VOLUME 3 (2022)

ENGAGING KOREA

CURRENT TRENDS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS



Student papers & presentations for CS5081: Introduction to Korea Studies

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AY 2022-2023, Semester 1

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TOURISM INDUSTRY IN SOUTH KOREA



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INTRODUCTION

Known as the “Land of the Morning Calm”, South Korea lies on the southern part of the Korean Peninsula and carries a rich history. South Korea has emerged from the shadows of their past and taken their place as one of the world’s major economic powers. Their rapid economic growth has been driven by the success of their major industries, one of which is their Tourism Industry.

South Korea is a country with dazzling landscapes and is representative of centuries-old traditions mixed into a contemporary society. The country boasts abundant tourist attractions where tourists can experience the distinctive harmony between their cultural heritage and modern culture. We shall explore some of their preserved local identities and how these cultures have brought more tourists into South Korea and strengthened their economy. We will also underline how some of their traditional identities have been cultivated into the modernised society.

In this paper, we will first explore South Korea’s festivals and traditions which introduces their deep heritage, then we will introduce their ample food cultures and how they have impacted the tourism industry. Following which we will delve into their cosmetic culture and show how they have achieved a strong market through innovative products and their medical tourism, specifically plastic surgery. Next, we will travel through their pop culture, examining the well-known Hallyu Wave’s impacts on tourism in South Korea. Finally, before we conclude, we will explain the overall impact of tourism on South Korea’s economy and environment.

Festivals and Traditions Influencing Tourism

South Korea has over 5,000 years of history and traditional festivals are an important part of their heritage. Their traditional holidays mostly follow the lunar calendar and therefore fall on different days each year from the perspective of the Western Gregorian calendar. Today, South Korea has more than 1,000 festivals every year, many of which reflect unique regional characteristics that portray their culture (Ryoo, 2018). For example, Boseong, which is a small town in South Korea known for its commercial tea industry, highlights their industry by hosting an annual green tea festival (Ladner M., 2018). Another example is the Damyang Bamboo Festival which showcases their endless forests of bamboo and other cultural sites in Damyang County (Ladner M., 2018).

Many traditional celebrations centre around myths and legends or the changing of the seasons (O'Leary, Jarman & Herz, 2019), such as the Gangneung Danoje Festival and Samjinnal. Gangneung Danoje Festival is a four-week long festival that includes a shamanistic ritual to pay tribute to the mountain deity and male and female tutelary deities (Intangible Cultural Heritage, 2008), while Samjinnal, also known as Double Third Festival, signals the beginning of spring in South Korea (Rowan, B., 2020). There are also fairly new festivals emerging for new generations to enjoy. These festivals can be categorised into arts, florae, religion, science and many more. One new festival displaying their artistic identity is the Icheon Ceramic Festival, where participants get to admire the city's well-known ceramic-making culture and try their hands on pottery. Other contemporary festivals that commemorate their flora, religion and science identities are the National Flower Mugunghwa Festival, Bodhi Day and Daejeon Science Festival.

There are countless festivals in South Korea. Some of the popular festivals in the modern day are Chuseok, Jeju Fire Festival and Jinju Namgang Yudeung Festival. For this report, we will elaborate more on the three aforementioned festivals.

Chuseok, also known as Korean Thanksgiving Day, is one of the most important festive holidays in South Korea. It takes place on the 15th day of the 8th lunar month, where it is a traditional practice for Koreans to go back to their hometown to reunite with family and friends. On this day, a full harvest moon appears in the sky and families gather to show their appreciation and gratitude to their ancestors for the plentiful harvest. They also hold memorial services called Cha-rye or visit to the family graves. Families may go on trips together or watch traditional games like Ssireum which is a folk wrestling style and a traditional national sport of Korea.
Jeju Fire Festival is a representative cultural festival to exhibit Jeju's culture of livestock care. The highlight of the festival is the burning of daljip, or "moon houses". Daljip are large bonfire structures that are made of pine tree branches and other logs. This action symbolises the villagers' prayers for good fortune and protection from evil (O'Leary, Jarman & Herz, 2019). This event also features a media facade show, torch march, fire show, fireworks, amongst many others.

The Jinju Namgang Yudeung Festival originates from the floating lanterns that were used during the Jinjuseong Fortress Battle of the Imjin War from 1592 to 1598. The floating of lanterns were used as a military strategy to prevent Japanese troops from wading the Namgang River. Now, the parade of lanterns in this festival are portrayed to carry people's wishes while floating along the Namgang River. Some other various programs in this event are the water lighting show, fireworks and cultural performances.

The number of festivals in Korea is increasing in response to the country's tourism initiatives for rapid urbanisation and economic growth (Ryoo, 2018). South Korea's festivals can influence the destination choice of tourists. In a study written by Min-Jung Oh and Timothy Jeonglyeol Lee, they investigated whether local festivals can be a tourist attraction in their own rights (Oh and Lee, 2012). They examined 17 of the 30 festivals held on Jeju Island as a case study, and identified the links between the festivals and tourists' perception of Jeju Island. They have concluded that when there is more awareness of festivals, tourists are more likely to consider those festivals as essential in their destination choice (Oh and Lee, 2012). Many tourism planners and event organisers use festivals or events to attract tourists and promote cultural tourism for a particular destination. There are also online platforms targeting tourists to discover popular attractions and experiences around the world. For instance, Klook has an article "Discover Korea through its festivals!" to increase the awareness of some festivals (Lee Yee, 2017). With rising awareness of these festivals, the tourism rate in South Korea will increase.

In addition, promotion of fairs and festivals will improve the destination image at certain locations (Chaini, S. R., 2016). Tourists can participate in the festivals in South Korea and experience their traditional cultures, handicrafts and enjoy their unique folk dances. This offers them an exclusive opportunity to understand South Korean culture and a chance to interact with the local community, gaining a deeper experience of the ambience, customs and their lifestyle. One such festival that boosted the tourism rates upon creation is the Hampyeong Butterfly Festival. Seok-hyeong Lee, the town chief, initiated the Butterfly festival in 1999 to not only promote local agricultural products by putting themselves out as a clean town where butterflies could live, but it also attracted high volumes of visitors. This festival achieved great success and reported that the 2013 festival has earned $720,000 alone in ticket sales. Hence, the Hampyeong Butterfly Festival has boosted the tourism rate in Hampyeong-gun.

There are clear benefits to hosting festivals, primarily in terms of economic and social benefits. The increasing number of visitors, job creation and underpinning economic development appear to be the main positive impacts of festivals. However, the extent of such positive impacts is disputed in relation to whether the festivals can actually attract visitors (McKercher et al., 2006) and whether the visitors are even aware of the festivals when they make their destination decision (Oh & Lee, 2012) in South Korea. In relation to the social benefits, there may be community cohesion, and greater sense of belonging and identity.

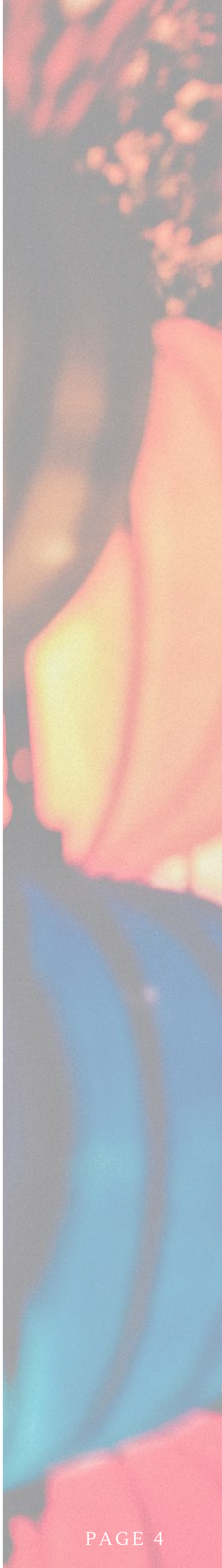
Tourism Influencing Festivals and Traditions

Each region of South Korea has its unique identity due to the difference in traditions, specialties and natural environment. To further strengthen and widely promote regional content, its local festivals are revitalised. Recently, many of the festivals combined with modern culture are gaining popularity due to the increasingly multicultural, international, yet interconnected environment (Korean Cultural Center NY, n.d.). For example, there is the Jarasum International Jazz Festival, in which world-famous jazz artists gather together to perform and express the freedom and joy of jazz.

There are festivals directed at foreigners and visitors to introduce Korean cultures and allow them to experience their culture (Kris, 2021). One such festival is the Seoul Kimchi Festival, which connects traditions and modern living through the Kimjang (making kimchi) culture and aims to be a place of harmony and sharing of Korean culture with international visitors.

South Koreans have also adopted Western clothing styles as they are easier to put on as compared to the traditional Korean garments. Hanbok, a traditional clothing in Korea, is an expensive piece of silk attire with several layers, and it also takes longer to wear. Hanboks are normally worn on Seollal (Lunar New Years) and Chuseok, but many families have gotten used to not wearing hanboks on those days (Keith, 2014) due to westernisation. Furthermore, there has been a loss of cultural value in South Korea due to commodification. Most tourists treat the renting of Hanboks and visiting famous tourist destinations and festivals as a form of leisure in modern life, rather than trying to understand or appreciate the history of the traditional costume and cultural sites. Therefore, these experiences of tourists tend to result in the loss of local culture (Hurt, 2017).

With the rising tourism rates in South Korea, their cultural sustainability is challenged. In an article by Li, X., Kim, J., & Lee, T. (2021), the authors study the significance of tourism on the cultural preservation within Jeju Island. Residents of Jeju Island highlight that while tourism may be beneficial to South Korea's economy, the influx of tourists may have intruded on their culture and caused some changes to their heritage. Based on the article, despite the Jeju Island residents having a strong sense of pride in their culture, they are not strong enough to preserve their cultural identity due to the tourism industry. It is also mentioned that the tourism industry may be affecting local traditional businesses in a bad way and there are some threats to the existence or viability of such businesses. The tourism industry, while they support the South Korean economy, may only have short-term benefits and could lead to cultural tension within the community.



Food Culture Influencing Tourism

Korean cuisine is increasingly gaining popularity around the globe, such as in the USA and East Asia. It has a unique tasting palette, mixed with spices and fermented dishes, but it turns addictive once one gets familiar with it. Since ancient times, the Koreans have believed that food and medicine share the same origin and hence perform the same function, following the saying that 'Food is the best medicine.' Thus, Korean food is a significant part of Koreans' lives and has become a class of its own where their food is mixed with chilies and ample amounts of garlic with exquisite ingredients like raw seafood and high-quality meat. It is no surprise that Korean cuisine has made a mark on the world and thus, attracted high volumes of tourists to the country through the popularity of its food.

The Koreans have a unique way of eating meals and have attracted the world's attention, leaving them curious and desiring for the same experience. A Korean meal is centered around rice (밥 bap) and soup (국 kuk) accompanied mostly with fish and meat, invariably served with a vast assortment of small side dishes (반찬 banchan). Koreans believe that health and illness alike originate from the food they consume and how they eat it.

Every component of a Korean meal has its purpose towards benefitting a Korean's health (Soon Hee Kim, 2016). Firstly, cooked rice provides calories and is the main source of energy which is why Koreans tend to eat rice during the first meal of the day - breakfast. Secondly, soup allows food to be more easily chewed and helps the rice to be swallowed easily to aid the digestive system. Thirdly, side dishes make food taste better and a comfortable stomach will ease the digestion process. In addition, they also replenish the body with plentiful amounts of nutrition. The common side dishes are usually made with namul, legumes, and fish. Also, Kimchi (김치 gimchi) is a very common side dish in Korea and is made from fermented cabbage and chilli. It is not uncommon to find Korean tourists carrying boxes of tightly packed Kimchi when travelling abroad. Lastly, the final component of a Korean meal is sauce (장 jang) which stimulates peoples' appetite whilst eating. A common Korean sauce would be Yangnyeom which includes herbs such as garlic, green onions, red pepper and onions. It does not include spices because the sauce is used to enhance flavours and increase the health benefits of the food they eat with.

The numerous delicacies created in Korea have gained the attention of food lovers around the world. Visiting Korea will allow you to explore countless locations to eat. Korean restaurants can be divided into a few categories such as Bunsik, Kogijip, Hoejip, Hansik and Department Stores. Bunsik are snack eateries that sell tasty food prepared quickly at a relatively cheap price. Kogijip, directly translated as 'meat house' is where you can find several meat dishes from grilled meat to fried chicken and Hoejip is where a fish-lover would enjoy consuming raw fish, similar to 'sashimi' in the Japanese style. More importantly, Hansik serves a full-course meal with traditional drinks such as sikhye or sujeonggwa. A Korean meal is served all at once at the table as per tradition, however today there are some Hansik that offer food served in courses (Wikivoyage, 2022).

