* and *Britain's Got Talent*
- Recent surge in popularity of K-variety shows among Chinese audiences led the industry to venture into producing their own remakes
- 2013 : Huge success of Chinese remakes of *I Am A Singer!* and *Where Are We Going, Dad?*

The Beginning of a New Era of Hallyu in China

- Chinese broadcasting companies have since purchased more than 20 Korean TV formats to date
- Prime-time slots: mainstream popularity and success of Korean TV format in China

The K-variety TV format as a commodity may replace the role played by K-dramas and K-pop in the growth of Korean popular culture in China.

The future of K-Variety

Emerging trends and the impact of globalisation on K-variety content

Emerging Trend : *Hybrid-Platform Shows*

- Adapt to survive: K-variety shows are tackling the decline of traditional TV by embracing new platforms - Youtube, streaming services, etc.



MMTG

Created by SBS, airs on Youtube



SHOWITERVIEW WITH JESSI

Created by SBS, airs on Youtube



MY LITTLE TELEVISION

Live streaming via Afreeca TV, Kakao TV & Twitch, raw footage edited to air on MBC

Emerging Trend : *Streaming on* NETFLIX

Still reveling in the global success of "Squid Game" and "Hellbound," multinational streaming giant Netflix has scheduled the launch of 25 South Korean shows in the current year. The total is the company's highest to date.

continued commitment to investing in Korea's creative ecosystem." According to the release, from 2015 to 2020, Netflix invested over 700 million dollars in Korean content. The company also has multi-year content partnerships with CJ ENM/Studio Dragon and JTBC.

Netflix Wants Its Own Korean Variety Show Hit

If you've never watched a Korean variety show, then you're missing out. And Netflix is looking to change that...

Netflix Original Series: *K-Variety Shows*



- Original programme formats inspired by both Korean and Western TV

The Globalisation of *K-Variety Content*



SINGLE'S INFERNO

- Inspired by Western dating reality shows (e.g. *Too Hot To Handle* and *Love Island*)
- Takes advantage of Netflix's looser censorship rules, compared to Korean public broadcasting - showing skin, physical intimacy, sex appeal, etc.
- Mixing Western influence while keeping Korean values - direct approach to dating with indirect displays of affection

In the future, we will see even more Korean variety shows adapting its content to appeal towards the growing international audience.



Quiz Questions : *Answers*

What is the first Korean broadcasting company? ANS: (B)

A. MBC
B. HLKZ-TV
C. KBS
D. SBS

"Singers recreate the masterpieces of the legendary singers on stage, and the judges evaluate their performance and pick one final winner." Which of these shows does the statement describes? ANS: (B)

A. Running Man
B. Immortal Songs
C. Gag Concert
D. We Got Married

Which of the following Korean variety shows have an international remake? ANS: (A,B,C)

A. Running Man
B. King of Mask Singer
C. Dad! Where are we going?
D. The Clinic for Married Couples


The Phenomenon of
Korean Variety Shows
TAN GIN YEE
LEE MING HAN
WONG GIN YING FELICIA
The Phenomenon of
Korean Variety Shows
TAN GIN YEE
LEE MING HAN
WONG GIN YING FELICIA

PROGRESSION OF FEMINISM IN SOUTH KOREA



Group 2
Soh Soo Yang
Nur Fatiha Bte Mohamad Omar
Yeong An Qi
Descalsota Nicole

TABLE OF CONTENTS

01 Historical background of South Korea's feminist movements

02 Feminist movements in contemporary South Korea

03 Attitudes towards feminism

04 Implemented solutions and outstanding problems

05 Future challenges

06 Conclusion



01

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF SOUTH KOREA'S FEMINIST MOVEMENTS



FEMINISM

The belief in and advocacy of the political, economic, and social equality of the sexes expressed especially through organized activity on behalf of women's rights and interests



RISE OF FEMINISM IN KOREA

- Confucianism
- Roles of women in labour unions
- Effect of neoliberalism on women in workforce

CONFUCIANISM

- Core principle - Conformity
- Three Obediences
- 1953 *Hoju* (호주) system
  - Family registration under a "family head"



EFFECTS OF NEOLIBERALISM ON WOMEN IN THE WORKFORCE

- Labour flexibility policy
  - Accelerated entry of women in workforce
  - Gender structure of workforce changed
  - Firm grip of patriarchal family structure loosens

WOMEN IN LABOUR UNIONS & MOVEMENTS

- 1961-1979: General Park Chung-hee
  - Poor working conditions of women workers in factories
- 1st woman was elected as president of the democratic union movement
- 1986: Creation of Korean Women's Association United
- 1987: Creation of Korean Women Workers Association







02

FEMINIST MOVEMENTS IN CONTEMPORARY SOUTH KOREA

Feminist Movements

Type of movements

VS

Reformist Feminists

- Advocate for equal rights between men and women
- Usually in support of the government

Radical Feminists

- Women's rights = Human rights
- Precede women related issues
  - Reunification with North Korea

한국여성정책연구원
Korean Women's Development Institute

여성의당
WOMEN'S PARTY

RADICAL FEMINISTS

Gangnam Post-It Note Protest (2016)

- In response to the Gangnam Station murder case:
  - A man hid in a gender-neutral bathroom and stabbed an unacquainted woman to death.
  - Perpetrator's confession: he hated women because they had ignored and humiliated him all his life.
  - Conclusion of the case: due to mental illness, not a hate crime or femicide.





Hyehwa Station Protest (2018)

- In response to the double standards applied to spycam (Molka 몰카—an abbreviation of molrae-kamera 몰래카메라) crimes
  - Swift arrest of a WOMAD (radical feminist community site) user who secretly photographed and posted photos of a nude male model.
  - However, majority of spycam perpetrators are male and they tend to go scot free because many spycam crimes remain unresolved.



#MeToo movement (2018)

- Come out to confess sexual harassment experiences



Free the Corset movement

- Challenge high beauty standards in South Korean society
- Boycott makeup, hair dye, and cosmetic procedures



Till death do I stay single: South Korea's #NoMarriage women



4B Movement

- ⊗ Dating
- ⊗ Sex
- ⊗ Marriage
- ⊗ Child-Rearing

Response toward Movements

San E - FEMINIST

- Satirical; aimed at criticizing the hypocrites
- Sparked controversy
- Diss tracks
  - "You only got one thing right, we're victims of patriarchy. But you know what's sad - it's men who did that" -Jerry K



RADICAL FEMINISTS 👈

- Community sites e.g. Megalia (메갈리아) and WOMAD (워마드)
- Use of mirroring and trolling: hate speech and derogatory remarks about men
  - E.g. a user lying about raping an Australian boy
- Seen as misandrist (misandry: hatred of, contempt for, or prejudice against men or boys)



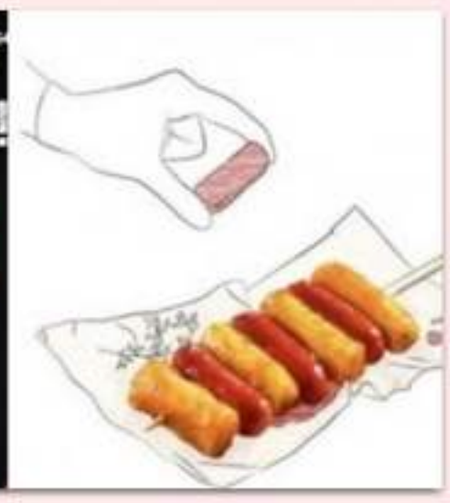
WOMAD

Shifted Mentality

Anti-Male?







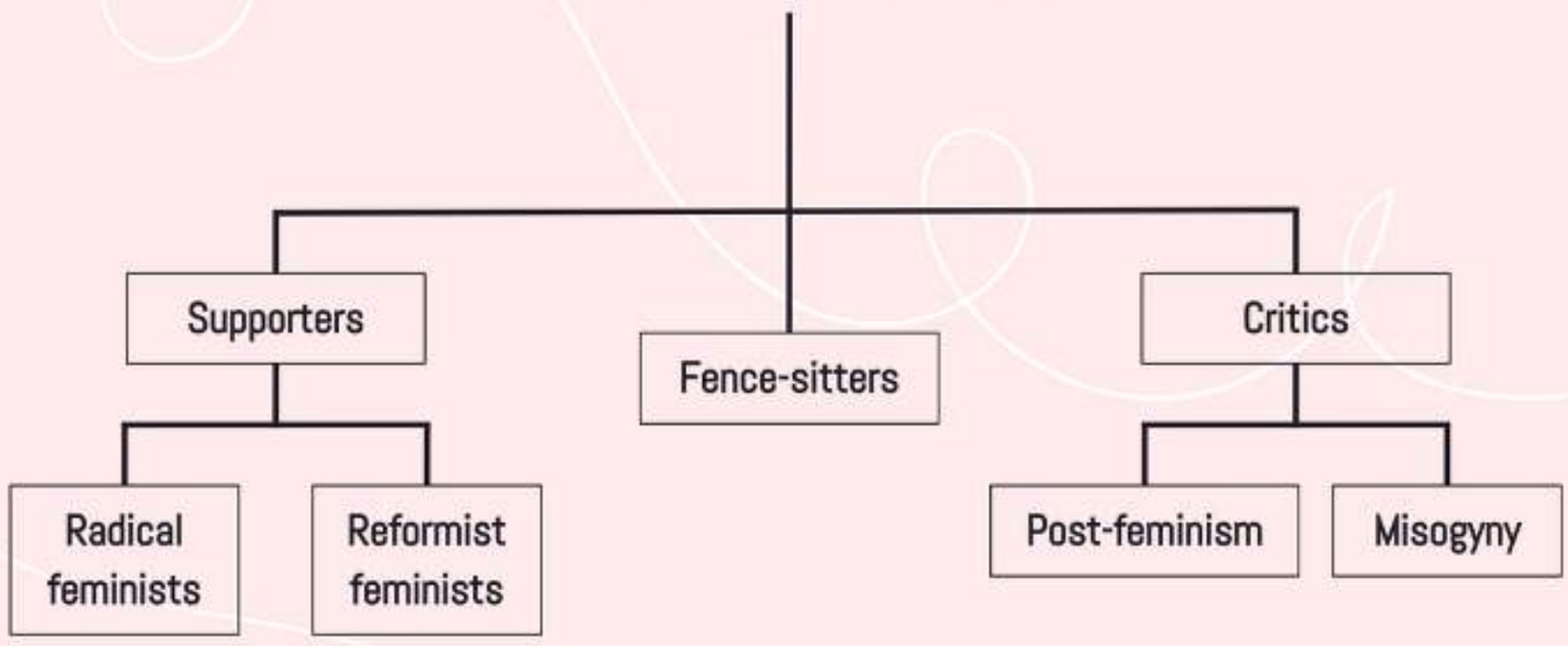


03

ATTITUDES TOWARDS FEMINISM IN CONTEMPORARY SOUTH KOREA



RANGE OF ATTITUDES



SUPPORTERS



- Mainly radical feminists
- Mostly women
- But there are also male feminists
  - Ordinary Guys Who Take Action (행동하는 보통 남자)
  - Feminism with him (남성과 함께하는 페미니즘)
- Recognition that blaming feminism will not solve the common issues that men face

CRITICS

- Mostly men in their 20s and 30s
  - E.g. New Men's Solidarity
- But there are also female critics
  - E.g. Real Women's Sovereign Action (찐(眞)여성주권행동)
- Use of demonstrations, rallies
- Agenda:
  - Protest against perceived misandry and gender discrimination of men
  - Abolishment of the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family (여성가족부)



CRITICS: BELIEFS

- **Misogyny**: hatred of, contempt for, or prejudice against women or girls
  - Sexist view of the world
  - Not exclusive to men: women can also experience internalised misogyny
- **Post-feminist view**
  - Gender equality has been achieved with the establishment of the Ministry of Gender Equality and family
  - Men are now the victims of gender discrimination
- Current feminist movement is a **"mental illness"**

여성가족부
Ministry of Gender Equality and Family



CRITICS: ACTIONS

- Crucify celebrities who are feminists or are perceived to be showing support for feminism
  - E.g. criticism of celebrities who read the feminist novel, *Kim Jiyoung, Born 1982*
  - Check Femi website: list 'verified' and suspected celebrities who are feminists
- Force gender stereotypes on others
  - E.g. criticism of An San for her short hair





FENCE-SITTERS

- Women who:
  - Cave into societal expectations
  - Attempt to negotiate the patriarchal system on their own terms
- Negotiating Patriarchy: South Korean Evangelical Women and the Politics of Gender by Kelly Chong (2006)
  - Well-educated, middle class women
  - Convert to evangelicalism
  - Evangelicalism provides personal comfort

SYNTHESISING THE ATTITUDES

- Diverse and polarised, particularly along gender lines
- Tendency to congregate within their own groups
  - Echo chambers
  - Perpetuate hate speech
- Difficult to have a constructive debate, or even a proper conversation, with each other
- Unhelpful presence of fence-sitters
  - Implicit consent to the status quo



04
IMPLEMENTED SOLUTIONS AND OUTSTANDING PROBLEMS

Family Law Reform (2005)

- After nearly three decades of work to improve the Family Law, significant reforms were finally enacted in 2005.
- Significant changes related to women:
  - *Hoju* (호주) system, or "family-head system" abolished
  - Remarriage waiting time for women abolished
  - The right to denial of paternity extended to women
- Important as it gave women agency and removed legalisation of gender discrimination



Abortion Decriminalised (2020)

- Broader than simply pro-life/pro-choice: Korea has a sizeable Christian population that wanted to emphasise the "cruelty" of a decision
- Criminalisation "endangered women and limited their rights" and stigmatised the practice
- Law was revised in 2020, allowing for more freedom of choice



Gender Wage Gap

- Confucian values remain heavily embedded in Korean mentality, stereotyping men as the breadwinner and women as homemakers
- Such societal expectations prevent women from pursuing advancements in their careers
- South Korea's wage gap is the largest among OECD countries



Source: OECD

05
FUTURE CHALLENGES





Yoon Administration (2021~)

- Yoon capitalised on growing anti-feminist sentiment to win presidency
  - He wasn't the only one!



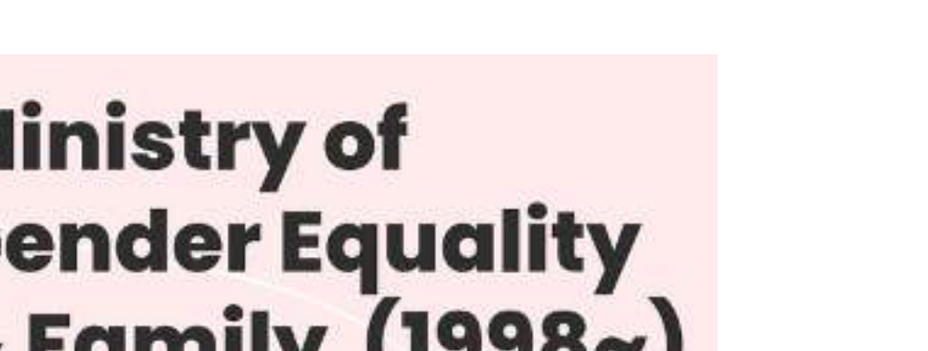
- Believes that "structural discrimination based on gender" does not exist
- No gender quota in his staff



Ministry of Gender Equality & Family (1998~)

- One of Yoon's campaign promises was to abolish the ministry, calling it "outdated"
- Ministry struggled to actualise gender equality but remains a critical symbol and root of reform for women's visibility

06
CONCLUSION







Questions for Test 2

1. **List three issues that feminists in contemporary South Korea focus on.**
   - (Any 3 from this list) molka/spycam crimes, sexual harrassment, challenging beauty standards, equal rights

2. **Which of the following were NOT one of the reforms of Family Law in 2005?**
   a. *Hoju* (호주) system, or "family-head system"
   b. Remarriage waiting time for women
   c. The right to denial of paternity
   d. *Hyoja* (효자) system that gave equal sibling rights

3. **Which of the following is NOT a feminist movement in South Korea?**
   a. Free The Corset Movement
   b. Hyehwa Station Protest
   c. 6B Movement
   d. #MeToo Movement


PROGRESSION OF
FEMINISM
IN SOUTH KOREA
Group 2
Soh Soo Yang
Nur Fatiha Bte Mohamad Omar
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PROGRESSION OF
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Nur Fatiha Bte Mohamad Omar
Yeong An Qi
Descalsota Nicole

K-Pop Over the Years

A look at the Hallyu Wave through K-Pop

Group 3
Wan Xuan
Christal
Amanda
Sarah

How has K-Pop changed over the years?