When tourists visit Korea, they are able to enjoy different delicacies belonging to specific regions. Each region in South Korea has its own dishes unique to its climate (PBS, 2022). In the mountainous northeastern part of Korea, the most famous dishes have plenty of wild ferns and native roots in them. In the rice-growing valleys of the south, in the region of Chonju City, the best known dish is a large bowl of rice covered in a variety of finely sliced vegetables, meats, and a spicy sauce called Bibimbap. In Seoul, the prime city area of Korea, many restaurants serving traditional Korean dishes can be found. Korean street markets are one of the best places to experience modernism and tradition coexisting together. Delicacies such as Mungbean Pancakes, Korean fried chicken, Kimbap and red bean fish toast is treasured by the Koreans and is a hot-seller to tourists around the world. In Jeju Island, they are famous for the freshness of their seafood such as abalones. These are traditionally harvested by female divers called Jeju's mermaids (해녀 haenyeo) who descend up to 15 metres to collect delicacies such as octopus, sea urchins, oysters and other shellfish (UNESCO, 2016). Busan is also a place where food is highly sought after in Korea by tourists. In the past, Busan was a refugee city during the Korean war in 1950 so in order to survive, Koreans had to be creative in the same few ingredients they had to feed families (Chloe, 2019). Fortunately, they are now famous for their pork-rice soup (돼지국밥 dwaeji gukbap).

The Committee on Tourism and Competitiveness (CTC) of UNWTO defines Gastronomy Tourism as a type of tourism activity which is characterised by the visitors' experience linked with food and related products and activities while travelling (UNWTO, 2022). South Korea has experienced an increase in gastronomic tourists and thus, the government is aware of the importance of food tourism for destination management and marketing since 2012 (Chang, 2021). The Korean government pledged to globalise Korean food as one of the five major international cuisines (Korean Cuisine to the World, 2009). There were early attempts to attract gastronomic tourists by developing and promoting food-centred tourist destinations and tours through partnerships among the government, travel agencies, and businesses beyond simply promoting Korean cuisine. They have used food with a strong Korean identity and professionals in tourism and hospitality can then use cuisine to promote and market a destination (Horng and Tsai, 2010). The globalisation of Korean food was integrated into the '2010-2012 Visit Korea Year" campaign, which was launched in 2009 to attract more international tourists and create more tourism revenue over three years (Korea Tourism Organisation, 2009). These marketing strategies portray an image of Korea linked to good food. The South Korea government has decided to name this comprehensive strategy 'K-Food' and have set aside a budget for it (National Assembly Budget Office, 2012). In 2013 and 2014, the government focused on increasing awareness of Korean food by generating a small-scale international outreach and organising food fairs and exhibitions overseas (Chang, 2021). International tourists were then guided through Korea in food-themed tours by holding the K-Food Festival in Seoul in 2015. They showcased the best Korean foods, which have captivated the taste buds of prominent gourmets. Among these local foods, bibimbap is a traditional food representing the culture of Jeonju province, and has become a representative food of Korea. Korean Air's bibimbap was selected as the 'Mercury Gold Award" by the International Travel Catering Association (ITCA) in 1998, and it was the opportunity to promote bibimbap as a representative food in Korea (Soon Hee Kim, 2016).

These efforts resulted in Korea becoming a tourist destination and Korean food a destination food because more tourists, especially from China and Japan, are coming to Korea (Seo, 2015). Tourism was concentrated in the capital area of Seoul from 2015 to 2017, but visits started to disperse later on to other regions such as Busan and Jeju Island in 2018 (Chang, 2021).

It is true that Korean cuisine has attracted tourists from many parts of the world and has indeed allowed the Korean food culture to bloom in today's context. There are several ways the Korean food culture has been impacted by tourism. Firstly, Korean food culture has become more westernised than the past (Chung, 2016). Koreans may live in an apartment or Western style house and wear Western clothes but they do try to preserve their food culture by eating rice and kimchi instead of bread and meat. Overtime, their food culture did change towards being more westernised due to the influence of tourists and globalisation around the world. Inherent Korean foods are disappearing, and children refuse to eat Korean food such as kimchi which is becoming a societal problem for Korea. However, there is a saying that the Koreans strongly believe in, "body and earth cannot be separated" which means that as long as they are on the lands of Korea, they will continue to eat and behave like Koreans, just like their ancestors (Hye, 2016). This has resulted in Koreans maintaining traditions in the field of food culture, and they still maintain the standards of their traditional food while living in the coexistence of modernisation of society.

Secondly, Korean food culture has become a cultural product due to the attention it has been getting from all parts of the world. With greater tourists entering Korea, the more action the government is inclined to take to establish Korean food culture as a culture product. Through the government's initiatives to promote K-Food, they are also aware of the need to claim a firm position for Korean cuisine among advanced countries in the 21st century. This helps with the long-term survival of Korean food culture in many centuries to come. The drama "Dae Jang Keum (大長今）" showed how cooking can make a region as the grounds for sustaining our food life and most importantly, how Korean food can become globalised. With the big hit of "Dae Jang Keum", many foreign people understood Korean food and they wanted to learn more about Korean food culture. Another example would be there is growing interest in quality kimchi and traditional sauce such as soybean paste (Chung, 2016). This resulted in a boom in farm tourism with more than 2 million people a year visiting artisan sauce makers and kimchi makers to understand and to buy their food straight from the source. Therefore, one can imply that tourism has boosted the quality of Korean food culture.

Lastly, tourism has also helped remote and small-scale food restaurants maintain business. Tourists often seek places that are considered "local" and "authentic" but these are often hard to find. With the food-themed tours that the South Korea government implemented, tour operators usually seek the types of restaurants that are hidden and away from the main streets because it gives guests a sense of exclusivity (Chung, 2016). These are usually establishments that are remote and protected from the tourist trade because of location. By physically taking these tourists to these locations, it widens the available pool of restaurants. Hence, this has benefited restaurant owners which in turn, helped to keep the Korean food cuisine alive.

Cosmetics Industry in South Korea

Cosmetics Industry Influencing Tourism

In South Korea, the cosmetic industry has gained a lot of recognition and has become favoured over the years. The Korean cosmetic industry is well-known for its skincare and cosmetic products and is one of South Korea's largest sources of income and influential forces. Appearance, beauty and skincare are very important in Korean culture, which led to a reliance on beauty products and plastic surgery to help them achieve the right, or most desired, look (technavio Blog, 2020). Some of the beauty brands in South Korea include ETUDE House and Peripera, who focus on their makeup products, along with Dr Jart+ and the SAEM, who focus more on their skincare products. All of the beauty brands in South Korea share a common strength and goal when innovating products.

The cosmetic brands in South Korea all have a strong emphasis on wellness and health which brings comfort to consumers everywhere, inviting them to explore and visit Korea for their products. Their skin-first philosophy is highly welcomed by consumers all over the world as it introduces products that actively rejuvenate and care for the skin. Furthermore, South Korea's cosmetic market has opened doors to innovation and style, allowing independent cosmetic brands to gain attention and improve their products.

When the beauty products entered the cosmetic markets, they rapidly gained popularity with the innovation of unique products and "functional cosmetics" such as anti-wrinkle, elasticity boosting, sun protection or pigment fading products (Siena, B., & Claire, L., 2019). Many customers appreciate Korea's fresh and original approaches to cosmetic products. For example, South Korea invented the highly popularised "cushion compact" foundation, which gained attention because of its easy-to-apply method and its SPF ingredients. It was introduced by AmorePacific, which is South Korea's largest cosmetics company (Park, C.,2018)

With the importance of skincare in South Korean culture, consumers are also becoming highly knowledgeable and educated about the cosmetic products which pushes the cosmetic industries to continue improving their products. While South Korea continuously refines their cosmetic products, many people gradually become more attracted and influenced by their culture. Ultimately, this led to a great increase in South Korea's tourism industry as well as brought economic boon to South Korea.

Through marketing of the beauty industry, many tourists have been attracted to shopping districts in South Korea where all the different cosmetic brands can be found. The cosmetics industry is said to be years ahead of the western market, offering products that are rarely found internationally (technavio Blog, 2020). This in turn may attract consumers to South Korea in search of those products. Many of these K-Beauty brands also work with various celebrities to promote their brand, attracting fans who wish to purchase and use the products that their idols use, or even go to Korea for the events where available.

Within the cosmetic industry, we have a smaller market that has helped put South Korea on the map as one of considerable medical tourism hotspots in Asia. That is the plastic surgery market. South Korea is the 3rd largest cosmetic surgery market in the world and has the highest rate of plastic surgery procedures per person amongst the International Society of Aesthetic Plastic Surgery member nations (MTM Editorial Team, 2020).

Focusing first on their locals, we see that Koreans have a desire of changing their appearance, partly based on pre-modern Korean culture and influenced by Confucianism philosophy. The philosophy states that one should keep their body, skin and hair intact, as they were given by their parents. Another reason for the desire of changing appearances was influenced by a belief that altering one's appearance can change their destiny into a better one. Cosmetic products and surgery help both men and women with these beliefs to fit into their desired look (Siena, B., & Claire, L., 2019).

Following the "old" beliefs into a modernised contemporary society, people have come across the beauty ideal of today's society, which is highly influenced by the actors, singers and models especially through the Hallyu Wave. In Korea, many idols and actors either have to fit into beauty standards or set a new and "improved" beauty standard. Not only the Koreans, but international consumers are influenced by these standards, and as a result the number of foreigners who undergo plastic surgery by Korean doctors in China or visit Korea mainly for cosmetic surgery has been increasing.

Progressively, countless plastic surgery clinics have been marketed and advertised all over the cities of South Korea, as well as internationally. The Korean National Assembly passed an amendment to the medical law on May 1, 2009, thus providing a legal basis for hospitals to attract foreign patients from overseas countries (Eun, S. C.,2013). This has made it possible to advertise and promote hospitals for medical tourism. Thus, more clinics have been advertising their services.

The cosmetic industry, including surgery, advertises in China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Indonesia, Vietnam and Singapore. They offer various vacation packages to South Korea to promote medical tourism (Hays, J., 2021). For example, plastic surgery clinics in the Gangnam and Apgujeong areas currently provide medical tourism packages for plastic surgery for international visitors. There is a significant number of tourists that come to Seoul particularly to get cosmetic surgery. Many of them come from China and elsewhere in Asia but some also come from the U.S., Middle East and Europe and even Africa due to the attractive prices and quality of the plastic surgeries.

Research from Statista (2022) has shown that the number of medical tourists increased steadily over the years, with the help of advertisements and the boom of the Hallyu Wave. In 2019, the number of international patients who visited plastic and cosmetic surgery departments in South Korea was approximately 90.5 thousand. Compared to the start of the marketing of their cosmetic surgery in 2009 with only 3 thousand plastic surgery tourists, there was a whopping 30 times increase in a decade. After 2019, however, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the number of patients fell tremendously. In 2021, there were around 16.7 thousand foreign patients at plastic and cosmetic surgery departments in South Korea. This represents a slight increase compared to the previous year, but it is still far below pre-Covid-19 pandemic numbers.

Tourism Influencing Cosmetics Industry

Although South Korea has achieved great success and spread their skin-care philosophies and practices to a wider audience, it would not have been possible without the innovative minds being adaptive to change and modernisation. Korean beauty has managed to align itself with Western and foreign expectations. The western customers, especially those of a younger age, have taken to the concept of a beauty routine that concerns self-care and self-nature. Korean brands have been able to cultivate and invent products that are personalised to consumers which also helps them to improve and attract more people. The tailored approach of Korean beauty has enabled them to remain strong in the cosmetic markets. They market themselves by explaining the science behind their makeup and skincare products, while ensuring that they are at a more affordable price point as compared to other markets such as France (Williams, D.,2021).

While the cosmetic industry has been a strong factor in increasing tourism rates, many of the marketing strategies rely on the triumph of South Korea's Hallyu Wave. The Hallyu Wave contributed significantly to Korea's growing economy and supported the country to become one of the strongest economic powers.

Pop Culture Influencing Tourism

The pop culture in South Korea is perfectly represented by their Hallyu Wave which is also known as the Wave or Flow of Korea. It refers to the global popularity of South Korea's cultural market in exporting their entertainment, pop culture, music, television dramas and movies since the 1990s. The Hallyu Wave, or Korean Wave, was driven by the spread of Korean pop music, Korean television, which include dramas, variety and reality shows, Korean cinema and other digital content. The rise of Korean pop culture started from the cultural opening by Kim Dae Jung back in 1998 and has since paved the way for an explosive growth of their popular culture especially after the release of an inspiring movie named "Swiri" in 1999.