Introduction

K-Pop: Hallyu 1.0 vs Hallyu 2.0

Social Media: Driving Force in Hallyu 2.0

Impact of K-Pop

Hallyu 1.0 vs Hallyu 2.0

Hallyu 1.0 vs 2.0

1.0	2.0
1997 - 2007	2008 - present
– Films and dramas	– K-pop and games
– Indirect involvement, cultural exports	– New technology – Direct involvement, IP laws

K-Pop

Through the Eras

1.0 vs 2.0

Sales	Trends
Music	Attention

Sales Comparison

Hallyu 1.0
g.o.d.
Debut in 1999



Hallyu 2.0
BTS
Debut in 2013



Sales Comparison (Domestic)

DEBUT SALES

g.o.d.	Chapter 1	160,000
BTS	2 Kool 4 Skool	439,575

3x

PEAK SALES

g.o.d.	Chapter 3	1,842,278
BTS	Map of the Soul: 7	4,768,802

2.6x

g.o.d. sales taken from RIAK sales statistics. BTS sales taken from Gaon cumulative sales.

Sales Comparison (International)

Gaon, 2021

- Over 57 million physical albums
- Top 400 albums of the year

Melon

Digital?

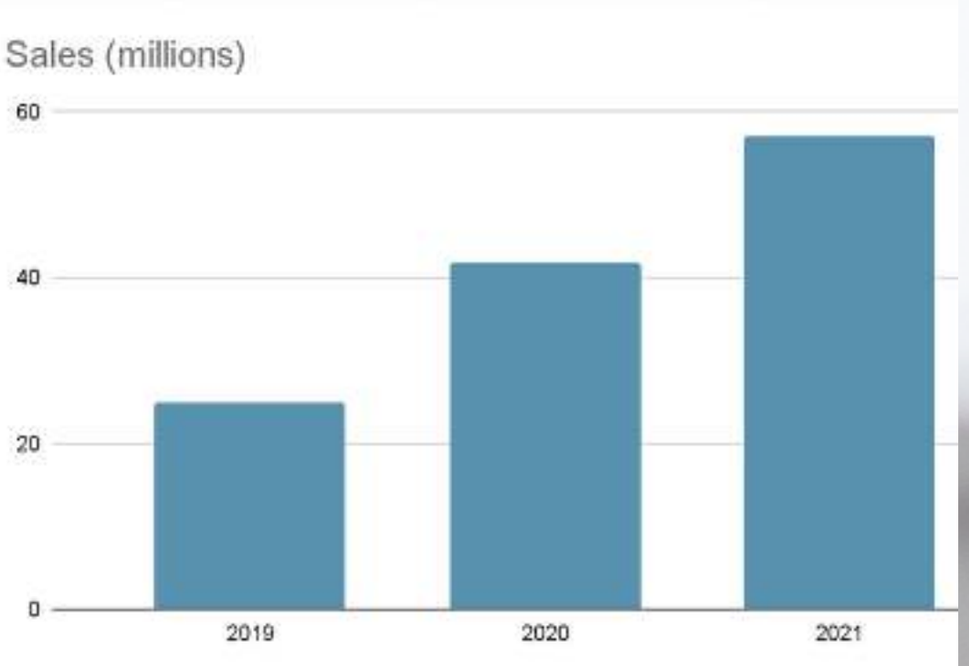
Streams?

Merch?



weverse

Official for All Fans



New Trends seen in new era?

Trainee survival shows

- Reality TV
- Present potential idols
- Create new groups
- Attract fandom





New Trends seen in new era?

PHOTOCARDS



- Popularised in 2010
- Encourage physical sales in a digital age
- Encourage buying multiple copies
- A whole aspect of its own

New Trends seen in new era?

PHOTOCARDS



- Popularised in 2010
- Encourage physical sales in a digital age
- Encourage buying multiple copies
- A whole aspect of its own

Attention

1. Type of Attention
2. Strategies for Attention
3. Recognition from Attention

Type of Attention



1.0

Asian market
- Focused on Asian audience (eg: Taiwan)
- In line with President Kim Dae Jung's term

2.0

Global market
- Expanded to international audience (eg: USA)
- Fuelled by PSY's Gangnam Style

Strategies for Attention



1.0

Korean members
- Made up of only Korean members
- Local auditions
- In order to gain local support from Korean+Asian market

2.0

Koreans + Foreigners
- Global auditions
- At least one foreign member
- Language training
- In order to gain international fans

Recognition from Attention



1.0

Recognition Spread
- Local charts
- Local end of year award shows (Eg: MAMA)

2.0

Recognition Spread
- Local charts & awards
- Global charts (Eg: Billboard HOT 100)
- Global annual awards (Eg: Grammys)

Music

1. English Usage
2. Taboo Themes
3. Music Videos

English Usage



Koreans **NOT** happy with increase in English

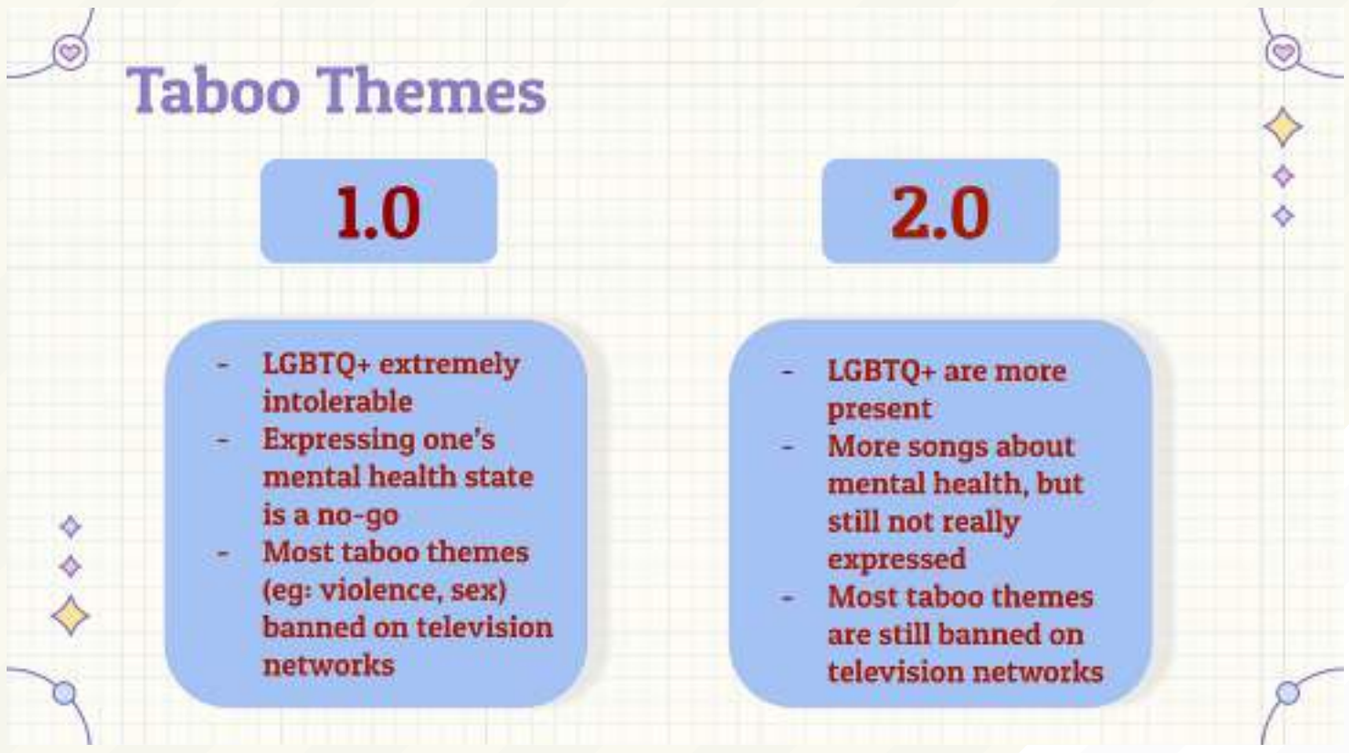
1.0

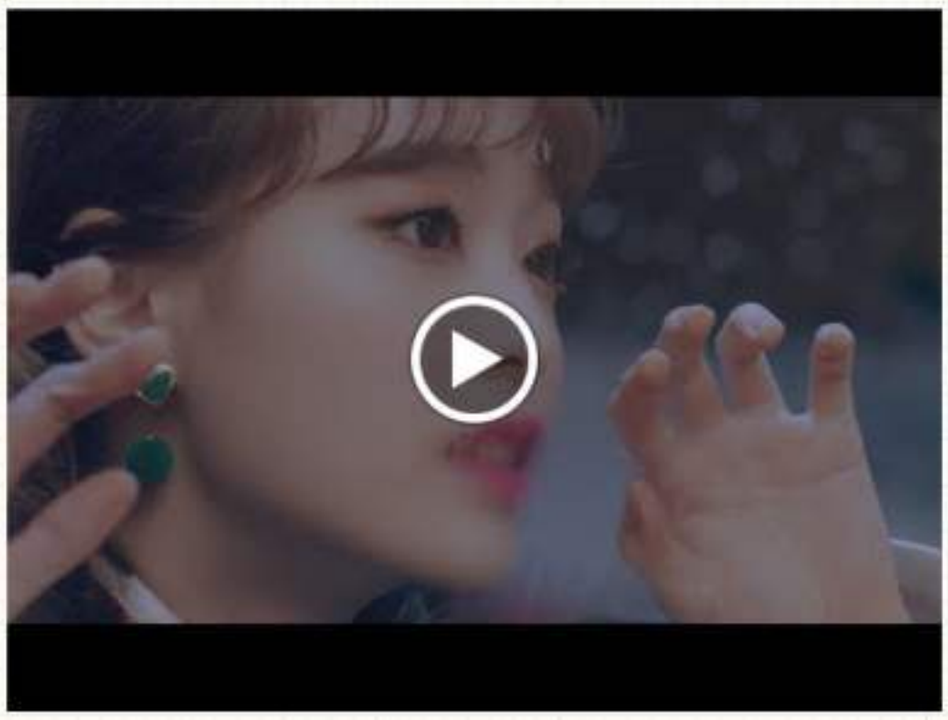
- Small amount of English words in songs
- Song covers of Western songs translated into Korean

2.0

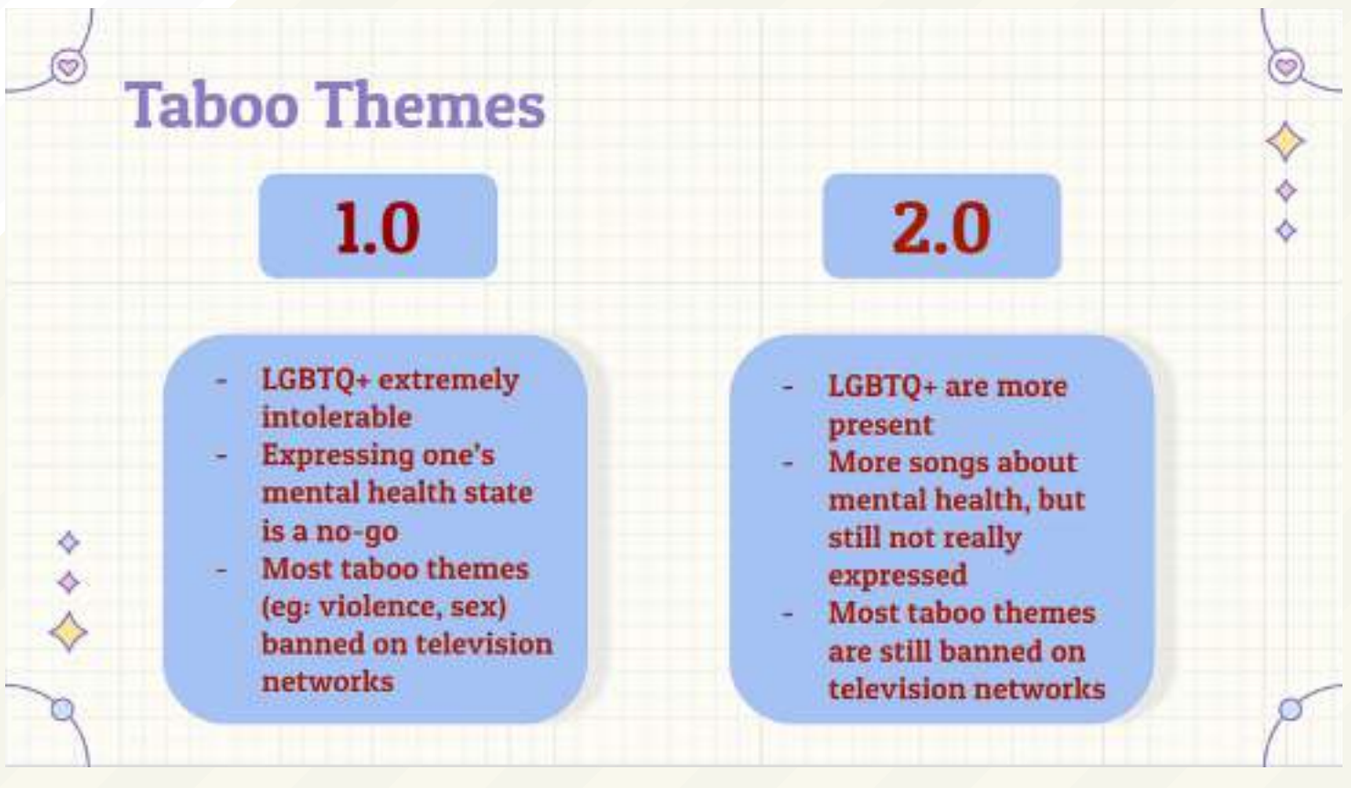
- Title tracks
- Stage names
- Taboo themes (Eg: Sexuality)
- Songs in full English
- Catchy chorus




Taboo Themes
1.0
- LGBTQ+ extremely intolerable
- Expressing one's mental health state is a no-go
- Most taboo themes (eg: violence, sex) banned on television networks
2.0
- LGBTQ+ are more present
- More songs about mental health, but still not really expressed
- Most taboo themes are still banned on television networks




지우고픈 그때 그대 기억 조차 나지 않는 어느 공연
하는 날
That time I want to erase, that's right, the memories I want to erase of that day I had that concert


Taboo Themes
1.0
- LGBTQ+ extremely intolerable
- Expressing one's mental health state is a no-go
- Most taboo themes (eg: violence, sex) banned on television networks
2.0
- LGBTQ+ are more present
- More songs about mental health, but still not really expressed
- Most taboo themes are still banned on television networks

Music Videos

1.0

- Mostly dance choreographies
- Show visuals
- Little storytelling
- Storytelling kept within the MV

2.0

- Mix of dance choreographies and storytelling MVs
- Storytelling Universes (eg: BTS, Aespa)
- Artificial Intelligence





Factors behind the Rise of K-pop In Hallyu 2.0

Social Media: The Driving Force of K-pop in Hallyu 2.0

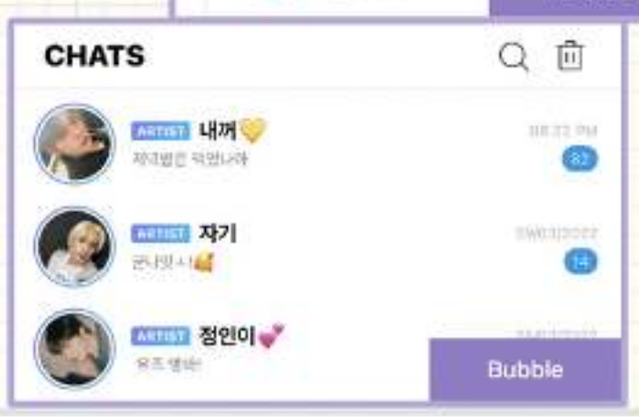
- FaceBook launched in 2004, YouTube in 2005, Twitter in 2006, Instagram 2010
- Ability to trend, reach across the world instantly
- E.g. BTS's most retweeted tweet(s)



The Age of Social Media

- Platforms for curated contents for specific idols
- Outreach to international fans
- Every K-pop group have at least a fancafe
  - Idols can interact with fans via messages, replies, and posts

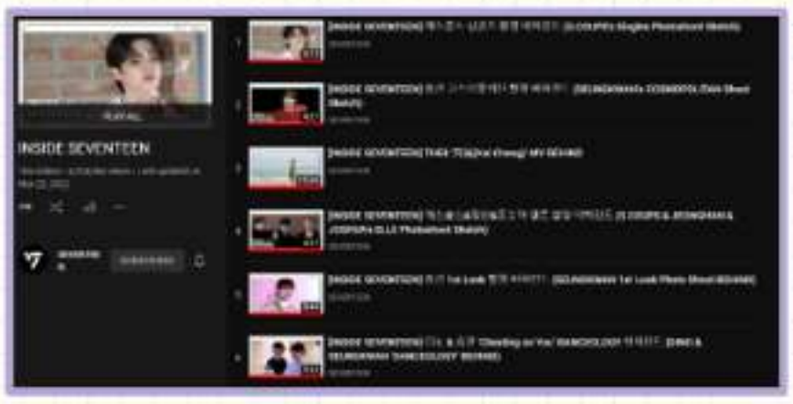




Exclusive Contents

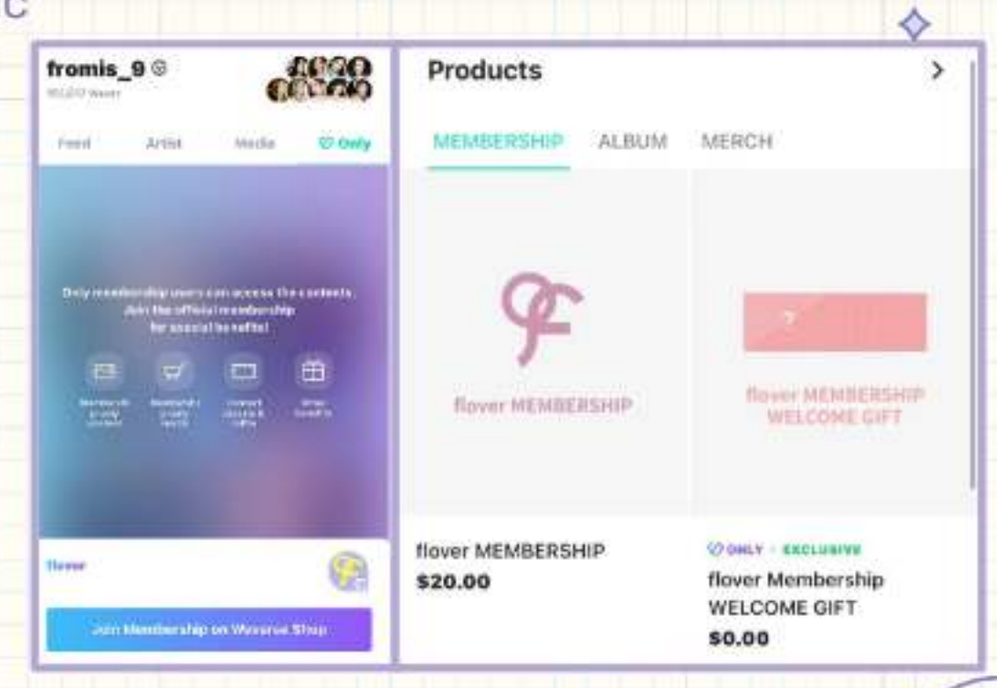
- Special content found only on specific platforms
  - Variety shows featuring the idols only
  - Behind-the-scenes contents
    - Content that is not music-related





Exclusive Contents

- Content found only on specific platforms
  - Membership-only zones
    - Paid Content
    - Access to pre-sale tickets, special content etc



Social Media, Pandemic, Fansigns

- Kakaotalk
  - 1:1 Video Calls
    - International fans able to participate
    - A way to generate profits = more albums equates to more chances of winning
    - Photocards as collectibles → "win-win" situation..?



Impact of K-pop

From Hallyu Wave

Sasaengs

- The expression Sasaeng comes from Korean pop culture
  - "Sa" derives from the word 'private' (from hanja 私) and "saeng" from the word 'life' (from hanja 生)
  - Stalkers who obsess over artists to the point of invading their private lives
- Many make a living selling footage of the idols and trading information about their private lives



Fanwars

- Most violent ones occurred during Hallyu 2.0, when fandoms were able to develop a more extreme bond with idol groups
  - Physical violence
- Online brutality, cyberbullying, extremism from behind a screen
  - Twitter stans





Economic impact

Gangnam Style

$8mil in YouTube revenue alone

BTS' 10-year economic impact

predicted to reach 56.2tril won ($49.8bil)

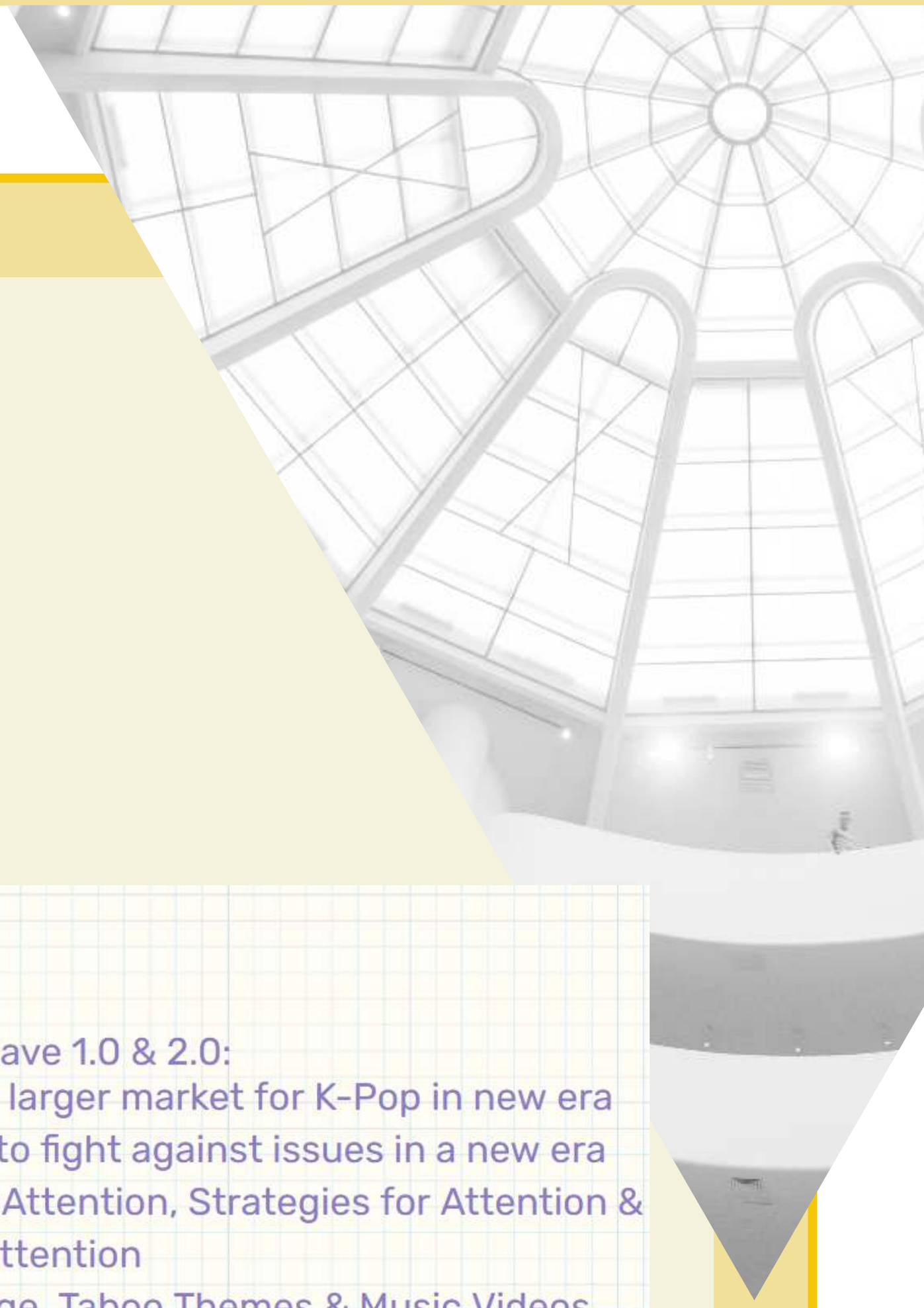
2017 tourism revenue

59.83 trillion South Korean won

Legal effects

- Military deferment
  - "A pop culture artist who was recommended by the Minister of Culture, Sports and Tourism to have greatly enhanced the image of Korea both within the nation and throughout the world" is allowed to postpone military service until the age of 30
    - 2-year extension





Conclusion

1) Comparison of Hallyu Wave 1.0 & 2.0:
    a) **Sales**: Significantly larger market for K-Pop in new era
    b) **New trends**: Tools to fight against issues in a new era
    c) **Attention**: Type of Attention, Strategies for Attention & Recognition from Attention
    d) **Music**: English Usage, Taboo Themes & Music Videos
2) Big factor behind rise of K-pop in Hallyu 2.0: **Social Media**
3) Kpop proving itself to have all sorts of effects, societal and economic included

QUESTION TIME

Which of these aspects of the K-Pop industry did not change from 1.0 to 2.0?

A: The market size has not changed significantly

B: Taboo themes are still bannable on TV

C: English is still not popularly used in songs

Which of the following is true about the B2B business model?

A. Products are sold to consumers directly

B. Channels have to pay to upload content

C. Reliant on royalties to earn profits

Which of the following is a societal impact of K-Pop?

A. Westernisation of South Korea

B. Increased usage of social media

C. Normalisation of unhealthy parasocial relationships

K-Pop Over the Years
A look at the Hallyu Wave through K-Pop
Group 3
Wan Xuan
Christal
Amanda
Sarah
K-Pop Over the Years
A look at the Hallyu Wave through K-Pop
Group 3
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How Hallyu has impacted South Korea's economy: K-pop, Films, Webtoons and Food.
Amanda, Siobhan, Su Wen and Khairiyah

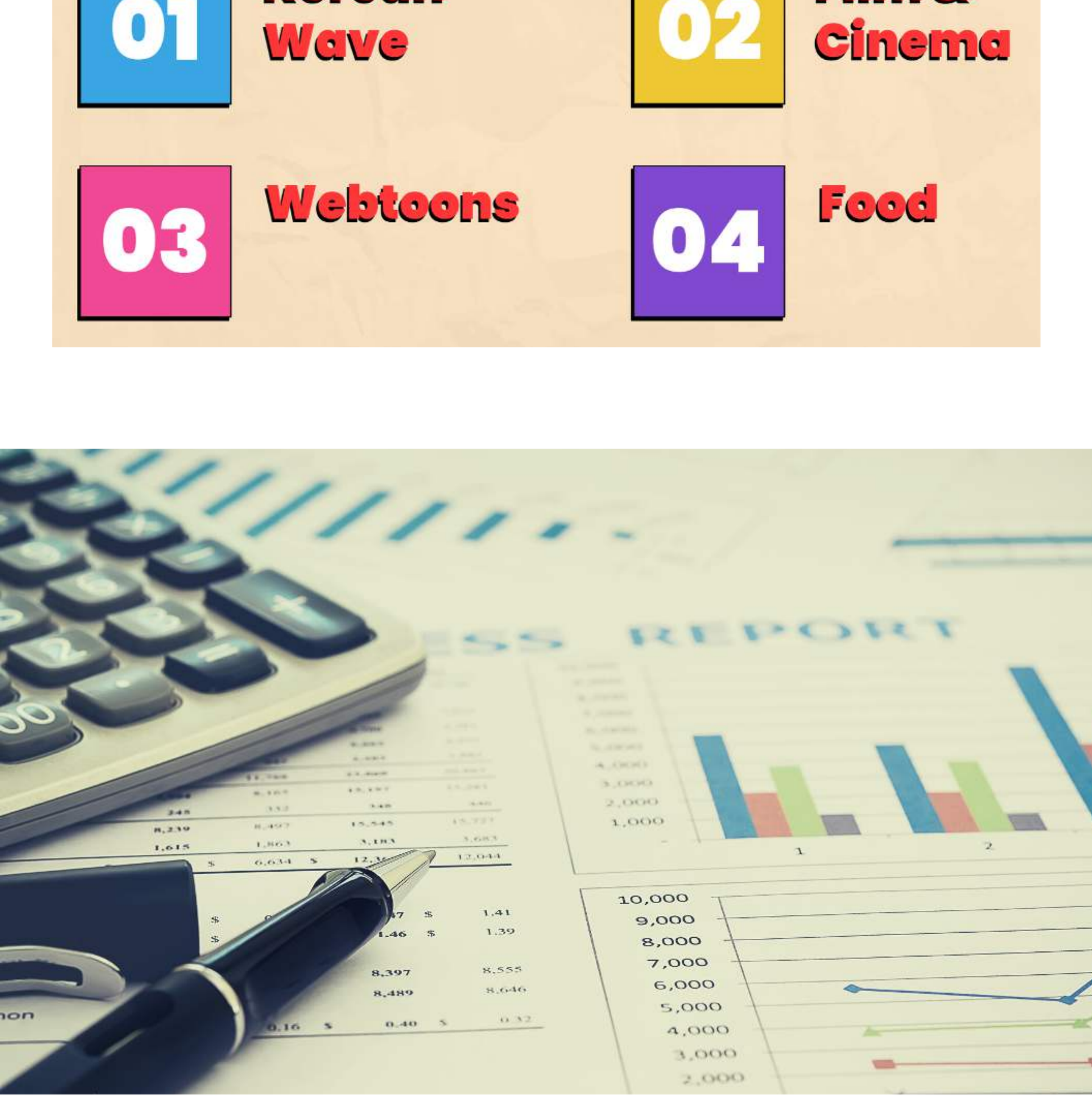
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01 Korean Wave

02 Film & Cinema

03 Webtoons

04 Food



Brief Overview of K-pop

- K-pop has become a global phenomenon, with K-pop idols garnering fans from all around the world. Known for its flashy outfits and synchronised music performances, K-pop is more than just a fad.
  - Transcended geological and linguistic barriers
- Can be categorised according to first generation, second generation and so on







Birth of K-pop

From military rule to democracy:

- During the Fourth Republic under Park Chung Hee's rule, the Yushin Constitution was established in 1972
- Strict controls and censorship over the media
- Next few civilian governments shifted their focus from propaganda-building to transforming Korea into a leader of innovation and cultural exports, giving rise to the 'Korean Wave'

Success of First Generation K-pop groups: Seo Taiji, S.E.S, Sechskies, H.O.T



Technological advancements

- South Korea was an early adopter of technology to spread the word of K-pop
  - First few Asian country to launch their own music streaming services (Eg: Melon was launched in 2004, two years before Spotify)
- Capitalised on the vast network and speed of the internet
  - Created YouTube channels to promote songs of their artists
  - Established an internet presence for their artists → rapid diffusion of music even in the international sphere
- Interactive nature of social media platforms allow entertainment companies to gauge the response of fans

K-pop as soft power & participatory culture

- K-Pop represents an opportunity for culture and economic dominance through the collectivisation of artistic expression.
  - Cultural mashup of languages, visual stance and dance, headed by both domestic and international hitmakers
  - Far more diverse and creative compared to its history under dictatorship, and is now easily exported to the international market
- More collaboration/negotiation than struggle/tension between the industry and fans
  - Participatory culture is defined as a culture which allows free expression of artistic talent and civic engagement by sharing one's creations with others
  - Creation of fan cafes, fan-made videos, 'streaming culture' → advancement of celebrity-fan alliances
- USP of K-pop
  - "Official colours", lightsticks, photocards in albums

Economic impact of K-pop (BTS as case study)

- **Overall impact of K-pop:**
  - 2020: South Korea had the 6th largest global music market
  - The country exports a high volume of copyright-protected content and K-Pop as a whole contributed over $5 billion to the South Korean GDP in 2020
- In 2018, the Hyundai Research Institute (HRI) reported that BTS generated an estimated amount of 4 trillion won ($3.54 billion) as economic value per year and 1.42 trillion won ($1.26 billion) as added value per year
  - BTS' contribution to South Korea's GDP is almost comparable with Korean Air
- **Impact on tourism:**
  - 796,000 foreigners visit South Korea annually because of BTS
  - The Seoul Metropolitan Government even credited BTS for helping recover Seoul's tourism industry which was negatively affected by the Terminal High Altitude Area Defence (THAAD) ban in 2017.
  - If BTS' popularity continues to grow, it is predicted that their 10-year economic impact will reach 56.2 trillion won
  - This number will easily surpass the PyeongChang Winter Olympics 2018 which is 41.6 trillion won.
- **Impact on consumer goods sales:**
  - BTS' endorsements with South Korean companies such as LINE FRIENDS CREATOR and VT Cosmetics
  - Contributed $1.1 billion (1.7%) to the total Korean consumer goods export which was $65.2 billion in 2017
  - Clothing = $2.026 billion, Cosmetics = $2.8 billion



2

KOREAN FILM & CINEMA

1.02 trillion Korean Won

Movie industry's sales revenue in South Korea, in 2021.