The Hallyu Wave has established a solid foundation through popular culture and has been pushing the boundaries of its influence since the 2010s. It has brought tremendously positive outcomes to the Korean economy and their country's image in the region. An opinion survey conducted by the Korea Tourism Organisation (KTO) in 2019 found that the total Hallyu-related tourist expenditure is USD 1.1 billion and that Hallyu-related tourism made up 55.3% of all inbound tourism (Roll, M., 2021). Hallyu has supported Korean tourism by cultivating the country's image and popularising various locations within Korea through media outputs.

With a mission to embrace the Hallyu Wave, South Korea has held many cultural events to strengthen partnerships and increase tourism to Korea. For example, the Korea Tourism Organisation (KTO) hosted a series of events themed Discover Your Korea at New York City which treated New Yorkers to Korea's diverse culture through introducing Korean temple food, Korean pop music, Korean Beauty, Korean Drama and Taekwondo performances. The country has also appointed various celebrities such as Lee Jong Suk, Yoona from Girls' Generation, EXO and BTS to be tourism ambassadors. They released a series of promotional videos and activities to charm fans and people into visiting Korea. Other tourism promotions include international music festivals, which aim to bring their Korean artists and culture to other countries. An example of this festival is the KCON which is held annually. The convention aims to expand South Korean culture through popular performances and smaller events like workshops on Korean food and beauty.

As the Hallyu Wave gained attention, people from many countries have been flocking to Korea to experience Korean culture first hand. KTO has also provided many packages and tours which include visits to shooting locations, small towns and resorts made famous through Korean cinemas and television series. Some of these locations include the beautiful Nami Island renowned through the Korean drama Winter Sonata, and the alluring 500-year old tree from Extraordinary Attorney Woo which brought attention to a small rural town in Korea called Dongbu (Travel Weekly, 2022). All of the promotional activities, marketing and advertisements have widely impacted the inbound tourism rates in South Korea.

In 2019, Korea earned approximately USD 21.5 billion from tourism, attracting a total of 17.5 million tourists. With South Korea's international tourism on a steady rise, the growth is expected to reach an annualised rate of 3.3% and the government is planning to raise its tourism revenues to USD 35 billion per year by 2030 (Roll, M., 2021).

Tourism Influencing Pop Culture

The Hallyu Wave has brought waves of tourists to Korea. However, as the Hallyu culture grows and spreads across different international audiences, South Korea has to adapt to this influx of international tourists according to their preferences. According to Statista's survey, they found that many of the foreign tourists came from Indonesia, the Philippines, Japan, Singapore, Malaysia, the United Kingdom, Taiwan, Germany and Hong Kong (Statista, 2022a). Hallyu tourism programs focus on active and experiential components. Hallyu tourists are also more motivated than other types of tourists in the pursuit of social interaction and belonging through unique programs (Lee & Bai, 2016). As the Hallyu tourism program works to fulfil tourist needs, the foreigners are more likely to revisit and suggest South Korea as a travel destination (Lim, 2020).

From the Statista's survey mentioned earlier, we see that many of the tourists come from different countries and different communities. While Hallyu continues to evolve, the South Korean government also seeks to diversify the inbound tourism market and Hallyu experiences to create a sustainable environment. They have implemented an initiative that is seeking to attract more Muslim tourists. The initiative recognises the rise and growth of Hallyu in the Middle East, and executed a government led campaign named "Muslim-Friendly Korea" in 2017. Since the launch of this campaign, there have been an increase in the number of Halal restaurants, prayer rooms and Muslim-friengly events have been established and available to and for visitors from Islamic countries (Hur & Kim, 2020).

South Korea's tourism market is working to reach out to more diverse cultures and foreigners by offering them a place that provides them a taste of the Hallyu culture while simultaneously ensuring their comfort and respecting the different communities' own cultures.

Economy and Environment

Tourism impact on South Korea's Economy

Without tourism, South Korea's thriving economy would not be flourishing like it is today. South Korea has a GDP of US$1.8 trillion in 2021 (The World Bank, 2021) and is expected to increase with the rising numbers of domestic and international travellers after the relaxation of Covid-19 measures. Tourism is expected to contribute at least 146 trillion KRW to the economy (Statista, 2022). There are many different types of tourists that visit South Korea, notably medical tourists and recreational tourists. International visit arrivals increased by 15.1% to 15.3 million in 2018 - with a wide demographic of travellers, majority of which are Japanese or Chinese residents that generated 50.4% of total international arrivals to Korea (OECD, 2020; Statista, 2018a). This increase in tourist volumes from China and Japan saw large expenditure growth of 14.6%.

South Korea's fabulous displays of festivals, popularity of Korean pop culture and the lure of Korean food and cosmetics demonstrates their ability in attracting more and more tourists each year. In 2019, Seoul was ranked 23rd most popular city to visit in the world, with more than 9.11 million tourists grossing US$25.46 billion in tourist receipts (World Data, 2020).

International visit arrivals increased by 15.1% in 2018 which helped tourism contributed 85.64 trillion KRW, which accounted for 4.7% of South Korea's GDP in 2018 (OECD, 2020), and is projected to grow at an average rate of 4.8% annually from 2022 to 2032 (World Travel and Tourism Council, 2021).

The tourism industry alone managed to newly open 33,089 tourism-related establishments in 2017 and even support 1.4 million jobs in 2018 using the revenue collected from tourism-related expenditures. The World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) even predicts in their 2021 Economic Impact Report that tourism in South Korea will continue to create 49,000 new jobs per annum. More notably, international companies are starting to recognise the value of South Korea's tourism industry and have been expanding investments into multi-purpose malls and resorts (Invest Korea, 2019).

Another huge contributor is revenue from medical tourism - where the number of foreign patients steadily increased from 60,000 to a peak of 497,000 in 2019. And as of 2018, South Korea's medical tourism industry was valued at US$655 million, second to just the United States (Statista, 2018b). On average, inbound medical tourists would spend US$6,800 in South Korea on cosmetic procedures (Statista, 2020a). Medical tourism not only attracted more people into South Korea but also helped create more jobs in the hospitality and medical departments (Medical Avenue, 2020).

However, the emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic early 2020 imposed crippling lockdown measures that restricted domestic travels and stopped all non-essential international flights into South Korea - which unfortunately included recreational travels. Tourism receipts fell drastically from 1.5 million visitors in December 2019 to 61,000 by July 2020. This resulted in a sharp decline in GDP from 4.4% in 2019 to 2.4% in 2020. 84,000 tourism-related jobs were cut and a 80% drop in hotel occupancy saw a loss of 492.4 billion KRW in just 2020 alone (Digi & Tacuban, 2021). The impact of Covid-19 really amplified the significance of tourism revenue on South Korea's economy.

In the pre-pandemic years, the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism (MCST) worked in tandem with the Korea Tourism Organisation (KTO) to ensure that revenue gained from tourism is used to invest in tourism infrastructure and promotion. However, the South Korean government had to find a way to kickstart the economy after the pandemic. Under the Tourism Promotion and Development Fund Act, MCST invested US$82.24 million in unsecured loans to relieve the losses on the tourism industry (Digi & Tacuban, 2021). In addition, the South Korean government tried to incentivise domestic travels by distributing vacation coupons. KTO has also launched a partnership with Singapore Tourism Board (STB) to co-promote South Korea and Singapore as tourist destinations through promotional videos and supporting tourism start-ups (Singapore Tourism Board, 2021). As South Korea slowly eased pandemic restrictions, they allowed vaccinated travellers from Singapore to enter without quarantine under a Vaccinated Travel Lane. These steps taken are ways that the South Korean government can help revitalise tourism again, and maybe aid tourism revenue to soar beyond its numbers before the pandemic.

Tourism impact on South Korea's Environment

Unfortunately, the increasing popularity of South Korea as a tourist destination meant greater waste and carbon emissions. A study has shown that tourists, who believed that their visits to South Korea were temporary, were either unaware or dismissed their harmful behaviour while on vacation (Kim et al., 2017). There is a positive correlation between increase in tourism and volume of waste generated in South Korea (Statistica, 2020b). And given the popularity of the cosmetic industry in Korea, more and more innovative products are made and released in order to retain their high number of tourists that visit for cosmetic retail. So there is increasing demand for sustainable tourism. About 20% of plastic waste in South Korea comes from the consumption of hygiene products and packaging. Hence, as part of South Korea's "Less Plastic" campaign, cosmetic companies are adopting more biodegradable materials and less plastic in their packaging not only to alleviate some of the impacts of consumerism, but also to promote sustainable products for the long-run. The actions of these companies serve as a role-model for other industries to follow suit in order for South Korea to reduce the negative environmental impacts that comes with tourism. Studies have shown that younger tourists are more inclined to be environmentally sustainable while travelling when exposed to pro-environmental products and activities (Han et al., 2018), so continued efforts to promote eco-friendly products and activities could change the mindsets of tourists in the long-term.

AmorePacific is South Korea's leading cosmetic company, responsible for 29 brands (ITA, 2022). They aim to reduce the harmful environmental impacts of their corporate activities by changing certain production practices. AmorePacific has several initiatives that led to a great decrease in plastic waste. For example, AmorePacific funded research into biodegradable disposable cosmetic applicators more in-store makeup tests that utilised paper or plant-based materials to replace one-time use plastic. They have also conducted recycling campaigns that reward customers when they return their used bottles to be recycled into new products. As a result, they have successfully reduced plastic usage by 159 tonnes in 2019 and plan to reduce plastic waste by 700 tonnes by 2022 (AmorePacific, 2019). This is a great initiative taken up by them to shift their focus to sustainability with the increased demand for tourist consumption.

KTO has introduced and promoted agritourism villages and tours as part of their Cooperative Green Tour Action Plan in 2004 (Choo & Jamal, 2009). Tours had activities such as recycled art projects that used as much recyclable or biodegradable materials to promote the idea of sustainable tourism (Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, 2021) - to raise awareness of the detrimental environmental impacts tourists may impose and encourage them to make more informed decisions when they travel.

Sustainability should also be more widely adopted by the food and beverage (F&B) industry. As of 2021, food packaging accounts for 78% of plastic waste in South Korea (Statista, 2021) and more could be done by F&B establishments to relieve the harmful environmental impacts. The South Korean government could also look into subsidies for companies that make an effort to be more sustainable. This can encourage production companies to reduce waste and tourism companies to create and promote more sustainable tour programmes.

CONCLUSION

The tourism industry has deeply impacted South Korea's economy and strengthened their position as one of the greatest economic powers. We have looked into the different cultures and rich heritage that South Korea has protected throughout centuries till this day. Their festivals, traditions and food cultures will remain embraced and respected for years to come as they all hold meaning and understanding of South Korea's history. Their cosmetics and pop cultures show a great improvement of their country and how they have embraced change and worked to make it one of their greatest strengths.

Through the influence of tourism and globalisation, South Korea has enriched their cultures and economy. The influx of tourists due to their critical innovative mindset and constantly growing industries have given them many opportunities to tailor their market approaches to the future, while maintaining their unique traditions. They have managed to influence tourists' choices and have allowed tourists to influence their own innovations which makes them a strong economy. South Korea is truly a country that managed to grow by creating a wondrous harmony between the past and present.

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SOUTH KOREA'S TOURISM



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INTRODUCTION TO KOREAN TOURISM

South Korea, officially known as the Republic of Korea (ROK), and often referred to as ‘Korea’. It is a country in East Asia with over 51 million citizens residing in a land area of 97,230 km2. Due to rapid expansion from the 1970s, Korea is now one of the world’s 15th largest economies and Asia's fifth largest economy (Ceoworld, 2022). Following the liberalisation of foreign travel in 1988 and cultural opening in 1998, tourism in Korea grew significantly over the decades and has since become a significant driver of Korea’s economic growth (OECD, 2020).

Overview of South Korea's Tourism

The number of foreigners who visited Korea increased 7.9% annually on average from 2010 to 2019 (Statista, 2022)1. In 2019, Korea welcomed 17.50 million visitors, the highest on record in the last decade, which generated a revenue of 21.6 billion USD (UNWTO, 2020)2. Although visitor arrivals in Korea showed an overall growth since 2000, the COVID-19 outbreak in 2020 caused the number of visitors to fall by more than 85%, to an all-time low of 2.5 million in 20 years. This number further plummeted to 967,000 in 2021 (Statista, 2022). Post border-reopening in 2022, Korea’s tourism rebounded, with 308,000 visitors in August 2022 CEIC, 2022). In the 2021 Travel & Tourism Development Index by World Economic Forum, South Korea ranked 15th in global scale and 4th in Asia, behind Japan, Singapore and China(WEF, 2022).

South Korea's Largest Tourism Markets

China, Japan, Taiwan and the United States (US) comprise the largest markets for Korea's inbound tourism (Korea Tourism Organisation, n.d.). Additionally, based on an international study conducted by the Korean Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism (MCST)and the Korea Tourism Organization (KTO), Southeast Asian countries including Vietnam, Thailand, Indonesia and the Philippines reflected high favourability for Korea as a tourist destination (2020). The OECD reports that China has consistently been South Korea's largest tourism source, peaking in 2016 and accounting for 46.8% of South Korea's total visitor volume, while Japan and Taiwan comprise the second and third largest visitor flows respectively (2022). However, tourists from China declined by 22.7% in 2017 due to the intercountry political disputes revolving around the THAAD Defence systems (Statista, 2022).

South Korea's International Events

1988 Seoul Olympic Games

Korea first came into the international gaze as a tourist destination in the advent of the 1988 Seoul Olympic Games. Historically, this marked a major turning point in the perception of Korea's modernisation and transformation. The Olympics highlighted Korea as a flourishing country, against the prior associations of the international and domestic political turmoils from the Korean War and democratic conflicts. Inspired by Japan's similar strategy of utilising "Sports Mega-Events" (Cho & Bairner, 2012), the 1988 Olympics allowed Korea to leverage positive associations from their mass popular appeal and international significance (Grix et al., 2021).

In addition to its impact on soft power and political impacts, the Seoul Olympics provided strong economic opportunities, wherein the country reaped benefits of 300 million USD of profits and large foreign investments (Bridges, 2008).

2002 Fifa World Cup

More than a decade later, South Korea welcomed its second major event by co-hosting the 2002 FIFA World Cup, further boosting the nation's national image and soft power. Marking the first event hosted by Asian countries, the historic event provided substantial economic benefits to South Korea post Asian Financial Crisis of 1997 (Kim et al., 2006). Spending from World Cup tourists totalled to US$307 million in direct income and US$713 million in value added for South Korea (Yeong, 2020).

Korean Tourism Organisation (KTO)

Established in 1962, the KTO has been responsible for marketing and promoting Korea domestically and internationally as a world-class travel destination. It provides a central role in South Korea's tourism and provides valuable information about touring in Korea. Currently, the organisation has 8 offices outside of Korea, in countries such as the USA, England and Singapore. KTO focuses on 4 core values: Diverse, Vibrant, Creative and Intriguing, reinforcing the organisational purpose of "advancing tourism as a key driver for national economic growth and enhancing national welfare".

South Korea's Climate

South Korea has a temperate climate with four distinct seasons. Temperatures are the hottest in August and can go up to 31°C, while the coldest period is during January with temperatures as low as -8°C. Spring and autumn have mild and pleasant temperatures, making them the most comfortable seasons to visit South Korea. (Trip Report, n.d.)

International Airports

There are three international airports in South Korea, making the nation a global hub.

Incheon International Airport (ICN)

The primary, busiest and largest airport is Incheon International Airport, serving over 80 local and international airlines. It has consistently been ranked in the Top 10 World's Best Airport, with its highest ranking being 1st in 2009 and 2012 (Skytrax, 2022).

Gimpo International Airport (GMP)

Gimpo International Airport was converted into a largely domestic airport after the opening of ICN in 2001. It carries most of South Korea's domestic flight traffic while also offering international travels to neighbouring cities such as Tokyo, Shanghai and Taipei.

Jeju International Airport (CJU)

Jeju International Airport is the largest gateway of Jeju Island. Originally established in 1942 as a military facility, it reopened as an international airport in 1968. The airport focuses on domestic flights to 14 major cities in Korea and services international flights to Japan, China, Singapore and more. Not only is it popular with domestic travellers, it also attracts overseas visitors by millions each year. This is further justified by CJU-GMP clinching the 2021 world's busiest domestic air route (OAG,2022).

Transportation

Korea boasts an effective and extensive network transport system nationwide, with inter-state and inter-city methods of transportation. Namely, there are trains, city buses, taxis that enable accessibility and convenience for locals and tourists.

Subways

Seoul Metropolitan Subway is a metropolitan railway system consisting of 23 lines. Consistently voted as one of the best in the world for its ease, cleanliness, and frequency (VisitSeoul.Net, n.d.), the Seoul subway system serves the majority of the Seoul Metropolitan area including the Incheon and Gyeonggi province. Subways are also available in four other major cities: Busan, Daegu, Gwangju and Daejeon, and is considered as the most convenient and favourable means to travel in Korea.

City Buses

City buses are also a great way to commute, with special colours or numbers to designate each route (Appendix F). Blue buses travel on major roads and run for relatively long distances through Seoul; green buses travel shorter distances and carry travellers between transfer points such as subway stations and longer bus routes; red buses are express buses that travel from Seoul to suburban areas and yellow buses operate on a closed circuit within a district of Seoul.

Taxis

Other means of commuting include taxis that are classified into Standard, Electric, Deluxe and Jumbo. South Korea also offers International taxis where drivers can speak one or more foreign languages such as English, Japanese and Chines

Taxis

Citizens and tourists can also travel conveniently between cities by the Korea Train Xpress (KTX), Intercity Train Xpress (ITX)-Saemaeul and Mugunghwa; and KORAIL tourist trains. The KTX can travel up to 421 km/h and reach as far as Yeosu and Changwon on the southern coast. For affordable travel around Korea, tourists can consider buying the KORAIL Pass, an exclusive railway pass for foreigners that allows unlimited use of all trains, includingthe KTX, for a selected number of days.

Factors Contributing to the Rise in Korea as a Tourism Destination

Food, Nature, Shopping, historical & cultural and fashion & trends are key reasons why tourists travel to Korea.

Korean Wave

Development of the Korean Wave has given rise to ‘Hallyu tourism’ where the number of inbound tourists visiting Korea and Hallyu tourist attractions due to the influence of this Korean wave, is increasing rapidly (Bae, 2017). As a result of the Korean Wave, Korean pop culture, films, attractions, Arts & cultural activities, food and K-beauty are also becoming more popular. This leads to K-pop concerts, shopping, language training and cultural tourism through visits to Korea.

Korean Pop Culture

The wave brought Hallyu stars, which include Korean actors, pop-stars and athletes, to a world platform, and their popularity became an effective and profitable method to attract tourists. Coupled with K-pop, K-dramas have led to a growing interest in Korean culture, shaping a preference for other Korean products such as food, fashion, and cosmetics (Sung, S. Y., 2008). Examples include Korea tourism officials posting a guide to the real Gangnam after Korean singer Psy’s ‘Gangnam Style’ became Youtube’s most viewed video of all time in 2012, (Clampet, 2013). According to ‘Business Insider’, BTS increased South Korea’s popularity, contributing to a surge in tourism. With such success and exposure, it has raised the global recognition of Korean artists and furthered interests in Korean pop culture. The Korea Culture and Tourism Institute estimated an economic ripple effect of USD$550-989 million for each BTS concert held domestically, post-pandemic, encompassing concert tickets, planned product sales, tourism consumption expenditures, transport costs, and lodging (Allkpop, 2022). In addition, BTS has been credited for 7.6% of inbound tourism, as a 2018 report cites 796,000 foreigners visiting South Korea annually for BTS (Lee, 2018).

To further leverage on the popularity of K-pop idols and given that Hallyu tourists are more motivated than other types of tourists in the pursuit of social interaction, belongingness and self-actualization through special activities (Lee & Bai, 2016), a “Hallyu experience program” was introduced, providing tourists with the opportunity to be actively engaged in the activities through a museum tour of SM Town – a top four entertainment company. In addition, tourists can also meet their favourite Hallyu stars by visiting Seoul weekly updates “the Hallyu Star Schedule” on its website (Hur & Kim, 2020).

Tourism induced by pop-culture, hereafter pop-culture tourism, has emerged among people in particular who are fanatics of pop-culture. They travel to destinations mainly driven by pop-culture or creative elements through the media such as movies, TV shows, soap operas, music, celebrities, games, and animations (Lee & Bai, 2016; Miller & Washington, 2007; Seaton & Yamamura, 2015). The development of technology and global media convergence have given rise to greater exposure to international pop-culture, transcending geographic boundaries, cultural differences and linguistic barriers (Cho, 2005).

Recommendations from relatives and friends who had lived in or travelled to the desired destinations were the most trusted offline sources of information. South Korean travellers also relied on brochures from travel agents or tour operators, followed by travel guidebooks. Travel magazines were less trusted because they were perceived to contain sponsored articles. South Korean celebrities and key opinion leaders (KOLs) have also played an important role in raising awareness of or inspiring visits to travel destinations (STB Market Insights, 2015)

Korean Films

As part of the Korean wave phenomenon, ‘film-induced tourism’ has also contributed to the rise in Korea's tourism. Film tourism refers to “the growing interest and demand for locations which became popular due to their appearance in films and television” (Tomala & Faber, 2011). Hallyu, especially Korean TV dramas and movies, has caused plenty of economic and socio-cultural changes. Yu et al. (2012) said that Hallyu affected the tourism trend to Korea of people coming from neighbouring Asian countries. Film is successful as a medium for tourism, especially when the storyline and site are closely interrelated, and involves the audience in the story giving them an emotional experience, which they link with the location. Repeat viewing gives further exposure resulting in greater familiarity, attachment and identification, all of which may result in a desire to visit looking for the sites, people, experiences and fantasies portrayed by the film (Tooke and Baker, 1996).

According to a study conducted, character fantasy, relaxation and romance, and vicarious experiences are the strongest determinants in inducing more travel to film destinations in Korea. (ResearchGate, 2019). To evaluate the relationship between dramas, movies and the travel-decision making process, the level of exposure illustrated by the frequency of watching TV dramas or movies and the level of affinity also play important roles. According to a study conducted, it was observed that respondents who have a higher level of affinity with Korean dramas and movies will be more likely to visit Korea. This means the longer the respondents are being exposed to Korean movies and TV dramas, the stronger their desire to visit4 . The motivations behind travel decisions to Korea induced by K-entertainment include were mainly due to the idea “to see the physical attributes of the filming locations” and “to be in places where my favourite characters from movies and dramas have been” (Huyen Minh An Pham, 2022).

This can be further supported by the significant growth in the number of Asian tourists travelling to Korea to see the filming locations (Kim, 2007). ‘Winter Sonata,’ one of South Korea's most popular television series, is a pioneer in this type of tourism. Nami Island5 from this show became a popular tourist attraction, recording over 270,000 tourists in 2005 (Han, H. J. et al., 2008). Moreover, a KTO survey in 2004 showed that 47% of the participants travelled to Korea because of the influence of Korean dramas (Bae et al., 2017). In recent years, internationally-renowned dramas and films like “Descendants of the Sun”, “Squid Game” and “Parasite” have been notable in attracting tourism (Loh, 2020). Hallyu agencies under the umbrella of MCST have also primarily focused on promoting tourism based on Korean culture and K-Drama locations such as movie sets and television sets as tourist destinations.

The rising trend in film-induced tourism can further be seen in KTO’s collaborations with streaming platforms like Netflix, where promotional videos highlight clips of Korea’s history, food and tourist attractions depicted in films and dramas (KTO, 2020). A search category “Explore Korea” was also added to make the original contents featured in the clip accessible to its users, allowing for greater reach and exposure among international audiences.

Popular Attractions

As reported by World Tourism Organization (2016), youth travel comprises 23% of the total number of international tourists every year, showing a rapid growth of this segment in the global tourism industry, confirming that extra attention should be paid to Millennials and Generation Z. These generational cohorts are of paramount importance due to not only their large population size but also their distinctive traits (World Tourism Organization, 2018), thus studying on motivation and behaviour towards travelling of these groups is the first step for tourism providers to evaluate changes of consumer travel demand, design strategies and offers accordingly that match customer expectations and preferences (Richards & Morrill, 2020; Slivar et al., 2019) As such, we have identified several factors that attract and motivate tourists to visit Korea.

Emerging Popular Sites (Korean Wave)

Namsan Seoul Tower

The Namsan Seoul Tower6 is an attractive destination among tourists, especially for young couples. It allows visitors to admire the views of the city while providing a variety of dining options that are suitable for any travel budget. Some attractions at the Namsan Seoul Tower include the Hanbok Culture Experience Centre, the love padlocks, as well as Namsan Park. Tourists are also able to rent Hanboks in the Hanbok Culture Experience Centre and have a photoshoot at the studio in the centre itself. Under the base of the observatory tower , lovers can write their names on locks and attach them to the railings as a symbol of love. To get to Namsan Seoul Tower, tourists can choose between taking a cable car up or the two kilometre trekking route at Namsan Park, climbing multiple flights of stairs to reach the base of the observatory tower that stands at nearly 480 metres above sea level. Namsan Park is also often visited by nature lovers as it offers picturesque landscapes, botanical gardens, and other exercise facilities.