Source: Statista Research Department

THRIVING FILM INDUSTRY

- In 2001, South Korea became the **first film industry in recent history to reclaim its domestic market from Hollywood** *(Lee, 2019)*
- The release and eventual success of "Parasite" and "Train to Busan" brought international recognition to the country
- **South Korean films are starting to become global blockbusters on the equivalent of Hollywood films**
- The proliferation of streaming services like Netflix also aided in the popularity of Korean films and TV shows

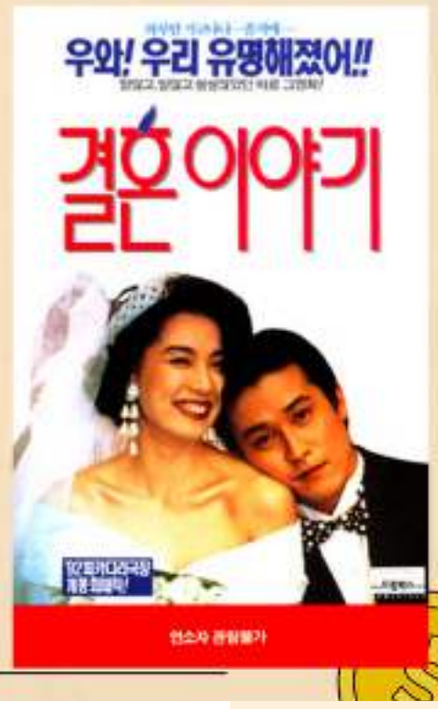




Chaebols and Industrialisation

Entrance of the Chaebols

- In the early 1990s, chaebols such as **Samsung, SK, Daewoo** made advancements in the film industry and pushed forward for the **industrialisation of films**
- **First film to produce tangible results - Marriage Story by Kim Ui Sok 1992 (financed by Samsung)**
- Marriage Story marked the first major success of so-called **'planned films'** a new method of conceiving and producing movies which was championed by a younger generation of producers
- After *Marriage Story*, quite a number of films were made with investments from chaebols - mostly **romantic comedy films**
- Chaebols also had a preference for using star actors, which is why movies usually have a well-known lead actor
- **These chaebols recognised the potential of profit of films and this move shaped the industry**



Commercial Films

- **Commercial cinema** refers to the ability of films to recoup their budget – large or small – at the box-office or through other means such as video or international sales.
- New generation of producers in the early 1990s placed a strong focus on the **profitability and self-sufficiency of films**
- Acclaimed directors would be given intensified pressure not only to make **good films**, but to **make films that would not lose money**
- **Venture capitalists** also began investing in films as film offered the opportunity to **earn back profit on an investment in about a year**
- **Governmental policy** under **President Kim Dae Jung** (1998–2003) encouraged venture-capital companies to set up special funds to be used for film production.



NOTABLE FILMS



Shiri (1999)

- First overseas commercial success



The Host (2006)

- 12 million audience reached
- Received good reviews in US, UK and Japan/ box office
- Launched success of Bong Joon-Ho



Miss Granny (2014)

- Remade by many countries: China, Vietnam, Japan, Thailand, Indonesia, Philippines, India and Germany

MOVIE ADMISSIONS

Rank	Movie	Director	Admissions	Year
1	*The Admiral: Roaring Currents*	Kim Han-min	17,615,437	2014
2	*Extreme Job*	Lee Byeong-heon	16,264,944	2019
3	*Along With the Gods: The Two Worlds*	Kim Yong-hwa	14,414,440	2017
4	*Ode to My Father*	Yoon Je-kyoon	14,263,203	2014
5	*Veteran*	Ryoo Seung-wan	13,414,200	2015

ECONOMIC PROFIT

- Korean film industry makes a **significant and direct impact to the economy of South Korea,** providing a huge number of jobs and careers
- Aside from film production, films profit through film distribution, film exhibition, and a range of other film services including online film screening
- Over-the-top (OTT) streaming services are also extremely popular and films can profit through licensing

NETFLIX

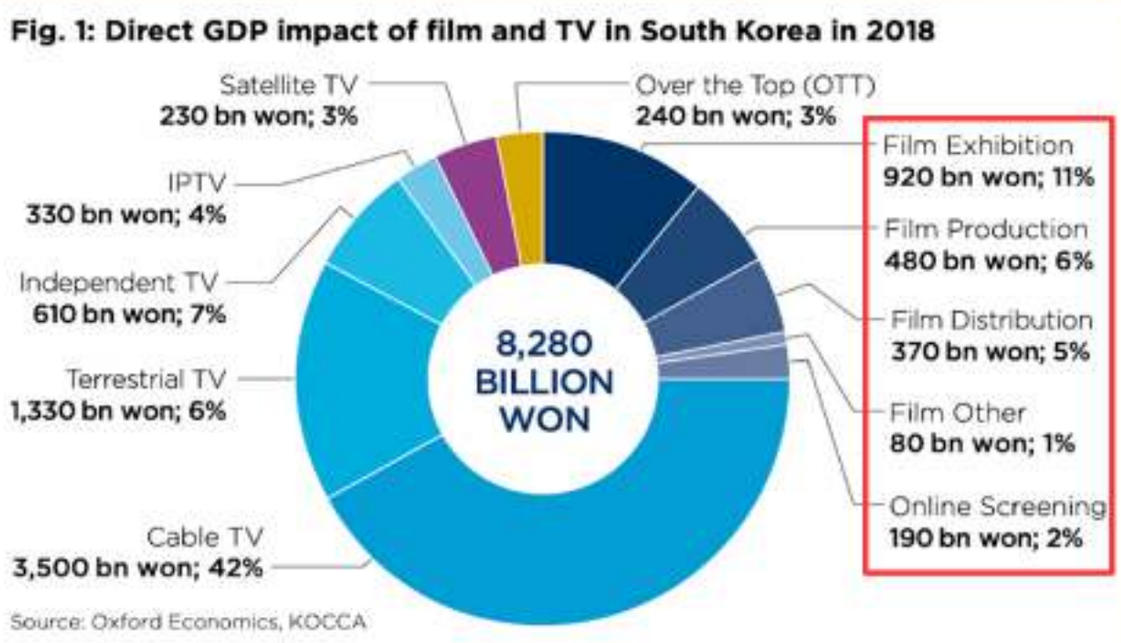
viu

iQIYI

hulu

GDP Impact

Fig. 1: Direct GDP impact of film and TV in South Korea in 2018



Source: Oxford Economics, KOCCA

- If we were to look at GDP impact, Film and TV are large contributors
- Direct film factors make up of 25% of the GDP impact alone in 2018
- Korea's film and TV industry show promising growth and we may see even further advancements in the future

03 Webtoons

What are webtoons?

WEB TOON

- Combination of **"web" and "cartoon"**
- Subset of *manhwa* (print and online)

- Part of the K-wave, which is a good example of **glocalisation** (balance between maintaining local identities and interacting with global cultures)

- **Became popular** with increasing web users due to Internet
- **Increased diversity in topics** addressed (especially Korean social issues)
- **Contests held** - encourage consumption (by web users) and production (by amateurs and professionals)

Jang & Song (2017)

How are webtoons structured?

Nonlinear Story-telling (increases viewers' participation)

Interactive motion (increases fun and focus)

Sound (maximises expression)

Vertical scrolling & presenting sequences (easier reading flow and stimulate curiosity)

Jang & Song (2017)

Economic Impacts of Webtoons (GDP)

- Webtoons: profitable as
  - They charge for content
  - Advertisement revenue
- One source multi-use strategy (OSMU)
  - Common strategy used in Korean cultural products due to success of webtoons
  - Promotes growth + earn profits with other associated products (like film, drama, musicals and game adaptations)
  - "OSMU webtoon products are currently "valued at around 420 billion won ($368 million) and is expected more than double at 880 billion won by 2018" (WY. Lee)

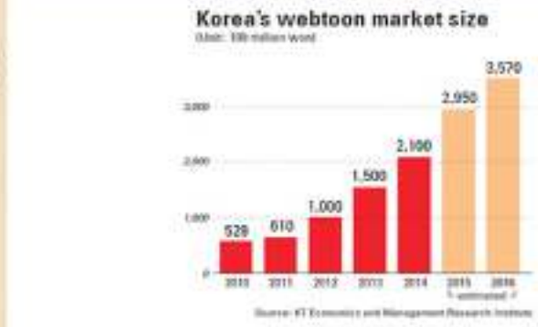


Fig. 2. Korea's Webtoon Market Size. From Hong, Joo-Hee and Eun-Soo Jin, "Webtoons aim to draw in more overseas readers"

Korean webtoon market has been growing consistently, and reached 357 billion Korean won in 2016

Table 1. Global Market Sizes of Printed Cartoons and Webtoons (Unit: Million US Dollars)

Year/ Market Size	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Printed Cartoon	72.01	71.08	64.79	63.51	61.97	60.36	58.65	56.87	54.97
Webtoon	3.30	4.26	4.57	5.38	5.91	6.47	7.07	7.71	8.40

Source: Mang, Ha Kyung, "Webtoon Hallyu will win over global comics market."

Market size of webtoon is sharply increasing (3.30million to 8.40million) while for printed cartoon is decreasing (72.01million to 54.97million)

Jang & Song (2017)

Economic Impacts of Webtoons (Labour)

- Webtoon making - job creation
- How artists earn money:
  - Rise the rank of tiers
  - Minimum wage of $1800 for all commission webtoon artists, OR
  - Competitive compensation -keyword-based adverts within Webtoon pages
  - More crowdfunding events



Webtoon (n.d.)

Kim & Yu, Nov 2019

Economic Impacts of Webtoons (Governmental Support)

- Increasing recognition that webtoon artists should be paid more fairly
- 2013: Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism announced a funding plan of US$4.65million for cultivating talent in Webtoon industry
- South Korean government: financial sponsor and institutional backer of the Webtoon industry
  - Webtoon industry - became established
  - Allows direct employment of content creators
  - Surpasses conventional *manhwa* industry

Kim & Yu, Nov 2019

Korean Food

4

1. Korean cuisine has been vividly portrayed in K-dramas and films and this attracts fans to try out different types of Korean food.

- "In a sense, increasing interest in entertainment content, such as movies, television shows and music, have paved the way for more curiosity about the culture, which then opens the door for **cuisine**."
- Fans are willing to travel to Korea to try food that they see in Korean shows, thereby contributing to its domestic economy
  - Singaporean Heather Chua went to Korea in July 2014 with her friends to tick "chimaek" (fried chicken + beer) off their list
    - Chimaek became popular overseas because of the popular South Korean TV Drama "You Who Came From the Stars"



1. Korean cuisine is vividly portrayed in K-dramas and films and this attracts fans to try out different types of Korean food.

- The bulk of overseas K-food sales in the past 5 years is snacks, instant noodles, and ready-made meals.
  - These are common types of food that appear in Korean dramas and films.
  - These three categories combined accounted for around **70% of total overseas K-food sales.**



2. Korean stars have a huge impact on food consumption.

Korean stars consume K-food → Fans are more likely to consume the same types of food. → This leads to an increase in the consumption of K-food.

2. Korean stars have a huge impact on consumer culture.

- According to a report in 2019, BTS has an annual effect of **$3.96 billion per year** on food as a consumer goods export.





3. K-food is promoted as food that is good for health and dieting.

We thus see an increase in the number of people eating Korean food, and this increase in consumption contributes to the South Korean economy.

Example 1: Traditional Korean Cuisine in Daejanggeum

Under the influence of Lee Young Ae's character's inspirational story of becoming a great chef, fans were **educated on the health benefits** in Korean traditional cuisine and medicine.



Restaurants began to catch up with the Daejanggeum fever by providing similar Korean cuisines and often highlighting their health benefits. For example: a Korean restaurant in Lotte Shopping Mall which named itself Dae Jang Geum and serves cuisines similar to those in the drama.

Example 2: Kimchi



Kimchi is celebrated today as the **central element** of Korean cuisine.

It has been said to be **universally palatable, delectable and nutritionally beneficial**. It has also been hailed as Korea's original health food and as a possible preventive for SARS and bird flu.

According to the Korea Customs Service, exports of kimchi surged by 10.7% on-year to $159.9 million last year. The figure **surpassed the record-high exports** of $144.5 million in 2020.

4. With the rise of Hallyu, people all over the world are exposed to K-food and it is now increasingly exported overseas.

From 2020 to 2021, Korea has seen a **net 7.7% increase** in its agri-food export to other countries. Shipments of processed chicken from South Korea increased in 2020 by 59.5% to USD 21 million, marking a new high. Likewise, the export of Korean condiments, like *gochujang*, has increased by more than 25%. The Korea International Trade Association (KITA) attributed the increase to the rising popularity of Korean culture, which has boosted **global awareness of Korean food**, thereby spurring many to purchase imported K-food.

QUESTIONS

Webtoon

Q: List any 2 characteristics of a webtoon, according to Jang & Song (2017).

ANS: Sound, Vertical scrolling and presenting sequence, Non-linear storytelling (digital techniques), Interactive Motion

Korean Cinema:

Q: Which movie had the highest admissions in Korean Film history?

A. Train to Busan
B. Along With the Gods: The Two Worlds
C. The Admiral: Roaring Currents
D. Extreme Job

K-pop:

Q: Which of the following are NOT key factors of participatory culture? (Select all that apply)

A. Symbiotic relationship between producer and consumer
B. Fandoms are built around participatory culture
C. Increasing tension between producer and consumer
D. Fans get paid a small sum for their efforts in creating fan cafes and making translation videos


How Hallyu has impacted South Korea's economy: K-pop, Films, Webtoons and Food.
Amanda, Siobhan, Su Wen and Khai
How Hallyu has impacted South Korea's economy: K-pop, Films, Webtoons and Food.
Amanda, Siobhan, Su Wen and Khai


SOUTH KOREA & TOURISM
By Lee Ming Xuan, Wong Yuet Yen,
Celine Poh Hui Yan, Sylvia Chang Shi Hui

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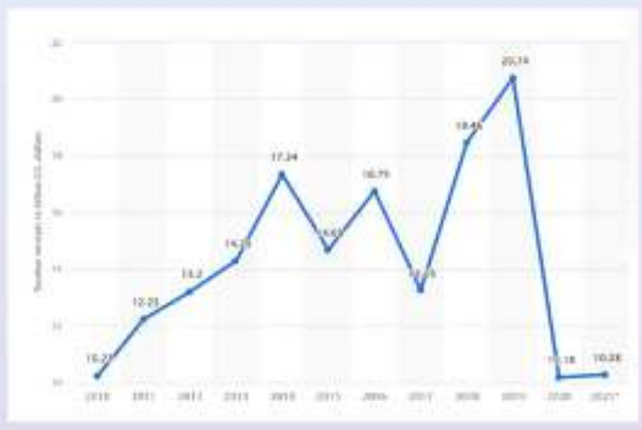
03 IMPACTS OF TOURISM ON SOUTH KOREA