K-Culture Valley

In a bid to attract more foreign tourists, the Korean government is working on building the country's first K-pop theme park in northern Seoul7. The concerts-only complex, Seoul Arena, slated to open between 2023-2024, is set to include a vast range of entertainment facilities including movie galleries, film studios and shopping complexes. In addition to this, a Korean-Wave themed complex in Gyeonggi Province is in development. "K-Culture Valley Arena" integrates music and entertainment with commercial facilities, to create a one-stop destination for Hallyu tourists (Gyeonggi Provincial Government, 2021).

K-Culture Valley

Shopping is a common and fundamental tourist activity both from the tourist's perspective and for the chosen destination (Jin et al., 2017). It is one of the most important activities for tourists (Yu and Littrell, 2003; Lloyd et al., 2011; Albayrak et al., 2016). In many cases, shopping is an important factor in the choice of destination (Moscardo, 2004) and in others, it may be the main reason for travelling (Timothy, 2005; Lehto et al., 2014). In the case of Korea, it is the world's 12th best shopping destination in 2013 (Kim, 2014). Examples of shopping districts include Myeong-dong shopping district, Gangnam Coex luxury mall and Itaewon market. Notably, these destinations offer unique cultural exports. Korea-exclusive or competitively-priced products from homegrown brands like Kakao Friends, Gentle Monster, and Innisfree have also given rise to increased tourism to the nation.

Vacation Sites

Leisure has always served as one of the primary motivations for travelling, as tourists seek enjoyable activities in places outside of their homes. Besides leisure activities like shopping, South Korea beaches are known to attract tourism. (Dogra, 2021). Examples of popular vacation destinations in Korea include Jeju Island, known for its untapped beaches, waterfalls & cuisine. Jeju is the largest and the only self-governing island in South Korea and is acclaimed as one of the natural heritage centres. It's a hot spot for honeymooners, beach lovers or outdoor enthusiasts. With literally hundreds of flights a day from Seoul, it's actually the world's busiest air route. (Liu, 2022) Haeundae Beach, located in Busan is the most famous beach in Korea, loved by people of all ages, visited by many tourists especially during the Busan International Film festival.

Cultural Sites

Heritage tourism is another major growing segment of the tourism industry (Hollinshead, 1996). Among popular tourist attractions in South Korea, modern values are often projected onto historic cultural heritage sites, or conversely, traditional elements are added to modern spaces. They serve not only as precious cultural heritage and vibrant living spaces for Koreans but also as a starting point for foreigners to visit Korea (About Korea, n.d.). Examples of popular historical and cultural attractions in Korea include Gyeongbokgung Palace, Panmunjeom, Bukchon Hanok Village, Gamcheon Culture Village, etc

Five Grand Palaces

Gyeongbokgung Palace was the first and largest of the royal palaces built during the Joseon Dynasty. Built in 1395, Gyeongbokgung Palace was located at the heart of the newly appointed capital of Seoul (then known as Hanyang) and represented the sovereignty of the Joseon Dynasty. The largest of the Five Grand Palaces (the others being Gyeonghuigung Palace, Deoksugung Palace, Changgyeonggung Palace, Changdeokgung Palace), Gyeongbokgung served as the main palace of the Joseon Dynasty.(Gyeongbokgung Palace, n.d.)

Security themed tourism

One of the last vestiges of the Cold War, the Demilitarized Zone is often described as the world's most heavily fortified border. The historical significance of the DMZ was reported to attract 1.2 million visitors annually. (Lee Sun-Young, 2019) Panmunjeom is located in the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ), 50km north of Seoul, where the Armistice Agreement was signed on July 27, 1953. Panmunjeom is within the Joint Security Area (JSA) secured by UN and North Korean military and is beyond the jurisdiction of North and South Korea. As Panmunjeom is located within the Civilian Control Zone, many international visitors seek to tour the area through tour agencies administered by the UN. Moreover, the Hallyu effect has led to a ripple effect in heritage site interest, with Panmunjeom and the JSA increasing in popularity post-release of the film "Joint Security Area". Now, Panmunjeom is one of the most visited tourist sites of the DMZ. (Sun-Young, 2019)

Culture and Arts

Other than the frequently heard term, "Hallyu Tourism", culture and arts have always been a big part of Korea's rich history. Since prehistoric times, Korea has cultivated a unique culture based on their remarkable artistic sensibility.

Korea's rich cultural history stems way back to the Three Kingdoms Era, and some examples of Korea's cultural forms include music, art, literature, dance architecture etc. Currently, Korea's Culture and Arts has found its way to tourists worldwide attracting them to various festivals and experiences unique to Korea.

Korean Festivals

Muju Firefly

The annual Muju Firefly Festival takes place every fall in Muju County, South Korea. The main highlights are the fireflies which light up the night sky. It showcases the beauty of South Korea's untouched nature and wilderness and would definitely be a go to location for any nature loving tourists. Other than enjoying the natural fireflies, there are also hands-on activities like catching local trouts in the river and having it with specialties like local wines and teas.

Yeon Deung Hoe Festival

Boryeong Mud Festival is one of South Korea's wildest festivals and has been held annually ever since 1998. The origin of the festival started out as a means to promote Boryeong's mud based-products which were used heavily in the cosmetic market. The mud from Boryeong has been known to have beneficial nutrients with healing and anti-aging properties in them, which has led many tourists to go there annually to celebrate the month-long festival.

Ever since the first Boryeong Mud Festival that was held in 1998, the festival has almost tripled in size with over 2 million people worldwide coming to pay a visit to this unique festival. The Festival is not only popular with foreigners, even locals of all ages and counties come together to bathe in the nutrient rich muds. Other than immersing in mud, tourists can also enjoy live music concerts, rave parties and even a world skin beauty pageant. According to statistics from the 2019 mud festival, the total number of foreigners that participated in the event came up to 380,000, with a total of 1.8 million participants that year (Lee, 2022).

Gyeongju Cherry Blossom Festival

The Gyeongju Cherry Blossom Festival is held annually in the historical city of Gyeongju and happens from late March to early April. Much like Korea's neighbor, Japan, many tourists and locals get to enjoy an annual festival that offers both beautiful pink cherry blossoms with a taste of arts and culture. During spring time, in Gyeongju, the ancient capital of Korea under the Shilla dynasty is one of the biggest historical sites in Korea, with the marvelous view of cherry blossoms in full bloom near Bomun Lake and Gyeongju historic UNESCO area. Other than the sight of cherry blossoms offered at Gyeongju, there are many other community events and activities such as orchestra, busking performances and even a Cherry Blossom Marathon.

Boryeong Mud Festival

The Yeon Deung Hoe Festival or also known as Lotus Lantern Festival is an annual event that celebrates the birth of Buddha. The festival originated from the Shilla dynasty and the traditional festival is celebrated by thousands regardless of nationality or religion. In 2020, the festival was even inscribed on UNESCO's list of Intangible Cultural Heritages of Humanity. The festival is spread across several days with various activities that take place in downtown Seoul and around the main Buddhist temple - Jogyesa Temple and Bongeunsa Temple. Lanterns would be showcased all over the city, and around the various buddhist temples in Korea. The main highlight of the festival is the traditional Lantern Parade that takes place late in the evening, starting from Dongguk University and finishing at Gwanghwamun Square. In 2018 before the pandemic, there were around 300,000 native koreans and 50,000 foreign visitors at the festival (Gale, 2019).

Ritual

Royal Ancestral Ritual

The Royal Ancestral RItual held annually on the first sunday of May is in the Jongmyo Shrine. This ritual is performed to honour the deceased Joseon kings and the queens that ruled over Korea in 1392. The ritual was the most important state ceremony as it helped to maintain the social order and encouraged solidarity. The unique feature about this ritual is that the order of the ceremony was planned out in the 15th century and after many years, in the 21st century, most elements of the ritual remained unchanged. The dance portion of the ritual is performed by 64 dancers in exactly 8 lines which represents the opposing yet complementary forces of Yin and Yang. The dances were accompanied by traditional instruments like the gongs, bells, lutes, zithers and flutes.

Gangneung Danoje Festival

The Gangneung Danoje Festival first originated in 1975 and it rserves to preserve the folk culture of the Joseon dynasty, it was later designated a Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Hertiage of Humanity by UNESCO in 2005. The event takes place in the town of gangneung and it is surrounded by Mountain Range of the Korean Peninsula. Though it is a festival, there many different types of rituals performed during this festival that makes it attractive to locals around Korea. One of the unique features of the festival is the coexistence of Confucian, shamanistic and Buddhist Rituals which might be the reason that it is able to attract locals from all parts of Korea. These rituals are performed to the deities which protect the region, however, it is believed by folks that the rituals bring about natural disaster immunity, allowing residents to live in peace and prosperity. Some examples of the rituals and activities that are present is the making of Danoje Fans, brewing the sacred liquor, drawing masks for the Gwanno Mask Drama, washing hair in iris water, etc.

Korean Food

Korean cuisine offers some of the most diverse food ranging from seafood pancakes, bulgogi, fish cake stews and the well known kimchi. As such many tourist come to Korea not only to explore the scenic places, but to experience a term called “Culinary Tourism”. This term have several other form such as food tourism or gastronomy tourism. It is where tourists visits a foreign country and explores the different kinds of local foods in that country as their main form of tourism. As such, the Korean government has initiated food-tourism intensive strategies such as “K-Food” in order to draw in more tourist to Korea.

Gwangjang Market

Gwangjang market is a century old market that started out in 1910s where it survived through the Japanese colonial rule of the Korean Peninsula and also the Korean war in the 1950s. Now the market is located in the capital of Korea, Seoul and it is one of the most popular destination for locals and tourists. The market boasts a figure of approximately 65,000 visitors per day (Yun, 2018). The name Gwangjang means “To gather from afar and keep altogether”, which resembles how the market has many different kinds of goods for sale and that locals and foreigners both visit the market. As mentioned, the market sells a variety of goods and groceries but the most popular section is the food street section selling many popular local street foods.

The market was even once hosted on the Netflix TV show “Street Food: Asia” where the producers of the show visited Gwangjang Market to try out the popular Korean handmade noodle made by Cho Yonsoon. The show managed to garner the attention of many aboard with how simple the dishes were and the cheerful personality of Ms Cho, this led to many tourists specifically coming down to Gwangjang market just to get their hands on the food featured on the TV show. On the other hand, there has been local TV shows like “Running Man” that featured the local street foods that can be found in Gwangjang market. The episode that aired showed the cast going around the market to try out the street food from different stores. Some examples of the dishes tried were hotteoks, fish cake soups, mung bean pancakes and even dishes like live octopus. The episode managed to attract locals from other parts of Korea just to try out the foods featured on the TV show. Thus, Gwangjang market is seen as an important part of Korea's food culture as it not only helps to increase the tourism of Korea overseas but also
locally.

Governmental Efforts

Apart from TV shows and places that help boost food tourism in Korea, the government has also made efforts to help in this sector. One strategy that the Korea government has been enforcing is increasing the popularity of the nation’s food among people from around the world. The Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs have been organising food tour programmes for Koreans and non-Koreans to cook and taste their iconic dishes. One example of this is the making of kimchi. The government has also started a K-Food Road initiative where they would promote Korean food by issuing free coupons to overseas residents, allowing them to eat at Korean restaurants for free in their own country.

Due to the Korean Wave, Seoul, the capital city of South Korea, became a global icon of fashion, beauty and culture. Fashion that was closely related to Hallyu idols, served as a promotional image of South Korea. So much so that many Hallyu fans began visiting Korea to look like their favourite pop stars or Hallyu stars. And because of that aspiration, medical tourism, particularly cosmetic surgery and the cosmetics industry were also directly affected by the Korean Wave. Many Hallyu fans have also thus visited Korea to get plastic surgery to look like their idols. (Dobo Shim, 2011)

K-Fashion

Gangnam-gu in Seoul, which is well known across the world after “Gangnam Style,” is a large district where wealthy residential areas sit alongside high-end art facilities and the busiest fashion streets. This special fashion zone attracts numerous fashion minded tourists from around the world with special fashion events by inviting global designers and holding contests for emerging talents to show their designs (About Korea, n.d.).

Another fashion district in Seoul that enjoys an international reputation is Dongdaemun-gu, now a hub of the regional fashion industry, which provides creative, affordable fashion items for youngsters. With its fully developed distribution and sales networks, highly efficient production facilities, and a throng of talented, aspiring designers, this district is now a must-visit attraction in Seoul for foreign tourists. (About Korea, n.d.)

Fashion events also attract foreign tourist. “Next Fashion 2022” is Korea’s 1st fashion festival, co-hosted by the Seoul Metropolitan Government and the rising fashion unicorn company Musinsa at the Family Yard and outdoor stage of Seoul Forest Park. At this festival, tourists will be able to see the paradigm of Korea’s fashion industry that the world is paying attention to and the new next-generation brands that’ll lead the Korean fashion industry going forward. (The Official Travel Guide to Seoul, n.d.)

Medical Tourism

Within the term health tourism, there are several sub categories such as physical healing, beauty treatments, relaxation rest, psychological and spiritual etc (Smith & Puczko, 2009). Korea is known for medical tourism as its general hospitals' transplants, robotic surgeries, and endoscopic operations have best-in-class quality compared to other medical tourist destinations. In particular, Korea's cancer survival rate is more than double the average among OECD countries, thereby boasting a world-class standard. The Korean Tourism Organization (KTO) clearly states on its website that medical costs in Korea remain at a fraction of the prices in the United States and even cheaper than those in Japan and Singapore. (BI | About KTO | KTO Overview, n.d.)

In addition, Korea being a highly image conscious society with a booming beauty industry, emerged as a global cosmetic hotspot. The Korean pop culture phenomenon, or the Korean Wave, has been also partly attributable to the growing visits by foreigners wanting to receive cosmetic surgery in Korea as they aspire for the physical perfection of Korean singers and actors. Nearly 50,000 foreigners have come to South Korea for a beauty makeover last year, spending 215 billion won ($188.3 million) and making the plastic surgery sector the country's most lucrative revenue source from medical tourists. (쨍, n.d.)

In 2021, around 26.4 percent of foreigners who came to South Korea as medical tourists received medical treatments at departments of internal medicine. This was followed by medical examination centres and plastic surgery departments, with 10.1 percent and 9.2 percent of foreign patients respectively (Statista, 2022).

Cosmetics

As stimulated by K-pop media (drama, music, and film), K-pop culture boosts the sale of Korean products as tourists are inspired to purchase products promoted by celebrities and destinations featured in media (Kim, 2012). As many of these music and TV celebrities are employed as ambassadors for cosmetics companies, brands benefit from the relevancy associated with Korean pop-culture. As the top 10 beauty markets in the world, many tourists are inclined to purchase cosmetics products. Cheaper prices, authentication, exclusive fan-meetings further encourage purchase of products directly from Korea. Known for its booming beauty industry,many tourists would travel to Korea to purchase their cosmetics.

IMPACTS

Economic Impact

In 2018, South Korea's tourism sector accounted for 4.7% of the overall GDP (OECD, 2022). This number is expected to double by 2028. Tourism undoubtedly brought plenty of business and employment opportunities to the country and is estimated to support 1.4 million jobs, representing 5.3% of total employment (Statista, 2021). Furthermore, it also improved the overall quality of life of its citizens as more people were employed and had stable incomes. This was reflected in South Korea's solid expenditure growth, with a 14.6% increase in international visitor expenditure and a total of KRW 16.7 trillion (WTTC, 2022). According to the latest report published by World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC), the growth of tourism will also outpace the overall growth of the national economy. This will likely boost the sector's contribution to nearly ₩116.9 trillion, representing 4.6% of the total economy. WTTC also predicts that the tourism sector will create nearly half a million jobs annually for the next decade, reaching to a total of 1.8 million jobs created by 2032. Thus, the tourism sector has great potential for South Korea's future economic growth.

Environmental Impact

Tourism has positive and negative impacts on the host country. Positive ones include incentive factors or benefits such as the preservation of historic sites, higher quality of roads, facilities and infrastructure. Negative impacts include the destruction of natural resources, pollution deterioration of custom or heritage resources and changes in community appearance (Nelson, 2021). For instance, Jeju Island, a previously rural area a decade ago, saw gentrification spikes from increased tourist interest in the area. While this led to a rise in improved housing and business opportunities, locals also reported a rise in negative environmental costs such as littering (Nelson, 2021). Lingering impacts of littering and "environmental devastation" (Watson, 2022) were observed from mounting litter across the island and notably, the plastic-ingestion related deaths of 6 sea turtles on the island (Han and Ella, 2021). Resultantly, projects like Save Jeju Bada came about to encourage visitors to preserve Jeju by promotion of clean-up campaigns.

Social Impact

Tourism increases cost of living because of the rising property and land prices and has pushed residents out of their homes due to higher property values (Kim, 2020). The case study of Woljeongri Beach in Jeju Island depicts heightened tourism visibility, compounded by social media's effects. A seafront cafe gained popularity on social media and created a snowball effect by enabling other restaurants and similar cafes to follow their business model and leverage on the popularity. Residents of Woljeong were offered significantly more money for their farmland in order to replace their land with Airbnbs and locations for tourists, which consequently increased prices in other economic areas and this is widely happening in the rural areas of Korea. Another social impact would be the tourist visits disturbing local residents (Kim, 2020). The Ihwa Mural Village case study shows that the noise caused by the tourist traffic is making it virtually unbearable to live in for many of its local residents. Nowadays, it is common for visitors to come across signs which are placed at almost every turn of the head, asking passer-bys to respect the residents living there and keep their volume to a minimum (Jackson, 2016). However, the signs did little to help the village residents sleep peacefully at night and until today, they are still bearing the brunt of tourism. In today's world, tourists are all looking for rural and traditional villages to observe and truly live in the atmosphere of the locals, and Airbnb made local housing available to tourists instead of hotels so they can experience the daily life there. This is the result of Korea's traditional rural neighbourhoods being largely romanticised by television dramas, films and mainstream media, portraying an unrealistic image, more appealing than what it is so that it will attract more visitors (Choi, 2021). While on one hand, it is considered good for the locals because they are more appreciated by international tourists and thus economic growth will be boosted there together with improvement in businesses. On the contrary, it is considered invasive and intrusive to the locals staying there.

Cultural Impact

The main cultural impact that tourism has on Korea would be cultural dilution. As globalisation and the Korean wave continue to advance and grow at rapid speeds, businesses in South Korea have begun to accommodate more to tourists' demand such that they cater to their taste. Goods and services, commodities and products were increasingly seen to be produced more towards their preferences and this shows that they are drifting towards foreign influence and away from local influence. This is worsened as their impression of Korea is not the actual traditional Korea, but what is being shown on television dramas and social media, in which they usually find synonymous, which leads to culture dilution (Choi, 2021). In the next example, the Gyeongbukgung Palace is also visited by many, as visitors love to try on their Hanbok and have candid pictures taken there with the traditional palace in the background. However, the tourists are doing it just for their own touristic experience and enjoyment, not to actually learn the Korean history or culture better or appreciate the origins of those traditional costumes (Choi, 2021). This exacerbates the cultural dilution effect.

COVID-19 Implications

2019 marked the year of the “new-normal”, as the world experienced a mass global pandemic in the form of COVID-19. South Korea was no exception to this – the nation saw a peak of 400,000 cases a day. Soon, curfews, temporary closures of nightlife spots, and international quarantines were implemented to curb transmissions. Coupled with international travel advisories and restrictions, this led to a drastic decline in the tourism sector’s capabilities and revenue.

COVID-19’s Impact on South Korea Tourism

South Korea’s tourism and travel industry was “severely hit” by the global coronavirus pandemic across both international and domestic demographics (Yon-Se, 2021). The rate of inbound international tourism dropped by more than 85% in 2020 and 62% in 2021 (Statista, 2021), and domestic visitor spending declined by 34%. Financially, this translates to an overall decline in the tourism sector’s contributions to the GDP across the 2019-2021 period. WWTC reports that at the height of COVID-19 in 2020, the tourism sector contributed 2.7% (₩54.2 trillion) to the South Korean GDP, a 38% fall from the pre-pandemic numbers of 4.4% (₩87.5 trillion). However, since the easing of in-bound travel restrictions, the GDP has recovered slightly to ₩55.9 trillion (WWTC, 2022). From 1st October 2022, Korea has eased PCR testing requirements for inbound travellers, enabling increased ease in travel.

As a result of heightened travel restrictions and low in-bound travel, South Korea saw the loss of 84,000 jobs in the tourism sector (WWTC, 2022). Popular travel destinations within Korea, like Myeongdong district in Seoul, saw multiple closures of occupant stores, which were attributed to the decline in tourist footfall (Jung, 2022).

Mitigation and Recovery Strategies

In the face of the decline in its tourism sector, the Korean Tourism Organisation and government have utilised a slew of tactics to revitalise tourism post-pandemic.

Untact Policy

South Korea's COVID-19 management strategies have been widely considered successful, with experts attributing this success to the nation's efficient use of technology to establish effective contact tracing systems and digital trackers. In response to the decline in tourism sector revenue and the COVID-19 pandemic, the South Korean has successfully leveraged on its "Untact" Initiative to revitalise the tourism sector (WTM Global Hub, 2020). Untact, which refers to "Undoing Contact", is a nationwide initiative with ₩9 trillion worth of government investments, that utilises new media technologies like automation and artificial intelligence (AI) to foster economic activities without direct contact, as its name suggests (Atkinson, 2022).

The South Korean government has promoted "untact" tourism activities to pair with the new "untact" infrastructure to alleviate travel concerns associated with the pandemic. Open-air sites like forests, parks and hiking trails have been increasingly spotlighted to minimise the associated risk and anxiety associated with COVID-19 transmissions and simultaneously to promote the "natural offerings" of the country (Imagine Your Korea, 2021a). In addition, hospitality sectors have been widening their "untact" offerings – like private dining rooms, buffet room service, and live chat concierge services – that cater to tourists.

Leveraging Hallyu

A series of content campaigns were released from 2021 by the KTO to promote travel to South Korea. These primarily video campaigns hinged on the nation's Hallyu effect and pop culture to highlight different regions of South Korea as travel destinations. K-hiphop and ballad artists like Big Naughty, PH-1, and Lee Hyun produced modern versions of traditional Pansori for the national "Feel The Rhythm of Korea" campaign. The series comprised cinematic shots of the featured cities like Busan, Daegu, Incheon, Mokpo and Pyeongchang (Imagine Your Korea, 2021b). In 2022, KTO released a follow-up to the series, this time featuring BTS members touring the different regions. A subsidiary channel, VISITKOREA, also released a series of long-form content featuring popular K-drama actors touring the filming locations of their respective dramas. Some highlights include Vincenzo's Kwak Dong-yeon and Hometown Cha-Cha-Cha's Lee Sang-yi.

Regionally, cities within South Korea have also sought to produce their own localised promotional material, as Seoul Tourism Organisation notably produced "EoGiYeongCha Seoul", which spotlighted Taekwondo, dance, and BTS, and raked up 83 million views on the latter. These campaigns have elicited strong favourable reviews and mass media coverage among viewers, with "Feel the Rhythm of Korea" achieving 560 million cumulative views (Spikes Asia, n.d.). In a localised study conducted to discover factors influencing intent on travel consumption post-pandemic, researchers found a positive significant relationship between mass media effects and the desire of respondents to travel, signposting the potential efficacy of such a large scale campaign. (Wang et al., 2021).

Boosting Domestic Travel

While the pandemic has led to a slowdown in international tourism to South Korea, some experts find that it may have contributed to the revitalisation of domestic tourism in South Korea. The lack of inter-country travel regulations provided accessibility to natives to discover alternate sources of travel via domestic tourism. Leveraging on this, stimulus funding and programme implementations – like district partnerships with popular tourism firms like Airbnb (Airbnb, 2020) – were directed at boosting domestic travel within South Korea. Success has been seen in the positive statistics, as local tourist visits to Jeju reached the all-time high of 6.8 million during the first quarter of 2022 (Park, 2022).

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THE KOREAN IDOL TRAINING SYSTEM



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INTRODUCTION

At the heart of the Hallyu Wave is K-pop, having grown rapidly in prominence to be part of the global culture (Romano, 2018). While K-pop has become popular around the globe with groups like BTS and Blackpink taking the world by storm, little is known about the idol training system, which is when an aspiring idol joins an entertainment company and begins his/her journey towards being a K-pop idol. In this paper, we will be going through what exactly is the idol training system in South Korea, its origins and evolutions through generations of K-pop, the pros and cons of the system, the outlook of the idol training system in South Korea, as well as comparisons with other nations who have idol training systems.