04 TOURISM & COVID-19

01

CURRENT TRENDS IN SOUTH KOREA TOURISM

SOUTH KOREA TOURISM REVENUE



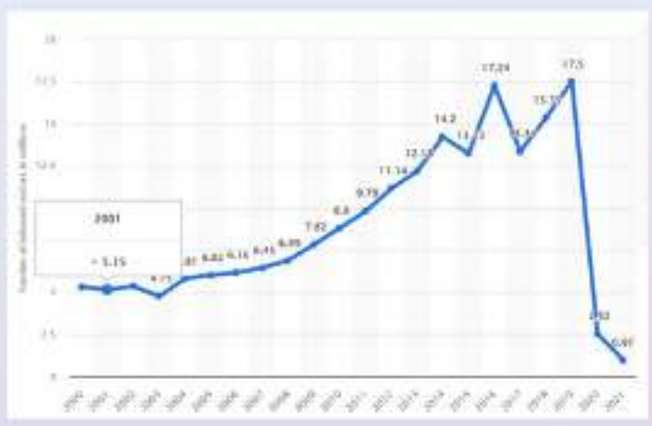
AVERAGE REVENUE

12.9 bil USD

HIGHEST REVENUE

25.5 bil USD
in 2019

NUMBER OF INBOUND TOURISTS IN SOUTH KOREA



AVERAGE NUMBER OF TOURISTS

13.3mil

HIGHEST NUMBER

2019, 17.5mil

3RD

IN EAST ASIA

23RD

MOST POPULAR CITY

100TH

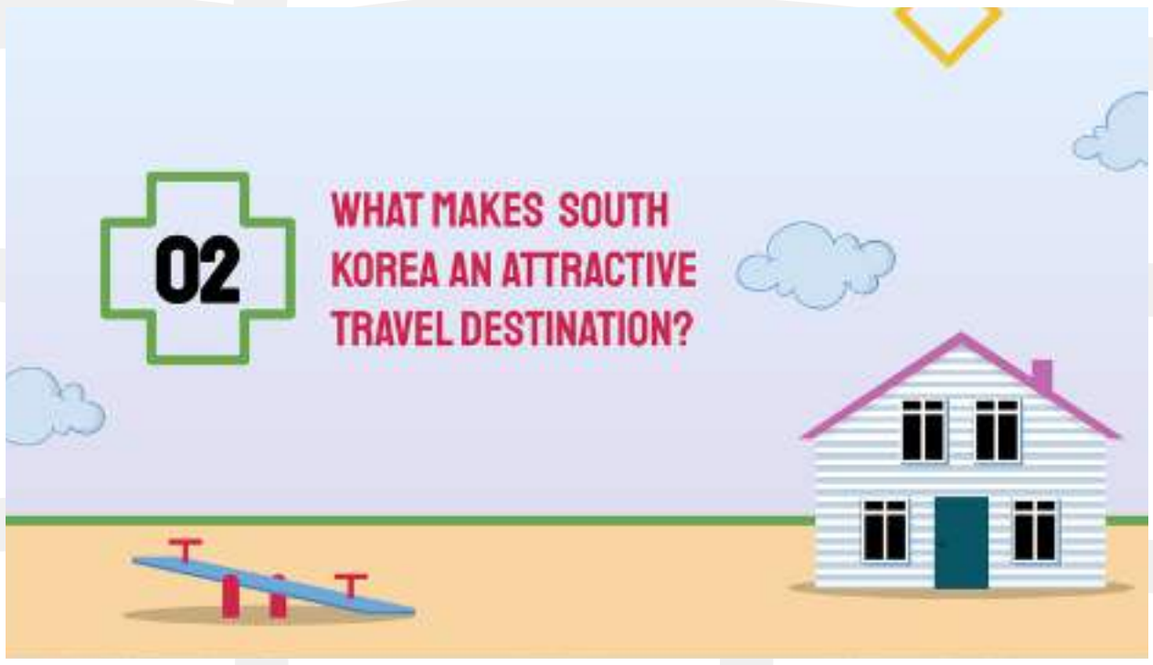
IN THE WORLD

FOREIGN TOURIST DEMOGRAPHICS

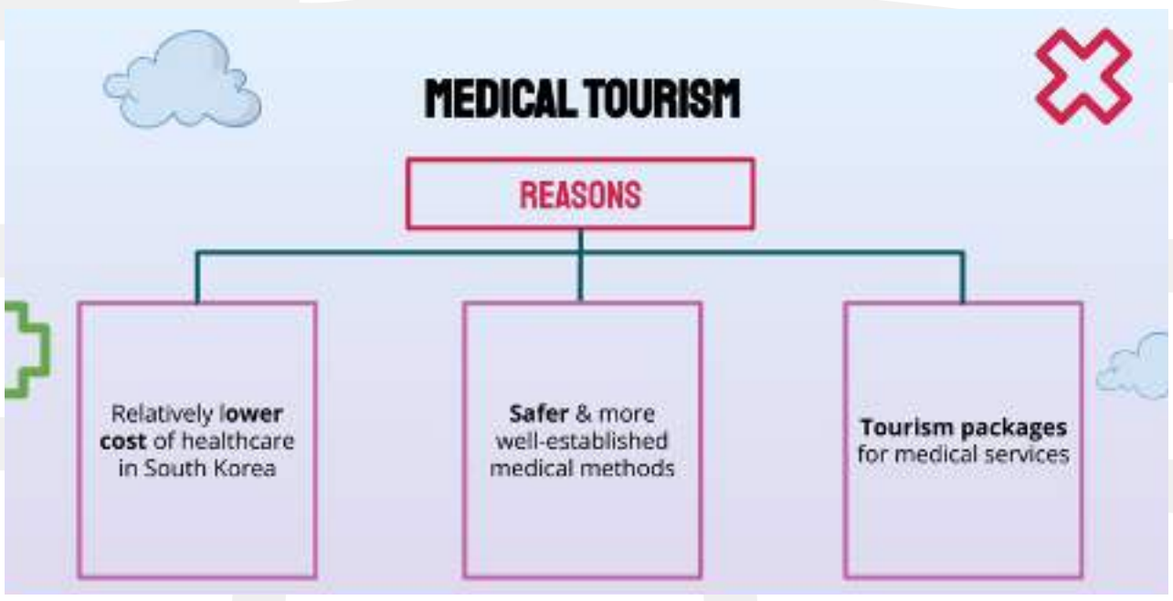


Mostly from **China, Japan, Hong Kong and Taiwan**. (Asian Countries)

Asian Culture
→ Sense of familiarity


02
WHAT MAKES SOUTH KOREA AN ATTRACTIVE TRAVEL DESTINATION?


SOUTH KOREA AS AN ATTRACTIVE TRAVEL DESTINATION
01 MEDICAL TOURISM
02 KOREAN WAVE
03 ATTRACTIVE ASPECTS OF SOUTH KOREA
04 TOURISM MARKETING STRATEGIES


MEDICAL TOURISM
REASONS
Relatively lower cost of healthcare in South Korea
Safer & more well-established medical methods
Tourism packages for medical services


LOWER HEALTHCARE COSTS
Surgery | United States | Korea
Heart bypass | $144,000 | $24,000
Angioplasty | $57,000 | $19,600
Heart valve replacement | $170,000 | $36,000
Hip replacement | $50,000 | $16,450
Hip resurfacing | $50,000 | $20,900
Knee replacement | $50,000 | $17,800
Spinal fusion | $100,000 | $17,350
Dental implant | $2,000–10,000 | $3,400
Lap band | $30,000 | $9,500
Rhinoplasty | $8,000 | $4,000
Face lift | $15,000 | $3,000
Hysterectomy | $15,000 | $9,000
MEDICAL TOURIST ARRIVALS
117k
NATIONALITY OF THE MAJORITY OF MEDICAL TOURIST
China
MOST VISITED DEPARTMENT AMONG MEDICAL TOURISTS
Internal medicine


GOOD SAFETY REPUTATION
Quality
South Korea ranked 12th overall in the world for quality of healthcare. (2015)
Accessibility
In 2015, South Korea ranked 1st in the OECD for healthcare access.
Choice
High freedom in choice of healthcare. South Korea ranked 8th in the world for freedom of choice.


MEDICAL TOURISM PACKAGE
Tourism package includes both countryside & city destinations
Quality stay of your choice: 3/4/5 stars hotel
Tour schedule around your treatment, surgery & recovery periods.

KOREAN WAVE - HALLYU

KOREAN DRAMAS & FILMS



K-POP

KOREAN DRAMAS & FILMS

1. **Filming Locations**
   - Viewers drawn to places shown in backgrounds or foregrounds of film or TV production
   - Visit sites that are featured in dramas and films - a form of pilgrimage
2. **Universal Themes Portrayed**
   - Sudden sickness, accidents, love affairs, illegitimate children, envy, intrigue, betrayal and all manner of interpersonal entanglements
3. **Attractive Characters**
   - Females - strong & independent or passive & infantile
   - Males - sensitive, emotional and alluring



Jumunjin Breakwater
Drama: Guardian: The Lonely and Great God



Yonsei University
Drama: Extraordinary You

K-POP

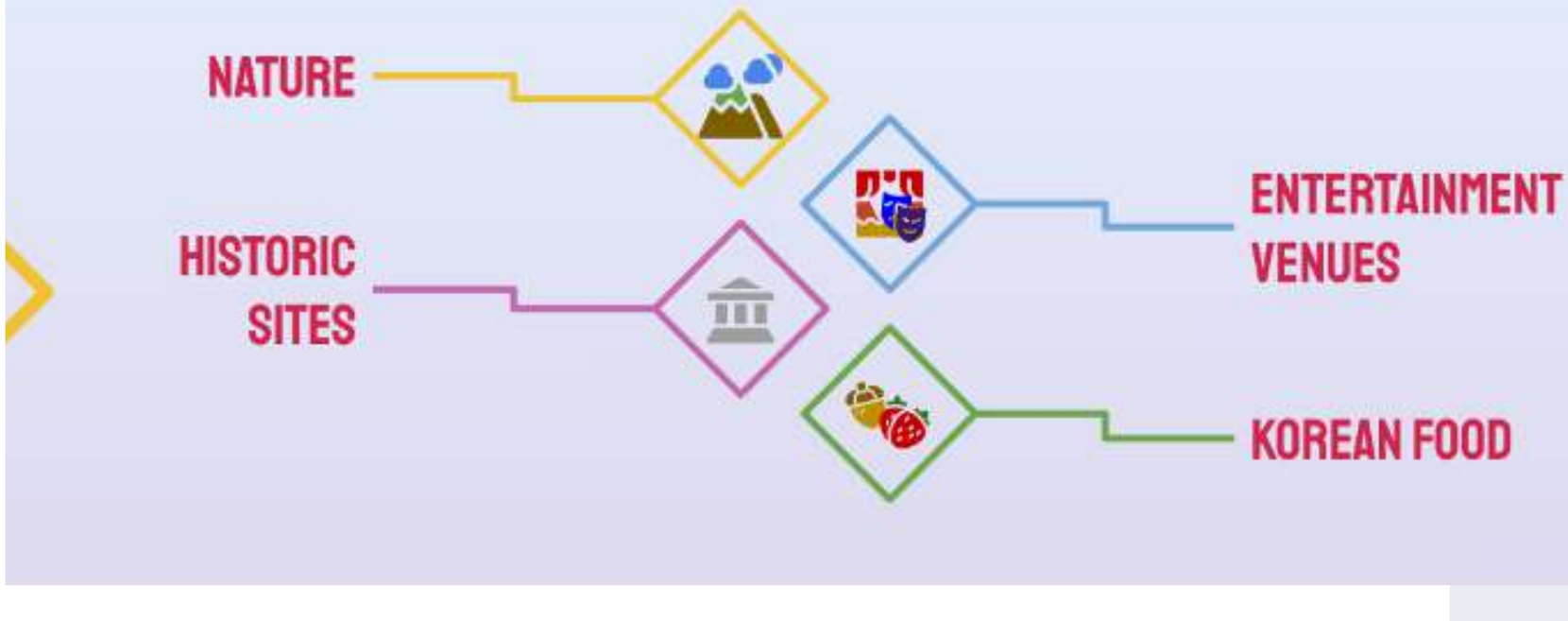
1. **Attractive Performers**
   - Many overseas saw Korea through the image of beautiful boys and girls
   - Wanted to act and dress like their idols, leading to the popularity of Korean fashion
2. **Stress Reliever & Source of Comfort**
   - Addicting melodies, slick choreography
   - Inspiring and relatable lyrics
3. **Sense of Belonging**
   - Feeling of belonging through being a part of fan clubs
   - Participate in donation activities, online voting, attending concerts, holding birthday celebrations for idols etc.







ATTRACTIVE ASPECTS OF SOUTH KOREA



NATURE



Jeju Island

- UNESCO World Heritage Site (2007), Biosphere Reserve (2002), Global Geopark (2010)
- Lava Tubes - finest lava tube system of caves
- Dol Hareubang ('Stone Grandfather' statues)
- Hallasan - tallest mountain in South Korea



Han River

- Major river running through Seoul
- 12 Han River Parks
- Park activities - cycling, picnicking, riding a duck boat, cruising etc.



Seoraksan National Park

- North-eastern part of South Korea
- UNESCO Biosphere Reserve since 1982
- Rich flora and fauna
- Various hiking trails with different levels of difficulty

HISTORIC SITES



Hwaseong Fortress

- Piled stone and brick fortress located in Suwon city
- UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1997
- Built in the late 18th century by King Jeongjo for defensive purposes
- Defensive features: command posts, multiple arrow launcher towers, bunkers



Gyeongbokgung Palace

- Oldest and largest royal palace located at the heart of Seoul
- Built in 1395, three years after the Joseon Dynasty was founded by King Taejo
- Many hanbok rentals near the palace



Bukchon Hanok Village

- Located between 2 main palaces: Gyeongbokgung and Changdeokgung
- Home to hundreds of traditional houses called *hanok*, dating back to the Joseon Dynasty
- Today, many of these hanoks operate as cultural centres, guesthouses, restaurants and teahouses

ENTERTAINMENT VENUES



Lotte World

- Theme park in Seoul, operated by Lotte Group
- Divided into 2 parts: Indoor Lotte World Adventure & Outdoor Lakeside Magic Island
- Amenities: shopping mall, folk museum, ice rink, hotel etc.



Everland

- South Korea's largest theme park in Yongin city
- 5 themed zones: Global Fair, American Adventure, Magic Land, European Adventure, Zootopia
- Decorated according to different themed festivals throughout the year



N Seoul Tower

- Symbol of Seoul, the city's highest point
- Sightseeing observatory & broadcast tower, serving media outlets such as KBS, MBC, SBS
- Equipped with the latest LED technology to create light art
- Amenities: restaurants, gift shops, arcades

KOREAN FOOD



Korean Barbeque

- Meat such as beef, chicken or pork are grilled
- Common side dishes: Kimchi, Stir-fried zucchini, Stir-fried anchovies
- Complemented with Soju



Korean Chinese Food

- Popular food items ordered for delivery
- Jajangmyeon (black bean sauce noodles)
- Jjamppong (spicy seafood noodle soup)
- Tangsuyuk (sweet and sour pork)



Korean Street Food

- Tteokbokki (spicy rice cakes)
- Sundae (blood sausages)
- Kimbap (seaweed rice rolls)
- Odeng (fish cakes)

  and many more...

TOURISM MARKETING STRATEGIES

From the late 1990s, the Korean government created a plan to enhance the standing of the **Korean entertainment industry**

- **Universities** tasked with producing the next generation of directors, producers and actors
- **Film studios** actively promoted by the government
- **Money** spent on creating agencies focused on promoting tourism based on Korean culture
- **Export** of Korean film and television programmes

K ARTS
한국예술종합학교
Korea National University of Arts



Notable Alumni: Kim Go-eun, Lee Je-hoon, Jang Dong-gun (left to right)

The Korean government viewed the **Korean Wave** not just as a cultural export, but also as a marketing and business phenomenon

- Help of **social media and streaming services** (e.g. Netflix, Disney+) to promote Korea as the "Hollywood of the East"
- Promotion and penetration of cultural products in the overseas market through the **Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism (MCST)**
  - **Creation of Hallyu agencies** that focused on promoting Hallyu through food events, sports or celebrity events, but especially music concerts
  - Opened **Korean Cultural Centres** in many foreign countries