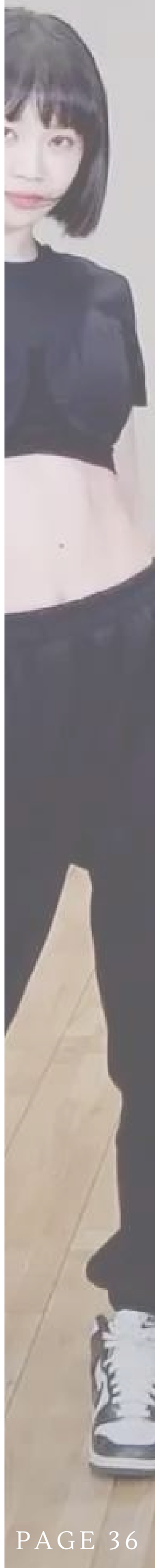
The trainee system is a boot camp-like training that has a varied duration, ranging from a few days to many years, with the average training period being 27.2 months (Statista, 2022). It is known to be extremely intense and strict, restricting all aspects of the trainee's life from their diets to their phone usage. One point to add is despite enduring all the aspects of the arduous training, debuting as an K-pop Idol is not guaranteed, with only a handful of trainees eventually debuting as an idol.

Most idols have spent the majority, if not their entire youth in this trainee system. One example is G-Dragon from Big Bang, who spent a total of 11 years training, 5 years at SM Entertainment and the other 6 years at YG entertainment (Berry, 2020). On the other hand, training periods can also be extremely short in some cases, one example being Olivia Hye from LOONA, who is considered to have had the shortest trainee period of only a day before debuting (Law, 2020).

Auditioning and Scouting

Before entering the trainee system, one would have to pass the recruitment process first, which is known to be extremely strict. Recruitment is done through mainly two methods, auditioning and scouting. Korean entertainment companies invest heavily in recruiting talent (Kim, 2022). Entertainment companies have even started hosting auditions globally, expanding their search for talents beyond Korea. However, the requirements to pass the audition are very high, resulting in constant rejections. One example is K-pop idol Rain who had to dance for 2 hours straight in order to impress his CEO (Padget, 2017). Other than the normal auditions held by companies, another recently popularised form of audition is talent shows, one example is “Superstar K”. Groups are arranged to compete with each other, with the winners being awarded with contracts with entertainment companies (Padget, 2017).

As for scouting, it refers to casting of talents off public places like schools, festivals and events. Many believe that scouting a talent who is a “good raw gemstone is half-success” (Kim, 2022). The scouting process is an important part as it expands the scope of talent search. Through scouting, companies are able to ensure that no potentially successful idol slips through their grip. Scouters have an eye for discovering talents and mainly look out for the visuals and charisma of a potential trainee. An example of successful scouting is Jungkook from BTS, who was scouted by 8 different companies (Padget, 2017).



Trainee Curriculum

Within the system, there are three main aspects: vocal and dance lessons, image maintenance, and language lessons. Strict rules apply to all aspects of the training, ensuring that the trainee would be ready to debut in their best form. Vocal and dance lessons are usually 3 hours long and can last up to 14 to 15 hours a day (Padget, 2017). When monthly evaluations are nearing, extra practice would be expected. Language lessons are also needed, especially in recent years as K-pop has become globalised. As for the maintenance of the trainee’s image, it is the strictest aspect of the training. In order to create the ideal image, trainees are restricted to extremely strict rules in all aspects of their personal lives, ranging from their diets to their social media usage.

Focusing more on the image maintenance aspect, there are 3 main areas where the trainees will be heavily monitored. These areas are their weight, their appearance, and their social media presence. With regards to their weight, trainees have to fall under a certain weight and constant weigh-ins are common. These strict requirements have led some trainees to adopt extremely unhealthy diets in order to meet the standards. The next area would be the physical attractiveness of the trainee. Plastic surgery is often encouraged in order for them to maximise their genetic potential. Even though it is often not forced upon them, the high competition amongst trainees acts as a pressure in order to stand out. The popular procedures are double eyelid surgery, nose bridge filler and v-line jaw surgery and these surgeries are often called the K-pop combo (Padget, 2017). If the trainees choose to enhance their appearance through surgery, the cost is then added to their debt. Companies will then go to great lengths to keep their procedures a secret.

As a result of the intense and strict trainee system, many skillful and successful idols have debuted. However, this trainee system has also resulted in both physical and mental health issues. Due to the immense pressure, lack of sleep and lack of proper nutrition, many trainees develop health issues in the process. Faintings are a common sight during training and the other trainees would have to carry the unwell trainee back to their dorm (BBC, 2020). Other than physical health problems, mental health issues are common too. The strict weight management has led to many trainees developing eating disorders. Moreover, the combination of busy schedules, intense pressure and their school work often cause anxiety and depression. Jo Kwon, formerly from JYP Entertainment once stated that he developed depression due to the fear of never being able to debut (Padget, 2017).

IDOL TRAINING SYSTEM THROUGH GENERATIONS OF K-POP

Birth of the K-Pop Idol Trainee System

The foundation of the K-pop idol training system in South Korea was laid by the founder of SM Entertainment, Lee Soo Man, in around 1993. The key driver of Lee's determination to set this system was the minor success of Lee's first ever artist, Hyun Jin-young. 3 years after debuting Hyun in 1990, under then SM Studio that was founded in 1989 by Lee (Shin et al., 2013), Hyun fell to stardom, following an arrest for marijuana charges (Waitt, 2014).

Learning from this experience, Lee set a new goal for himself and the company, which was to debut artists who are talented and obedient (Waitt, 2014). This marks the start of the idol training system that Lee had in mind, overlooking all aspects across the system, from auditions, to casting of trainees, actual training as well as debut. Firstly, by holding auditions not only in South Korea, but also in the United States and Japan (Deniar et al., 2019), Lee was ready to search for new talents from around the world. Next, Lee proceeded with casting, which was also done by Lee himself, who directly called former H.O.T member, Tony An, to express his willingness to sign a contract with Tony (K-Pop Evolution, 2021). Last but not least, Lee also already had in mind how training for these trainees would be carried out. It would include singing, dancing, facial expressions, public behaviour and even personality development (Deniar et al., 2019), which marks the start of the systemisation of the idea of "training", revolutionising the music industry from self-made artists to creating idols (Waitt, 2014). Furthermore, along with the changing of the name of SM Studio to SM Entertainment in 1995 (Shin et al., 2013), an in-house production system was introduced by Lee to better provide resources for trainees (Deniar et al., 2019).

The First Generation of Idols (Hallyu 1.0)

From 1996 to 2000 was the era of 1st Generation idols, which was led by several artists from SM Entertainment, who all have undergone some aspects of the training system. Year-on-year, SM Entertainment debuted H.O.T in 1996, S.E.S in 1997, Shinhwa in 1998, Fly to the Sky in 1999, and BoA in 2000 (Waitt, 2014).

However, it is noted that the specific training in place during the early phase of the training system differed between years. During H.O.T's era around 1996, Tony An shared his opinion that the training system then "wasn't that organised and vocal training didn't really exist", through YouTube Original's documentary, K-Pop Evolution (K-Pop Evolution, 2021). This can be made in comparison to the training that BoA went through, during her training period from 1998 to 2000. As BoA dropped out of school to focus on idol training, she was fully dedicated to the training system at SM Entertainment (Waitt, 2014), and hence she became a representation of the effect of the training system in place then. Additionally, not only was BoA trained in singing and dancing, she also had to study the Japanese language intensively, and was "even sent to Japan for long periods of time in order to achieve fluency through immersion in the language" (Waitt, 2014), as it would give her the edge in entering the Japanese music industry as well. BoA's fame and success, in and outside of South Korea, intensified the outlook towards the K-pop idol training system that Lee started and led to rising expectations for the quality of training provided in creating these idol stars (Waitt, 2014).

From First Generation to Second Generation Idols (Hallyu 2.0)

While BoA ventured into the Japanese music industry, SM Entertainment also opened up to the China market, holding its first international audition in Beijing, China in 2000, where SM Entertainment scouted a number of Chinese trainees, who eventually debuted in idol group, Super Junior in 2005 (Wikipedia, 2022), and were active members as Super-Junior M (M for Mandarin).

According to Kim, the next wave of Korean Popular Culture, Hallyu 2.0, was highly oriented on K-pop idols, with the rise of 2nd Generation idols, including idol groups KARA, 2PM and Big Bang (Kim, 2015). Since the 1st Generation, SM Entertainment remained a leader in continuously producing reputational idol groups, namely TVXQ in 2003, Super Junior in 2005, Girls Generation in 2007, SHINee in 2008 and F(x) in 2009 (Deniar et al., 2019). Through trials and errors in forming the training system through producing 1st Generation idols, the idol training system for this generation of idols developed and became more structured, as trainees underwent more intense and wholly training, and are assessed through periodic evaluations (Deniar et al., 2019). As such, selected trainees would be able to offer to the market and their fans a complete set of "products" (of the training system), that range from vocal and dance skills, and attractive styles (Deniar et al., 2019) once they debut. This is further reflected once the trainees debut as idols, where entertainment companies set for their idol groups a fixed concept to follow, and thus instruct and restrict the behaviour and actions of members, so as to maintain the targeted specified image (Koreaboo, 2018).

Third and Fourth Generation Idols Today (Hallyu 3.0)

The idol training system has been proven effective in producing K-pop idol stars from the success achieved by 1st Generation and 2nd Generation idols. As such, this system remains prevalent today, leading to the evolution of K-pop idol groups from 1st Generation idols in the 1990s to 4th Generation idols today. Some 3rd Generation idol groups include boy groups EXO, BTS and Seventeen (Lee et al., 2021), and girl groups Red Velvet, Twice and Blackpink (Wikipedia, 2022), while 4th Generation idol groups include ITZY, Aespa and IVE (Wikipedia, 2022).

With the rise of trainee survival programs such as the Produce Series, many trainees are exposed to the media even before debut. Some examples include then Starship Entertainment trainees, Jang Won-young and An Yu-jin's participation in Produce 48, who debuted in IVE subsequently, and then JYP Entertainment trainee, Ryu-jin participating in MixNine, followed by her debut as a member in ITZY (Koreaboo, 2021). This reflects the foundation that the structured training system lays for trainees, in preparation for a chance at debuting.

While the common aspect among these groups is that all members undergo rigorous training in their respective entertainment companies before their debut, there has been a growing trend in having at least 1 foreign member in the group. For example, Joshua in Seventeen is from the United States, Lisa in Blackpink is from Thailand, and Tzuyu in Twice is from Taiwan (Rossly, 2020). A reason for this could be the focus of Hallyu 3.0 on genre-diversification that is brand-oriented, with the ultimate goal as the expansion to the world beyond Korea (Kim, 2015). However, needless to say, even foreign trainees undergo the same intense and structured training system that any trainee goes through in order to have a chance to debut as an idol (K-Pop Evolution, 2021).

Past vs Present: Comparing Contemporary Idol Training System with the Past

Across numerous generations of K-pop, much about the industry has changed. The trainee system has adjusted accordingly, especially in relation to the economy and the exposure to the international music industry.

In this segment, we will now compare 5 main factors: dormitory conditions, no salary, encouragement of rivalry, long training hours and long contracts in present times with the past.

Past

The K-pop scene in the early years was not as successful as western pop – it had only proliferated into Asian countries in the early 2000s. According to Figure 1 (Appendix), South Korea's music industry exports only made up around 22 million USD in 2005 (Statista, 2022). Most entertainment companies were struggling financially – some went bankrupt and eventually shut down. Therefore, these companies could not afford much for decent trainee dormitories, much less giving the trainees salary. However, they were determined to push through such dire times and turn their trainees into idol stars. Hence, they designed the trainee system to be extremely competitive, on top of the already long hours. The well known 'slave contracts' were a huge part of the trainee system as well.

The dormitories were often extremely cramped with barely enough space to walk, much less store personal items and clothes. The arrangement of the dormitory bedrooms were usually bunk beds placed right beside each other, in order to capitalise on the tiny space available. Sanitation was an issue as well. Although sharing the same room could help trainees form friendships more quickly and genuinely, the lack of personal space and privacy likely negated it. Figure 2 (Appendix) shows current BTS member, RM's dorm room shared with nine other trainees back then, where they also shared all their clothes in one tiny closet (Jeong, 2021). Evidently, the living conditions were far from ideal.

Most trainees did not have a salary from these companies, but some companies did not even allow trainees to work external part-time jobs to support themselves (Tudor, 2014). However, companies do provide them with basic allowance to cover basic necessities. Different companies give out a different amount of allowance, depending on their profits.

Objectively, the K-pop trainee system is designed to be a competition to debut – the organisers did everything to make the players pit against each other. According to Ida Simmons, a trainee in 2002, their mentors would often remind the trainees that at the core of everything they go through, they are each others' competitors (Tudor, 2014). This made it difficult for trainees to form genuine friendships amongst themselves, despite training collectively but fighting for their own individual future. Putting this in the context of the physically and mentally exhausting training environment, it was overall incredibly isolating and lonely for trainees.