Disney+ N

문화체육관광부
Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism



03

IMPACTS OF TOURISM ON SOUTH KOREA

IMPACTS OF TOURISM ON SOUTH KOREA

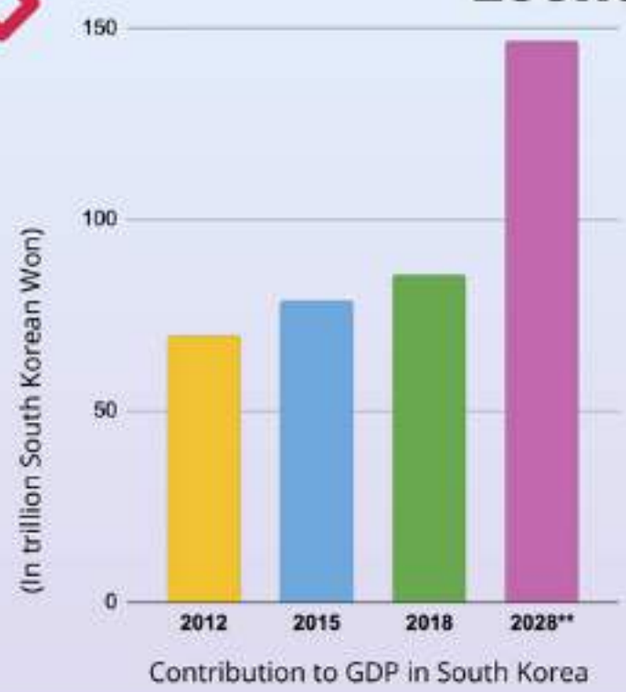
01 ECONOMIC

02 CULTURAL

03 SOCIAL

04 ENVIRONMENTAL

ECONOMIC IMPACT



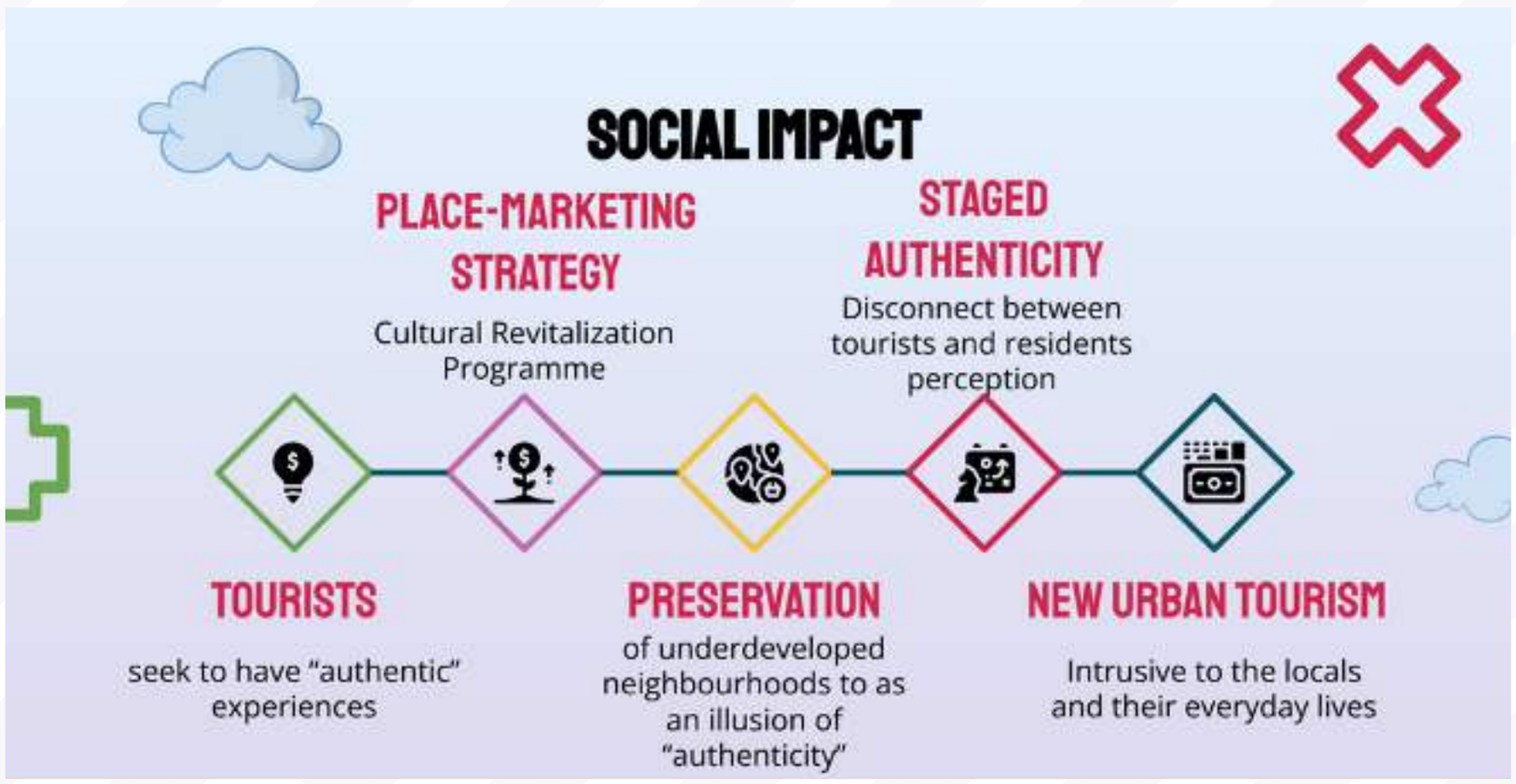
4.7% of GDP in 2018

1.4 MILLION JOBS CREATED

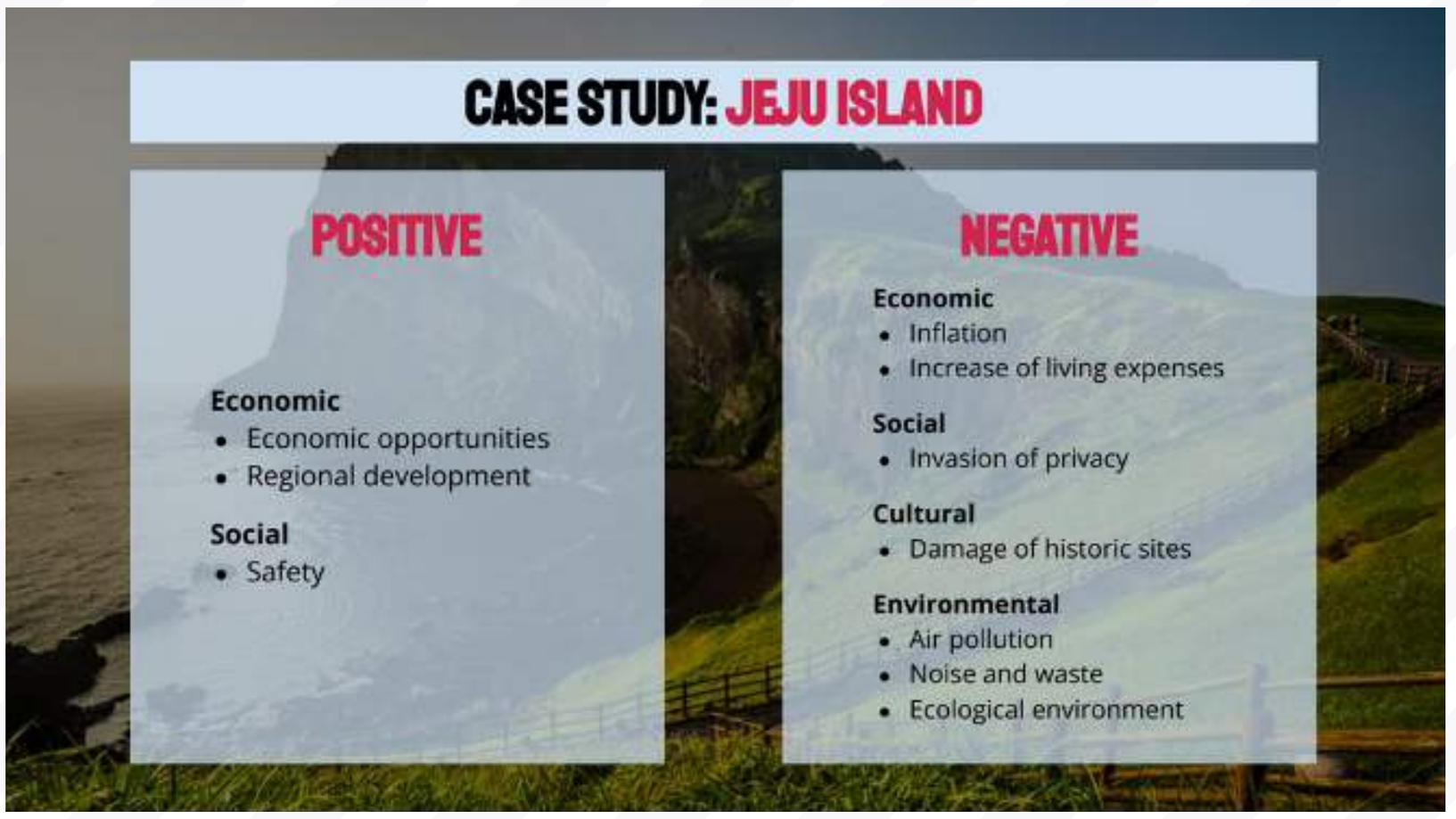
5.3% of total employment

Statistics retrieved from https://www.statista.com/statistics/646922/south-korea-economic-impact-of-travel-and-tourism/ and https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/6e8b663c-en/index.html?itemId=/content/component/6e8b663c-en#:~:text=In%20%2019%20the%20economy,represented%205.3%25%20of%20total%20employment


CULTURAL IMPACT
CULTURAL DILUTION
Cultural exports are adapted to global demands
LOSS OF CULTURAL VALUE
Commodification of culture and traditions

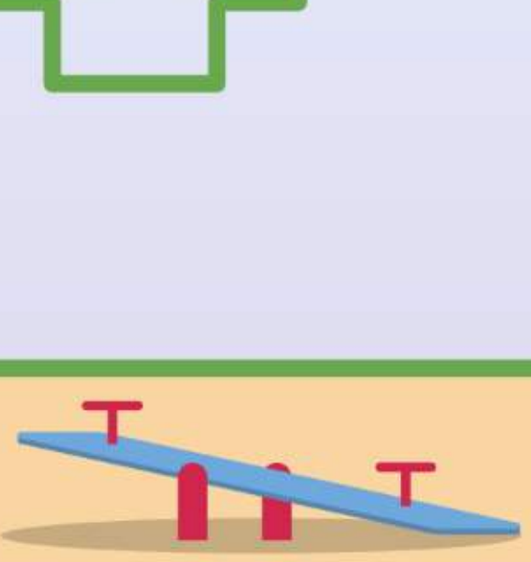

SOCIAL IMPACT
PLACE-MARKETING STRATEGY
Cultural Revitalization Programme
STAGED AUTHENTICITY
Disconnect between tourists and residents perception
TOURISTS
seek to have "authentic" experiences
PRESERVATION
of underdeveloped neighbourhoods to as an illusion of "authenticity"
NEW URBAN TOURISM
Intrusive to the locals and their everyday lives


IHWA MURAL VILLAGE
22


CASE STUDY: JEJU ISLAND
POSITIVE
Economic
• Economic opportunities
• Regional development
Social
• Safety
NEGATIVE
Economic
• Inflation
• Increase of living expenses
Social
• Invasion of privacy
Cultural
• Damage of historic sites
Environmental
• Air pollution
• Noise and waste
• Ecological environment

04

TOURISM & COVID-19





HOW KOREA HANDLED THE COVID-19 SITUATION

IMPACT OF COVID-19

- Global decrease in international tourism
- Significant decrease in domestic tourism
- Change in attitude towards tourism after COVID-19

METHODS

- Used knowledge from previous pandemic in 2015 (MERS)
  - Able to be more prepared and respond quicker
- Formed an effective detection, containment, treatment plan
- Compliance with measures: mask-wearing, social distancing
- Becoming the norm, that it influenced the decisions that people made

ADOPTING 'UNTACT'

A new term that was coined

DEFINITION OF 'UNTACT'

A behavioural disposition to minimize direct contact between people

ADOPTING 'UNTACT' TOURISM

KOREA TOURISM ORGANIZATION

- Organized a list of 100 untact attractions for people to visit

INCREASE IN BOOKINGS

- During holiday week in 2020, there was 48.9% increase of accommodation bookings in Jeju Island

ADOPTING 'UNTACT' TOURISM

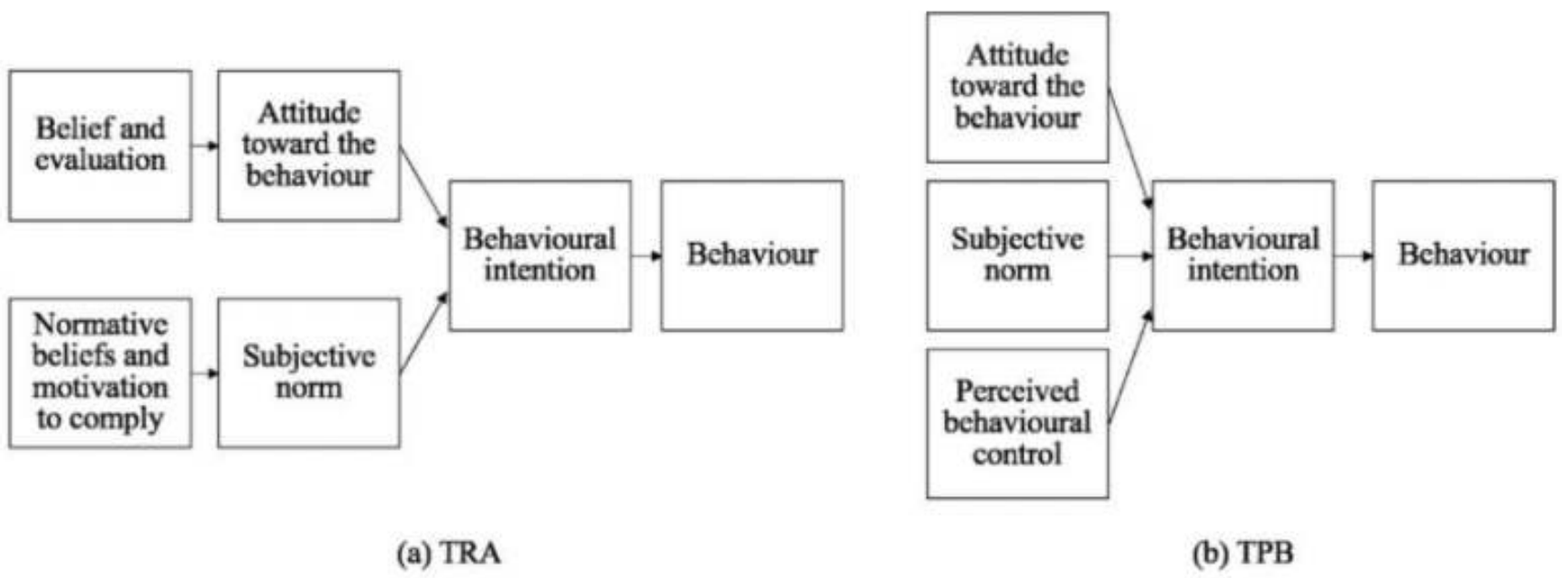


Figure 2. Theory of reasoned action (TRA) and theory of planned behaviour (TPB).

Diagram showing how the behaviour is formed towards 'untact'

Q&A

Q1: WHAT IS THE TYPE OF TOURISM IN SOUTH KOREA THAT SEEKS TO MINIMISE DIRECT CONTACT BETWEEN PEOPLE?

(A) Contact Tourism

(B) Untact Tourism

(C) Intact Tourism

(D) Outact Tourism

Q2: WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING ARE REASONS WHY MEDICAL TOURISTS VISIT SOUTH KOREA?

A. Safety Reputation
B. Relatively lower healthcare cost in South Korea
C. Exclusive Tourist medical hubs
D. Attractive medical tourism packages
E. Exclusive cosmetic surgery procedures

(A) A & B only

(B) B, C & E only

(C) A, B & D only

(D) All of the above

Q3: WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING YEAR DID SOUTH KOREA HAVE THE HIGHEST NUMBER OF INBOUND TOURISTS?

(A) 2002

(B) 2012

(C) 2018

(D) 2019


SOUTH KOREA & TOURISM
By Lee Ming Xuan, Wong Yuet Yan,
Celine Poh Hui Yan, Sylvia Chang Shi Hui
SOUTH KOREA & TOURISM
By Lee Ming Xuan, Wong Yuet Yan,
Celine Poh Hui Yan, Sylvia Chang Shi Hui


THE POLITICAL IMPACT ON SOUTH KOREAN CINEMA
Fiona Lau Min Yee
Jeslynn Ng Jinglin
Toh Yi Shien

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05 RENAISSANCE
1998-present: South Korea's cinema in global context

5 THE BEGINNING

<1910: Before Japanese Rule
1910-1945: Colonial Korea
1945-1955: Korean War



ORIGIN OF FILMS



- 1st instance of film exhibition was held in 1899 at Gyeongbok Palace in Seoul
  - American cinematographer Burton Holmes visited King Kojong
- Early film exhibitions were limited to court circles
  - Later garnered general curiosity
  - Became widespread mass-entertainment events for the public

LOSS OF RECORDS

- Hard to determine the exact exhibition date of the first Korean film.
- **Japanese colonialism**, which began in Korea in 1910, contributed to the **loss of records of early Korean films** (including the disappearance of all Korean narrative films made before 1943)

COLONIAL KOREA

1910s

- Suppression by the Japanese
- Key turning point in 1919 (March First Independence Movement)

1920s

- Birth of silent films
- Exhibition & domination of foreign films

1930s-1945

- Introduction of sound technology
- Forced Japanese cultural assimilation
- Censorship of films

1910s



Japan's Police had full control over Korea

- aka Military Police Reign Era (1910 to 1919)
- in control of the media, law and government by physical power and regulations
- Suppressed Koreans' freedom and expression

KEY TURNING POINT

'March First Independence Movement' 1919 (Sam-il Movement)

- Inspired a number of nationalist protests against the Japanese occupation
- Although movement was violently quashed by the military-led Korean Colonial Government, they started to relax Japanese administrative control over Korean cultural and artistic activities
- Writers, actors, filmmakers, theater entrepreneurs grasped this opportunity to express Korean culture, giving rise to a level of cultural nationalism



1ST KOREAN FILM



The Righteous Revenge (1919)

Considered to be the **first Korean film**

- "The Righteous Revenge" was a transitional form combining motion pictures with a theatrical play (aka kino-drama) > film
- Widely considered a **starting point in Korean cinema**, because it triggered further development in films

1920s



FIRST GOLDEN AGE

- Between 1926 to 1936, the decade was known as the First Golden Age

Relaxation of Japanese control allowed Koreans to gain film production training and expertise

- Production of domestic films and distribution of various foreign films (American, French, Chinese and more)
- Most of domestic films struggled to compete against foreign films, but their resilience eventually paved the path for a renaissance of Korean filmmaking
- First silent feature was produced in 1923

NOTABLE FILM IN 1920s



Arirang (1926)

Considered the masterpiece of this era

- Written & directed by Na Woon Gyu (First filmmaker to achieve national recognition)
- Admired for its **aesthetic qualities and hidden political messages**, became an inspiration for a wave of young filmmakers who hoped to make films based on **principles of realism and resistance to Japanese power**.
- The title is taken from a popular folk song, which in its newly re-arranged form would become an anthem for the Korean independence movement.

1930s

Sound technology was introduced to Korea in mid 1930s

- However, in 1937, as Japan prepared for war with China, they formalised a forced assimilation policy 'naisen ittai' (naesson ilche)
  - Meaning 'Japan and Korea as One Body'
  - Used locally produced feature films as **tools to draw Koreans toward Japanese ways of thinking and living**



CENSORSHIP

- Japan **abandoned any policies that had allowed expression of Korea's indigenous culture**.
  - Less than a handful of films were produced per year during this decade.
  - Banned the Korean language and Korean names from official use
  - Robbed Koreans of the opportunity to establish their own national identity during the early sound era

- Japanese authorities enforced a strict film policy that **prohibited the exhibition of Western entertainment and foreign films** while **promoting pro-Japanese propaganda films**
  - Banned screening American films across 120 cinemas in Korea
  - Korea became a key exhibition market for Japanese products

NOTABLE FILMS IN 1930s

- Despite the suppression of Korea culture and language, there were still famous Koreans films produced to **challenge the suppression.**
- **Silent films were more popular** than sound films as they had more freedom of expression



Kanggaonnee maeul / The Town Across the River (1935)
Aimed for socialist realism



Chunhyangjeon / The Story of Chunhyang (1935)
1st "successful" commercial Korean talkie



Oh Mong-nyeo / 오몽녀 (1937)
Reflected the hardships of Koreans and their desire for better future

1940-1945

Under the 1940 Korean Film Law (Chosun Film Decree),

- Korean films were completely absorbed by the Japanese film industry
- Subjected to **strict censorship**
- Scripts could be banned, and thus never reach production, if they "misrepresented" Japanese national culture or detract from the advance of Japan's "ideological project" in Korea.



CO-PRODUCED FILMS

Korean filmmakers collaborated with their Japanese counterparts

- Promoted unity between the two nations, in attempt to **reaffirm loyalty** to the Japanese Empire
- Nevertheless, even while superficially obeying censorship directives, conflicted directors were able to **subtly undercut the desired effect** by foregrounding other concerns



Angels on the Streets / 집 없는 천사, Jibeopneun cheonsa (1941)
Focused on impoverished children and the Christianising forces which eventually "save" them.



Spring in the Korean Peninsula (1941)
Subtly undercuts Japanese through a depiction of a director that is forced to bear all stoically while seemingly dying inside.



Suicide Squad in the Watchtower (1943)
Suggests Koreans can achieve a social position equal to or higher than the Japanese

KOREAN WAR

Film infrastructure was destroyed and the centre of the industry temporarily moved to Busan.

- Many filmmakers became involved in shooting newsreels and war documentaries.
- Only **5 films have survived** from the period between the U.S. occupation of Korea and the end of the Korean War.



Hoorah! Freedom/ Chayu Mansel (1946)

- Most famous film during the war
- First film made after achieving independence
- An ode to patriotism with strong anti-Japanese sentiments, the film proved to be a hit with audiences

6 THE GOLDEN AGE

1955-1969: The period of unprecedented vitality and commercial success



LATE 1950s

Period of revival, overcoming post-war chaos and paving way for golden age of cinema in 1960s

- **Significant growth**, putting out foundations for current film industry
- Despite turbulence after liberation from Japan (1910-1945) and Korean War (1950-1953), **quality and quantity increased rapidly**
  - 18 films (1954) to 111 films (1959)
  - Tax exemption to attempt rejuvenation

Film industry started to flourish from **public interest**

- Covering **wide-scale genres**: Actions, Melodrama, Comedy, Crime thrillers and Period films.
- Most films made for mass entertainment
- Adoption of modern elements and more varied stories

CHUNGMURO ERA



- Films in the late 1950s: "Madame Freedom" & "Chun-Hyang Story" spurred a great cinematic boom

Chungmuro, Seoul

- Small neighbourhood in northern Seoul housed multiplying number of film companies
- Home to first movie theatres in Korea, such as Dansunga
- By the end of 1950s, more than 17 film companies gathered in 3rd street of Chungmuro Road.

CHUNGMURO ERA





Madame Freedom (1956)

- Director: Han Hyung-Mo
- Women in the movie reflect social changes in the phenomenon of 'liberal women'
- Modernisation as a result of massive consumption of US culture
- Drew more than 150k female movie-goers in their 30s and 40s just in Seoul

Chun Hyang Jeon (1955)

- Director: Lee Gyu Hwan
- He wrote the script during the war
- The film drew 180,000 viewers in Seoul setting a new box office record (about 10% of Seoul's population)
- Opened genre of historical films and set a foundation for the revival of the industry

RISE OF DIFFERENT GENRES

1. PERIOD FILMS

- 16 of 30 films produced in 1956 were period dramas
- Focus on life story of characters than historical stories



King Gojong and Martyr An-Jung Geun (1959)



The Flower of Relief (1956)



A Sad Story of Danjong (1956)

RISE OF DIFFERENT GENRES

2. COMEDY FILMS

- Most notable genre
- Portray everyday life of era with satire and humor
- Appealed to greater public, unaccustomed to free expression



Hyperbolae of Youth (1956)



Three Brides (1959)

RISE OF DIFFERENT GENRES

3. CRIME THRILLERS



The Hand of Destiny (1954)
First spy thriller in Korea to incorporate elements of melodrama



The Boxes of Death (1955)
Anti-communist film and detective drama

EARLY 1960s

TEMPORARY FREEDOM

Democratic government established

- "Film ethics provisions" announced by democratic government
- Spoke of "creating ideology in line with spirit of democracy, respecting people's rights"

Success of protests changed young adults perception

- More freedom of expression for over a year
  - But the democratic mood only lasted from 19 April 1960 to 16 May 1961 due to a military coup.
- Emergence of new directors
- Production of some diverse and exciting films

DEFINING EVENT
April 19 Revolution

Student demonstration overthrowing authoritarian government of Syngman Rhee



TURNING POINT

South Korean cinema showcased key works from the 1960s.

- **First Korean auteurs** created films that were both hugely popular and cinematically daring.
- The reason behind the emergence is complex.
  - **Technological advancements** to screen colour and widescreen formats played a big part
  - Big influence from **political and social factors**

DEFINING EVENT
April 19 Revolution

Student demonstration overthrowing authoritarian government of Syngman Rhee



NOTABLE FILMS IN 1960s



The Housemaid (1960)

- Explores topics of infidelity, social structure and cultural invasion of Korean society
- Birth of K-horror, erotic fantasy
- Was Bong Joon Ho's inspiration for award winning movie "Parasite" (2019)



Aimless Bullet (1961)

- Discusses the pain and despair caused by the war and Korea's industrial development, downfall of Korean masculinity and a struggling nation caught in a neo-imperial relationship with US

MID 1960s

Influence of foreign films

Foreign films were exhibited for 2 or 3 times more than Korean films

- Outperformed domestic films
- **Increase popularity in Hong Kong Martial Art Films and James Bond action films**
- Strong competition among registered producers to import
- Audience for foreign films left local films in the shade





THE MILITARY REGIME

Park Chung Hee's government (1961-1979)

Military coup in May 1961

- Growing propaganda in films
  - Film industry reduced to status of a propaganda factory

- Creation of Ministry of Public Information (MPI), National Film Production Centre (NFPC) & Motion Picture Law (MPL)
  - Systematised administrative control over film production, distribution and exhibition
  - Consolidated number of film production companies from 76 to 16 in 1961

MPI: Tasked to administer NFPC and MPL, coordinate films, print and radio broadcasting media campaigns

NFPC: Produce newsreels and cultural films (문화영화)
+ Distributed through commercial cinemas



DOMESTIC FILMS IN 1960s

Themes: War Films, Family comedy, Youth-Oriented dramas, Action Movies



Barefooted Youth (1964)

- Directed by Kim Ki Duk

"Adolescent films"

- Highlights Korea's stark class division and generation gap.
- Events portrayed hardly seem controversial but struggled to get a release.
- Rumoured that Park Chung Hee watched the film's final edit and approved for release.
  - Indication of constraints placed on Korean filmmakers
  - But, still huge commercial success.



Red Muffler (1964)
Propaganda War Movie



Flame in the Valley (1967)
Indirectly portrayed damage wrought by war.
Anti-communist message woven into story.
Common in the 1960s.



Mist (1967)
Stands out among the decade's work for its aesthetic achievement.
People cast off tradition to look for new paths.
Theme of self-development and pursuit of personal fulfilment.
Directed by Kim Soo-yong, shooting 10 features in 1967 alone

3 THE DARK ERA

1970-1988: Harsh censorship and Chun's 3S policies

한국영화

1970s

DECLINE IN FILM PRODUCTION

Darkest period of Korean cinematic history in volume and quality

- **Television as new means of entertainment**: distribution rate skyrocketed to 89.1% in 1969
- Park Chung Hee **revised the Motion Picture Law** and film policies for more asserted control
  - Further strengthened censorship measures under Yushin System
  - Film scenarios returned for revision shot up to 58% in 1975, rate of rejection reaching 80%
  - Directors are given little artistic freedom. Limited genres and styles for emphasised promotion of government policy

Increase of "apolitical, escapist genre films eg. martial/action arts films, melodramas/government propaganda films"

DIRECTOR HA GIL JONG (하길종)

- One of the few film directors of 1970s who **constantly countered against Park Chung Hee's military dictatorship**
  - His works "The Pollen of Flowers" (1972) and "Fidelity" (1973) were censored heavily and boycotted by the government for his **politically critical tone**
  - His misfortune portrays the reality of Korean cinema in the 1970s
  - Tough productions and rejection remain testimony to the stringency of Park Chung Hee's regime
- Notable for artistic engagement with global film/aesthetic movements of the era
- Labelled as a 'martyr' of the tragic times.



Ha Gil Jong (1941-1979)

NOTABLE FILMS IN 1970s



Pollen (1972)
Film reads as an attempt to depict the true, ugly face of authoritarianism.



The Insect Woman (1972)
Paradoxical states that defies realist representation or critical distance prefers direct somatic response and full ambivalence.
Modernization forced upon South Koreans by PCH's dictators.



Rainy Days (1979)
Anti communist viewpoint.
Deals with the Korean war and the ideological division that left scars in Korean psyche for subsequent generations.

EARLY 1980s

Park Chung Hee's assasination

Led to a power vacuum, causing political and social instability.

Nationwide demonstrations for reforms (eg. end of martial law, human rights, freedom of press) occurred over the next few months in 1980 after military coup by Chun Doo-hwan.

Martial law was extended to the whole nation on 17/5/80, then met with student protests in Gwangju.

Seoul Spring

Short period of democratisation from late 70s to early 80s.

Films that discussed banned themes were produced.

A Fine, Windy Day (Lee Chang Ho, 1980)
Pursuit of Death (Im Kwon Taek, 1980)
The Last Witness (Lee Doo Yong, 1980)

The short "Seoul Spring" ended with military coup.

Chun's cultural policies

Chun's government reduced many restrictions from previous Park's government (eg. broadcast censorship) and implemented the "3S policy: Sex, Screen and Sports".

This was an attempt to distract the public from a harsh reality of low pay, authoritarian political rule and limited democracy.

NOTABLE FILMS IN 1981 (SEOUL SPRING)



A Fine, Windy Day
Makes satire of the South Korean society through the tiring daily lives and friendship of 3 young men from the countryside in Seoul.

Reflects the emotional drained sentiments due to strong and rapid industrial development in the 70s.



Pursuit of Death
Reflects the futility of ideology (through NK partisan and SK policeman chasing each other for 30 yrs) and values in humanity.

Im Kwon Taek was finally able to stop producing anti-communist films to prove his ideological innocence (due to familial ties).



The Last Witness
Portrayed South Korea was the more powerful state in the power struggle and tragedy of the Korean War.

3S POLICY: SEX, SCREEN, SPORTS

PROMOTION OF FILM INDUSTRY WITH NUDITY

While films with political messages were censored, but nudity and sex scenes were condoned and encouraged.

- **Hostess melodramas of the 1970s gave way to eroticism**, which was a **commercial breakthrough** for South Korea cinema which suffered from a recession in 1970s.
- The proportion of erotic films increased from 40% (1970s) to 55% (1980s).
- Erotic movies (both modern and traditional) were the most produced genre in Korea during the 1980s.



Madame Aema (1982)



Eoh Wu Dong (1985)



Prostitution (1988)

Symbolic Directors emerging in the 1980s



Lee Chang Ho
15 films

A Fine, Windy Day (1980)
Declaration of Idiot (1983)
Between the Knees (1984)
Lee Chang Ho's Baseball Team (1986)
T Bird (1987)
The Man with Three Coffins (1987)



Bae Chang Ho
11 films

Purple in the Rain (1982)
The Flower of the Equator (1983)
Whale Hunting (1984)
Seoul Blue Night (1985)
Hwang Jin-Yi (1986)
Sweet Days of our Youth (1987)



Lee Doo Yong
19 films

Three Women Under the Umbrella (1980)
The Last Witness (1980)
Day and Night (1984)
The Wall (1985)
Mulberry (1986)
Ruach (1986)

KOREAN NEW WAVE

1988-1997: National Cinema Movement, Rising investment in cultural industries, Influx of Foreign Films, IMF

1980s

National Cinema Movement / Minjok Younghwa

- Rise of 'Cinephilia' culture
  - **"underground" viewing practises** of foreign films due to government censorship in early 1980s
  - Interested in arthouse, experimental and auteur films
- New Wave films were largely defined by their **outright criticism of real social problems** of South Korean society and political history
  - Drawing references from 3rd cinema
  - Modelled after problems like demand for democracy and the belief in reform (cf. Gwangju Uprising and 1987 Movement)
- Socially realistic portrayal of lives, with themes revolving around social-economic issues (eg. poverty, class, cultural practises)



INFLUX OF FOREIGN FILMS

US Pressure to open up Korean manufacturing sector

After the 1985 and 1986 revision of the Motion Picture Law,

- Permit system that required government approval to establish a production company was abolished
- Import of foreign films were liberalised
- Major US studios (Twentieth Century Fox, United International Pictures) could directly distribute their films into local market from 1988-1993

Why did Korea allow this?

- Lead-up to the 1988 Seoul Olympics
- President Roh Tae Woo also wanted to maintain trade status with US → agreed to MPEA demands

What happened?

- Market Share: 39.9% (1983) to 20.2% (1989)
- Top Grossing Films of 1980s: 925K (The Killing Fields) vs 495K (Deep Blue Night)





RISING INVESTMENTS IN CULTURAL SECTOR

Changes in government attitudes

- Both Roh Tae Woo and Kim Young Sam saw the potential of cultural products (films, music and gaming) → **enhance economic growth** and **revitalise Korea's electronics and IT industries**
- Censorship was greatly reduced more during Kim's government
  - 1st civilian government in 30 years
  - Increased film budgets, provided tax breaks
  - Rapid increase in cultural products that could publicly criticized political corruption and social injustice in Korea
- Thus, Korean film industry could enjoy more freedom to establish production companies and independent film productions were activiated



RISING INVESTMENTS IN CULTURAL SECTOR

Chaebol's investment

- Chaebols involved in **VCR production** ventured into the film industry as distributors
  - Distribution rights to Hollywood films were extremely expensive and Hollywood Studios usually produce and distribute their own films
  - Eager to produce content for their VCR hardwares, secure distribution rights to video films
  - Saw the feasibility of using film as a tool to boost popularity of their hardware
- Produced **"concept films"** which were genre-specific, commercial films that targeted the masses
  - Easy to produce, high and fast profits



Marriage Story (1992)
Investor: Samsung Entertainment Group
Production Company: Shinclne Communications

Film was developed based on intensive market surveys conducted on newly weds; topped the box office upon release.

NOTABLE FILMS IN 1980-1990s



Seoul Jesus (1986)
Makes satire of the South Korean society and mental trauma from previous military regime



Chilsu Mansu (1988)
Released 7 mths after end of Chun's regime.
Reflects political climate and frustrations felt by the working class (lack of understanding from authoritarian rule)



Sopyonje (1993)
Korean classic film about music, family, and ambition. A love letter to Korean people, to not pressure children to fulfill parent's ambition, also to preserve Korean old traditions unconditionally.



City of the Rising Sun (1999)
Represents the lost generation in Korean society, discusses how greed, love and pride (something they are trying to figure out themselves) will break their friendship

1997

IMF Crisis

- Kim Dae Jung's government had to take radical and painful economic measures to save Korea from the financial crisis
  - 43 films released in 1998 during the IMF restructuring program; lowest recorded number since 1957
  - Made many chaebols to offload their film subsidiaries

- Changing mentalities as a result of IMF, a devastating financial crisis
  - Pessimism prevailed among the minjung and the economic effects of the crisis-psychologically damaged society
  - Shifted viewer preferences from grand narratives to smaller stories with deep connections to the current milieu



Peppermint Candy (1999)
Parallels the analysis of the human condition against cruel stages of industrialized life (cf. falling economic state of south korea in the 80s and 90s)

RENAISSANCE

1998-present: South Korea's cinema in global context

NOTABLE FILMS IN EARLY 2000s



The Host (2004)
Widely acclaimed Bong Joon Ho movie that contains the use of CGI



Joint Security Area (2000)
Discusses the NK-SK relationship, where politics is mixed with humanity and friendship.



My Sassy Girl (2001)
Tits away from the mainstream patriarchal relationships; contains misogynistic undertones and romanticized violent and physically abusive relationships dressed as a joke



A Tale of Two Sisters (2003)
Dysfunctional family structure with a blend of horror/thriller. Especially poignant after the IMF crisis where the labour market were reorganised, which led to a collapse of the traditional family structure

Mid 2000s

STAGNATION

- Inflated actor salaries and fixation of casting big stars resulted in the **decrease in quality** of Korean films
- **Reduction in screen quota**
  - 2006: 146 days reduced to 73 days a year
  - Free Trade Agreement between South Korea and USA
  - Market share of foreign films: 36.2% (2006) to 53.4% (2010)



Haeundae (2009)



Speedy Scandal (2008)

2010s

RESURGENCE

- Better quality and wide range of genres films were produced
  - An attempt to attract local and international audience again
  - Touches on **unconventional subjects and uniquely Korean themes** that Hollywood movies could not offer
  - Themes: revisiting South Korean history, war, societal issues, sci-fi, family
- 2014: continued to perform well
  - >100M viewers for the third consecutive year
  - Annual admissions per capita of 4.19 (2nd highest globally)

- Important Note: **still dependent on the type of president in power** at that point in time
  - Park Geun Hye: conversative, rise of patriotic-oriented films
  - Moon Jae In: liberal, human-rights lawyer, left-leaning films that speaks about South Korea's fractured political past

POLITICAL SPECTRUM OF FILMS





Park Geun Hye (2013-2017)
Patriotic films, South Korea superiority





Moon Jae In (2017-2022)
Demonise previous conservative government (particularly military rule in 1970-1980) + humanise NK that transcends Korean division

NOTABLE FILMS IN 2010s



The Handmaiden (2016)
Combines elements of art-house, mainstream, and exploitation/cult

Present messages regarding society and humans through violence, eroticism, extreme scripts



A Taxi Driver (2017)
Real life story that happened during the Gwangju Uprising 1980, first few movies aired after the ban on making films regarding democratic protests were lifted



Parasite (2019)
Sociological storytelling and a surrealist commentary on the current consumerist society that we live in.

1st non-english film to win Best Picture awards at Oscars



Minari (2021)
Tells the experience of immigrant families in the 1980s

Q1. What was true for the 1920s?

1. The Japanese banned and restricted foreign films, promoting Japanese propaganda
2. The Japanese Military fully suppressed Korea's cultural and artistic activities
3. It was the First Golden Age with production of domestic films and distribution of foreign films
4. Korean filmmakers shot sound films

Q2 What did Syngman Rhee do in the 1950s in an attempt to rejuvenate the film industry?

1. He loosened the censorship
2. He invested a lot of funds in the film industry
3. He exempted the country's film industry from taxation
4. He set up initiatives to help korean producers

Q3 Why did the film industry stagnate in the mid 2000s?

1. Inflated actor salaries and fixation of casting big stars resulted in the decrease in quality of Korean films.
2. Koreans preferred to watch K-dramas.
3. Censorship was enacted via the 2000 Motion Picture Law.
4. There were scandals between many Korean stars.


THE POLITICAL IMPACT ON SOUTH KOREAN CINEMA
THE POLITICAL IMPACT ON SOUTH KOREAN CINEMA

Korea-Singapore Relations

Toh Peiyun, Eugene Cheung, Glenn Chong, Jamie Loh



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01 INTRODUCTION

HISTORY AND NATIONHOOD

South Korea



- Once unified with North Korea
- Separation was due to presence of ideological differences between the occupying powers in the Cold War, and the Korean War
- First Republic began in 1948, with the election of President Syngman Rhee

Singapore



- Once a state of Malaysia from 1963-1965
- Separation from Malaysia was due to political and economical differences
- Declared independence on 9 August 1965
- Economic miracle after separation under the PM Lee's government

02 NORTH KOREA-SINGAPORE RELATIONS

POLITICAL

Diplomatic relations were established on 8 Nov 1975



- North Korea maintains an embassy in Singapore
- Singapore has no diplomatic representation in North Korea

Suspended trade relations since 2017 due to UN sanctions



Panama Canal Incident

- Singapore-based Chinpo Shipping Company fined in violation of UN-led sanctions for facilitating a shipment of arms from Cuba to North Korea in 2016



North Korea's nuclear tests

- After the country's sixth nuclear test, UN imposed further sanctions on North Korea, leading Singapore to officially suspend trade relations
- All work permits of North Koreans were also revoked in 2018

Trump-Kim Summit

Historic event hosted by Singapore

Apart from Singapore's security and neutrality, a long history of friendly relations between Singapore's government and both the Kim family regime and the US were main reasons for the selection of Singapore



ECONOMIC RELATIONS

Business exchanges and training programs

Chosun Exchange

조선교류 CHOSON EXCHANGE

- Singapore-based NGO
- Focuses on supporting entrepreneurship in North Korea
- Training programs on economic policy, entrepreneurship, and law

Singapore Business Federation

- Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to allow for and facilitate business exchanges with North Korea in 2008

SINGAPORE BUSINESS FEDERATION
Apex Business Chamber

SOCIAL

Tourism, medical trips, and Singaporean influence

Visa-free Travel for North Koreans

- North Koreans could enter Singapore visa-free till mid 2016
- Singaporeans required a visa after obtaining authorization from the North Korean government
- Elite North Koreans occasionally travel to Singapore for medical treatment



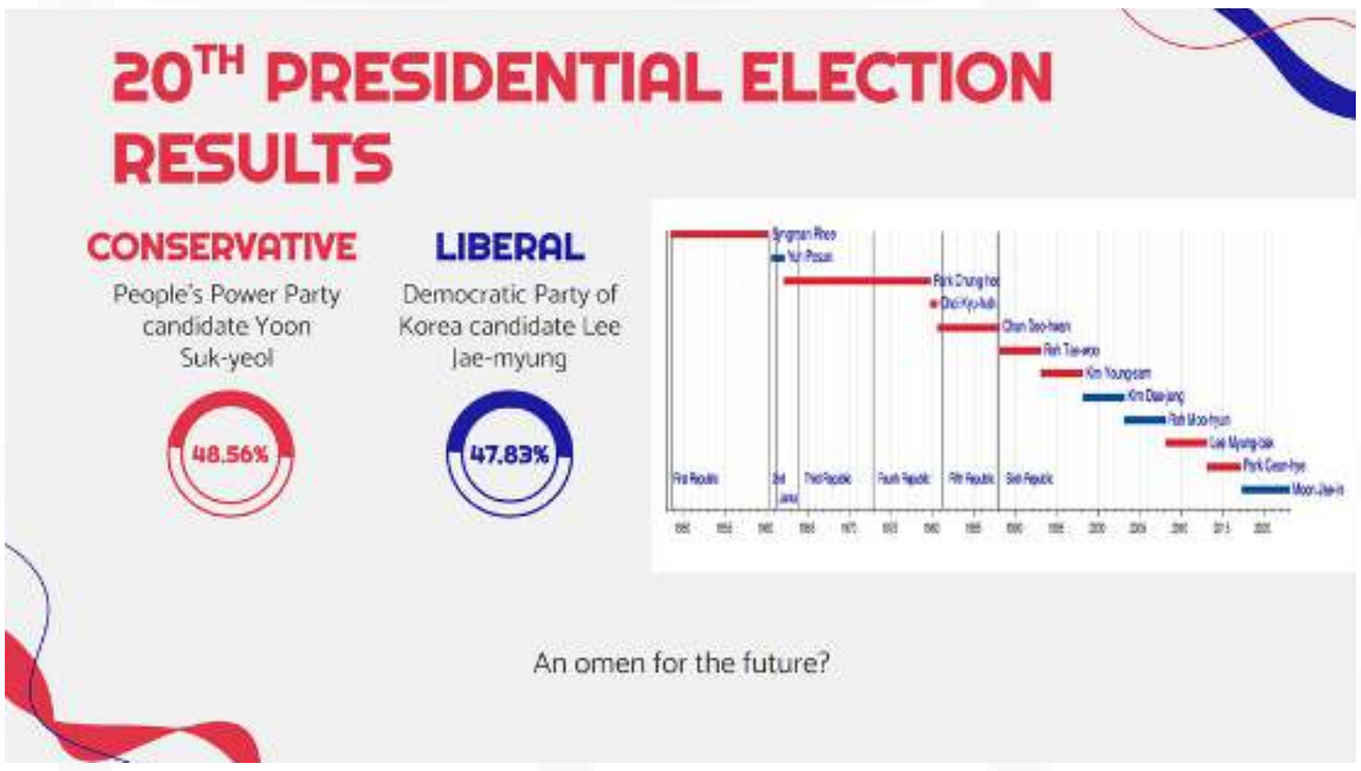
Singaporean influence in Korean consumption

- Imported beer, soft drinks, and other processed foods from Singapore
- Supermarkets and fast food restaurants set up by Singaporean businessmen




03
SOUTH KOREAN - SINGAPOREAN POLITICS


South Korea's Political Landscape
Run under a semi-presidential system
Had a recent presidential election in 2022 to decide who the 20th president of the 6th republic of South Korea will be
Elections are continuously rife with scandals
2018 Moon Jae-in was charged with online opinion rigging
2016 Park Geun-hye who has been accused of favoritism and being influenced by a defunct religious group


20TH PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION RESULTS
CONSERVATIVE
People's Power Party candidate Yoon Suk-yeol
48.56%
LIBERAL
Democratic Party of Korea candidate Lee Jae-myung
47.83%
An omen for the future?


54 YEARS
Were led by conservative right-wing parties
16 YEARS
Were led by Liberal left-wing parties

PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION SIGNIFICANCE

YOUTH

The swing in confidence is largely influenced by the distraught youths of korea

UNREST

Large part of the korean population were unimpressed with Moon Jae-in's efforts

PROBLEMS

Increased house prices, widening income gaps, lack of job opportunities

SINGAPOREAN POLITICAL LANDSCAPE

SYSTEM

1

Unitary Parliamentary Democracy

BRANCHES

2

Legislature, Executive, Judiciary



UNCHANGING

4

Not a "One-party" state but...

BIG PLAYERS

3

People's Action Party and Workers Party

SINGAPORE'S POLITICAL HISTORY

Since Independence

Led entirely by the dominant PAP with one of PAP's most dominant win being 93 seats in parliament

Stability

Singapore to date has had only 3 prime ministers, again all from PAP

Opposition

The opposition has mainly been sidelined with WP only gaining more prominence in recent years

Elections

Voting for opposition is seen more of a protest against PAP than supporting the opposition

SOUTH KOREA AND SINGAPORE

POLITICAL TIES:	• More than 45 years of bilateral relations with each other • Frequent high-level exchanges with regards to economy, culture, tourism and security
AGREEMENTS:	• Singapore and Korea were one of the first few countries to establish a vaccinated travel lane with each other • KFTSA – Korea-Singapore Free Trade Agreement which is an economical agreement • Digital Partnership Agreement has recently been agreed between the two countries
FUTURE OUTLOOK:	• Actively looking for medical, biotech, smart cities and cyber security agreements • Looking to make both countries pioneers of the technological world

SAME BUT DIFFERENT

It is said that the exceptionally strong ties between the two countries can be mainly due to the similarities of the difficulties each country has faced, albeit in slightly different contexts


3B
ECONOMIC RELATIONS
$9.66 billion
Exportation from Singapore to South Korea
$11 billion
Exportation from South Korea to Singapore
MAIN PRODUCTS EXPORTED BY EACH COUNTRY
Integrated Circuits
Photolab Equipment
Machinery
Integrated Circuits
Refined Petroleum
Passenger and Cargo Ships
Main exports from Singapore to South Korea
Main exports from South Korea to Singapore

KOREA-SINGAPORE FREE TRADE AGREEMENT (KSFTA)

PROPOSAL — NOV 2000

First proposed when President Kim Dae Jung visited Singapore and met PM Goh Chok Tong

INVESTIGATION — 2002

Official inauguration of a joint study group to investigate feasibility of FTA

CONFIRMATION — 4 AUG 2005

KSFTA was officially signed

IMPLEMENTATION — 2 MAR 2006

Came into force and was Korea's first free trade with an Asian country

AIMS OF KSFTA

- REDUCE TARIFFS
- SAFEGUARD MARKET
- PROTECT INVESTORS

BENEFITS OF KSFTA

1. **TRADE IN GOODS**
   75% of SG's domestic export to ROK enjoy immediate tariff eliminations
2. **REDUCTION OF TECHNICAL BARRIERS**
   Avoidance of testing duplication, reduces costs and cuts down time to market for businesses
3. **TRADE IN SERVICES**
   SG's service industries have enhanced access to ROK services market in areas such as Education, Logistics and Environmental Sciences
4. **INVESTMENT PROTECTION**
   SG's suppliers will be given non-discriminatory treatment when bidding for ROK's government procurement tenders
5. **OTHERS**
   Contains cooperation initiatives in a wide range of areas such as Environment, HR Development and Intellectual Property Rights

UPCOMING COLLABORATION

HYUNDAI MOTOR GROUP INNOVATION CENTRE (HMGICS) IN SINGAPORE

- Construction is expected to be completed by end of 2022
- Sited in Jurong Innovation Centre, the facility can produce 30,000 vehicles every year by 2025
- Hope that it would open new growth areas of Singapore's economy
- Pave the way for more Korean companies to invest in Singapore





UPCOMING COLLABORATION



KOREAN-SINGAPORE DIGITAL PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT (KSDPA)

- Singapore's first digital economy agreement with an Asian country
- Recently concluded negotiations in December 2021
- Enable seamless cross-border data flows
- Build a trusted and secure digital environment for business and consumers
- Help to promote jobs and growth for SMEs by encouraging them to participate in platforms that help link them with international suppliers, buyers and other potential business partners



3C

CULTURE AND SOCIETY

In 2019, there were...



645, 728

South Koreans who visited Singapore



246, 736

Singaporeans who visited South Korea

BILATERAL TOURISM

Singapore's Korea Plaza



- Provides free info for prospective tourists
- Holds Korean cultural classes

STB X Studio Dragon





- Signed in 2020
- Three-year partnership
- Facilitates filming of K-dramas in Singapore

STB X KTO





- Signed in late 2021
- Aim: Co-promote both destinations, develop tech solutions, and boost bilateral tourism
- New cartoon/webtoon starring each board's mascot, Merly and Hojong

LIFESTYLE

K-food

- Korean restaurants, fast food chains

- Snacks and groceries
  - From 2011 to 2013, FairPrice doubled its K-food stock and Giant increased its selection by 40% -> clear increase in demand

K-beauty

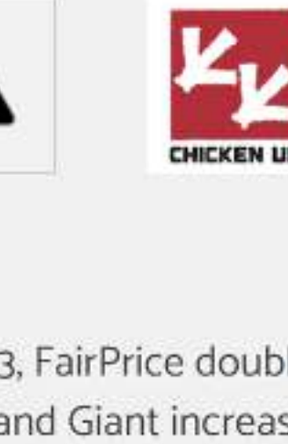
- Street beauty brands

- Luxury Korean brands, salons and beauty services

ENTERTAINMENT

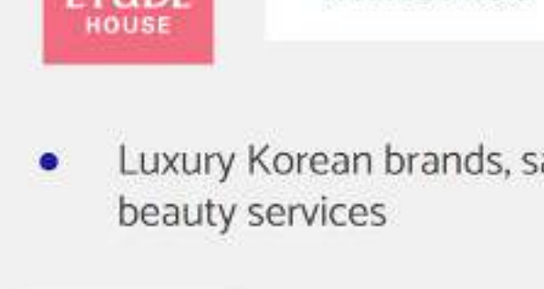
K-pop





- Singapore hosts many K-pop concerts and events
  - Music Bank 2017
  - HallyuPopFest 2018 and 2019

K-drama





- Popular dramas include *Winter Sonata*, *Stairway to Heaven*, *Jewel in the Palace*, *Boys over Flowers*
- Korean dramas dominate Netflix's weekly charts

EDUCATION

SOUTH KOREA

- Prevalence of *hagwons* or cram schools
  - School days can be very long for students
- Grades are main determinant of success
  - Rerouting of flights and traffic for *suneung*, the college entrance exams



SINGAPORE

- Reliant on private tuition, but perhaps less so than South Korea
- Less emphasis on school exams
- More ways for students to gain school admission other than via grades: Direct School Admission (DSA), qualified admissions

WORK

	South Korea	Singapore
Work hours	52 hour work week, inclusive of overtime • Originally capped at 68 hours; reduced after reforms	44 hour work week, up to 72 hours of paid overtime per month • Law does not cover managers & executives
Workplace culture	• *Gapjil* → highly hierarchical workplaces • *Hwaesik* (company drinking sessions)	• More flexibility • More reports of 'toxic' workplaces, e.g. Ubisoft, various SMEs
	Seoul is 5th most overworked city	**Singapore is 2nd most overworked city**

THE FAMILY UNIT

SIMILARITIES

- Traditionally consists of breadwinner father, stay-at-home mother, and their children
- More dual-income families today
- Ultra-low birth rates as of 2021
  - South Korea: 1.09
  - Singapore: 1.15
  - Both are amongst the lowest in the world



DIFFERENCES

South Korea:

- Confucianism as a "familial religion" (Park & Lee, 1995)
- Built on and maintained by Confucian value of filial piety

Singapore:

- Family unit is functionally built on pragmatism and public policies in Singapore, e.g. BTO system, public housing (Goh, 2018)

QUESTION 1

Which Singapore-based organisation facilitates entrepreneurship in North Korea?

- Chosun Exchange
- Chosun Economic Enterprise
- North Korean Exchange
- Singapore Business Federation

QUESTION 2

What is the name of the trade agreement between South Korea and Singapore?

- Korea-Singapore Free Trade Agreement (KSFTA
- Trans-Pacific Partnership
- STB X KTO

QUESTION 3

What is one of the upcoming economic collaboration between Singapore and South Korea?

- Hyundai Motor Group Innovation Centre (HMGICS)
- STB x Studio Dragon
- Korean-Singapore Digital Partnership Agreement
- Korea-Singapore Free Trade Agreement


Korea-Singapore Relations
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