The long training hours took up a big part of their lives – it is not surprising that these trainees were often sleep-deprived, especially when they had to juggle between school and training. Even during the holidays, trainees would train around 12 hours a day. For trainees on the verge of debuting, training hours could go up to 20 hours per day (Jeong, 2021). On top of these already-long hours, most trainees were still driven enough to stay past training hours to practise. 2NE1's Sandara recounted that if the lesson ended at 8pm, no one left until 12 midnight because everyone would stay back to practice on their own accord (K-Pop Evolution, 2021). BTS' Ji-min also mentioned on variety show 'You Quiz on the Block' that as a trainee, he practised until 4am in the morning and woke up at 6:30am for school (Jeong, 2021). For this very same reason, most trainees and idols back then dropped out of school, putting complete faith in their abilities to go down this path and debut.

Commonly known as 'slave contracts', the terms of a trainee's contracts were usually standardised at 12 years. Undoubtedly, there had been countless uproars and criticism about the unfairness of it - being bound to a company for 12 years with no guarantee that they would debut, but yet having to pay a hefty fee if they were to break it. In short, these contracts were very controlling on trainees and limited their profits upon debut (Wilson, 2020).

Today, K-pop is one of the most popular music genres globally, according to the International Federation of the Phonographic Industry's Music Listening 2019 report (Herman, 2019). With reference to Figure 3 (Appendix), K-pop is also considered "very/moderately popular" amongst 8500 respondents in 18 countries (Korean Foundation for International Cultural Exchange, 2021). With such a significant number of K-pop groups hitting the music charts all over the world, Billboard has created a global chart entitled "K-pop Hot 100" (Messerlin, 2017).

Figure 1 (Appendix) illustrates the steady rise in value of South Korea's music industry, especially from 2009 to 2020, hitting a peak at 756.2 million USD in 2019 (Statista, 2019). The K-pop industry now earns much more revenue and therefore profit, and is gaining much more international recognition. With K-pop's huge success, we will now analyse how the 5 factors have changed from past to present, for good or for worse.

A larger part of their profits can now be invested to improve facilities and dormitories for trainees. Figure 4 (Appendix) is the girls' trainees' dorm from High-up Entertainment in 2021 (K-Pop Evolution, 2021). Clearly, there is a decent amount of space to walk and even sit on the floor. Storage is not much of a problem as well. The bed arrangement allows for a more spacious environment where trainees can maintain their personal space in a sharing facility.

The quality upgrade in trainee dormitories is evident in trainee survival shows as well. An example is I-LAND, a 2020 boy group reality survival show by Belift Lab. The top 12 trainees were given an extremely high-tech, well-lit and spacious dorm (Figure 5, Appendix), a stark contrast to even the usual trainee dorms today. The fact that entertainment companies are now able and willing to splurge on extravagant dormitories for marketing and publicity highlights the success of the K-pop industry. Therefore, the quality of the dormitories have progressed along with the industry.

However, despite the increased success, most trainees are still unpaid. The rationale behind this is that most companies are already investing a lot in trainees, without being sure if they would hit their standard for debut. Hence, allowance should be more than enough (Park, 2021). For smaller entertainment companies, if their trainees end up debuting, they are often required to pay off their trainee debt. This includes the costs of the lessons and accommodation provided by the company. Therefore, even after debuting, it would still take a few years to repay their debt to the company before they can start earning money for themselves.

Undoubtedly, the encouragement of rivalry is still prominent today. However, with the accessibility of video-editing software, the organisations themselves have stepped in to dramatise it. The media's obsession with drama has manifested in dirty tricks such as manipulating the content to deliver sensational and gossip-worthy information. The prime example of this is Mnet's well-known tactic, 'Evil Editing'. Past cases include Mnet re-arranging video clips and/or adding dramatic effects (captions/zoom-in to facial expressions/audio effects) to present and hint conflicts between two parties, even if it is not true.

An example is the "toxic rivalry" between then-trainees Yeon-jung and Chan-mi, during the 2016 Produce 101 (Koreaboo, 2019). The clips were arranged as follows: Yeon-jung hits the high note perfectly, and then it cuts to Chan-mi's angry face. However, the second clip was from another occasion, so this was not Chan-mi's actual reaction to Yeon-jung's performance. Mnet edited these two clips together to insinuate jealousy from Chan-mi's side when there was none existing in the first place.

Despite the unethicality of this evil-editing, Mnet continues to show no mercy in twisting the narratives. Even guest mentors on trainee survival shows, who are well-established idols, are not spared from it. On the first episode of 2019 Produce X 101, GFriend's SinB's reactions were heavily edited by Mnet to make it seem like she was being condescending on the trainees (Koreaboo, 2019). She mentioned this herself on a Vlive broadcast afterwards that the environment was extremely warm and welcoming, and that Mnet had manipulated this interaction in the editing process.

Practice hours are still long today. Trainees still practise 10 hours a day, and it can even go up to 14 hours. Hence, many trainees today still struggle to balance school and trainee life. Figure 6 (Appendix) is an example of a trainee's schedule, packed from 10am to 10pm with English lessons, vocal lessons and dance lessons (Koreaboo, 2020).

Fortunately, the contracts are now a lot shorter. In 2009, three members of K-pop boy group TVXQ brought this issue to court, demanding justice on behalf of their group as well as the entire community. Korea Fair Trade Commission (KFTC) found that at least nine entertainment companies (eg. SM Entertainment, YG Entertainment, Cube Entertainment) have six aspects of unfair terms in their trainee contracts, including "Unfair termination clauses" and "Exclusion of basic rights guaranteed by law" (moonROK, 2017). In 2017, KFTC ruled that trainee contracts are to be limited to a maximum of 7 years. They also reduced the financial penalties for trainees who break their contracts early, and revised the provisions in these contracts to ensure that trainees' rights are protected. Some experts add that South Korea's exposure to foreign music companies in recent years helped their local music industry to realise the ridiculousness of the previous contract term (Williamson, 2011). In any case, the current contracts, albeit still rather long, are at least more ethical than they used to be.

Pros and Cons of the Korean Idol Training System

While the Korean idol training system has produced many global stars like BTS and Blackpink, it has also received much criticism from netizens due to its harsh and strict nature. However, whether the cons exceed the pros is controversial and has to be further analysed.

Pros of the Training System

However, these benefits cannot be reaped without the harsh and strict behind-the-scenes moments of being a trainee. In the past, trainees often faced the concept of “slave contracts” where they sign themselves to a debt that includes even the most basic living expenses like rent, taking years for them to break even (Padget, 2017). Luckily, “slave contracts” have now been abolished. There are however, many other cons of the training system that have yet to be improved on.

Physical health deterioration is one aspect trainees face. Trainees often face eating disorders as the training is too focused on physical image, such as monthly weigh-ins on body fat percentage (Valean, 2017). Furthermore, the long hours which can last 14 to 15 hours cause health and body issues including fainting, a common sight for K-pop trainees and idols (Padget, 2017).

Mental health deterioration is equally as bad in the trainee system due to company mistreatment and a combination of all the cons. Trainees are often treated with little respect and are punished harshly for the smallest wrongdoings. Ex-K-pop idol Prince Mak claims that “if one member misbehaves, the whole group is punished, usually with a 30km run or more” (Sebag Montefiore, 2016). The lack of respect with no platform to rebel due to confidential clauses that refrain one from mentioning training activities causes mental health issues including anxiety (Padget, 2017). Other mental health issues such as depression can also be caused by a combination of different factors such as long working hours, mistreatment and eating disorders combined. The only solution the industry is doing to fix this is the introduction of counselling sessions in larger companies (E Shin, 2016).

Cons of the Training System

Only 10 percent of those who audition for a K-pop company are chosen in each audition (K-pop Evolution, 2021). The difficulty of being chosen is what motivates trainees to feel grateful that they still have a chance to debut. The training system offers the lucky 10 per cent an opportunity to meet their goals. However, this does not come easy as trainees have less than a 60 percent chance of debuting in 42 percent of K-pop agencies (Statista, 2022).

While the chances are slim, the competitive training prepares trainees well for their debut (Padget, 2017) and comes with a slew of benefits. A financial benefit is fully paid living expenses (Valean, 2017). For the Big 3 companies, living expenses are fully paid for trainees. These include lodging, food and professional dance and vocal lessons. This allows trainees to be debt-free and earn an income the moment they debut, leading to reduced financial stress. A personal benefit is that trainees receive professional feedback from vocal and dance professionals, which boost their skillset. Thus, even if one does not debut, one can apply their professionally trained talents in other sectors. Additionally, one can gain life skills from living independently.

To avoid netizen scandals, K-pop trainees are given lessons on how to craft the perfect public image (Valean, 2017) such as JYP’s three values of humility, sincerity and honesty (Koreaboo, 2017).

On a business front, trainees can make connections as they often interact with professionals and may even meet other K-pop idol seniors in the industry. Thus, even if one does not debut, one has connections to various important people in the industry whom they can reach out to for other similar lines of work.

Future Outlook of the Korean Idol Training System

Importance of the Korean Idol Training System

Looking forward, there have been no signs that the Korean idol training system will be abolished, with a survey conducted in 2021 discovering that there are 1,375 trainees in the singing sector of the Korean pop and arts industry, as compared with other sectors like acting with 408 and modelling at 111 (Jang, 2022). Furthermore, studies have shown that training, along with key success factors like casting, promotion, social media, and content, are crucial to the sustainability of K-pop and to increase tourist behavioural intention to visit South Korea (Kim et al., 2021). With experts estimating that K-pop generates about US$10 billion for South Korea every year (AFM Editorial Office, 2022), it is expected that South Korea and entertainment companies will continue to ensure that the Korean idol training system is in place so as to ensure that top quality stars continue to be produced for an ever-growing global audience.

Exportation of Korean Idol Training System Overseas

While there has been an increasing focus by South Korean entertainment companies to seek talent overseas, such as Kakao Entertainment, which house famous K-pop groups such as Monsta X, IVE, and The Boyz, by hosting auditions globally for talent (Kakao Entertainment Corp, 2022), there have also been some companies who have went overseas to different countries to debut local K-pop acts, for example NiziU, an all-Japanese K-pop girl band launched by Park Jin-young, founder of Korean record label JYP Entertainment, in partnership with Japan's Sony Music Entertainment. Experts such as Kim Jin-woo, a music business professor at Seoul Institute of the Arts and head researcher at Gaon Chart, believes that this is an evolution from previous phases of K-pop, which were initially focused on the domestic market in the 1990s and then evolved to focus on recruiting foreign members so as to target foreign markets. Kim, however, predicts that Korean producers will soon turn their attention to licensing revenues rather than producing K-pop groups themselves, selling their "recipe" for training and developing K-pop groups and idols to businesses abroad (Dong, 2021). As of now, there are plans by some companies to export the idol training system to overseas markets, for example HYBE Entertainment and Universal Music Group announcing that they are holding auditions for the first US-based pop girl group that will undergo the K-pop idol training and development methodology (HYBE, 2021). This can be seen as a form of transnationalism, which can be described as ‘a condition by which people, commodities, and ideas cross national boundaries and are not identified with a single place of origin’ (Watson, 1997). Indeed, South Korea has become one of the leading non-western countries that exports almost all of its cultural products to both western and non-western markets (Jin, 2019), and we foresee that the Korean idol training system is another cultural product that similar to other aspects of the Korean Wave, will become an exportable cultural product that Korean entertainment companies can export in order to expand the reach of K-pop and its ideologies.

Addressing Pressing Issues in the Korean Idol Training System

While we believe that the Korean idol training system will continue to be a cornerstone of the K-pop industry and become an exportable cultural product to overseas markets, similar to the vein of other cultural products of the Korean Wave, there are still ongoing issues that need to be addressed with regards to the system.

Firstly, there has already been work done to address issues with K-pop trainee contracts, with a 2017 report by the Korean Fair Trade Commission investigating 8 major Korean entertainment companies - SM Entertainment, YG Entertainment, JYP Entertainment, Loen Entertainment, FNC Entertainment, Cube Entertainment, Jellyfish Entertainment, and DSP Media - and implementing changes to several contract clauses deemed unfair, such as imposing excessive penalties upon contract cancellation, cancelling contracts immediately without notice and for ambiguous reasons, and forcing trainees to pay penalties immediately (Kim, 2017).

However, the changes mentioned above seek to improve contract clauses for Korean trainees, but not the working conditions that K-pop idol trainees have to operate in. A review by Francesca Padget highlighted numerous issues with the K-pop industry and idol training system, such as discrimination against foreign trainees, long training hours, as well as health and body image issues due to unrealistic beauty standards (Padget, 2017). With more than half of South Korean children aspiring to be entertainers according to a survey in 2010 (Choi, 2010), more children will spend their lives preparing to audition and become a K-pop idol trainee, and dedicate their lives to make their dream a success, despite the number of people becoming successful as an idol being slim. Thus, there needs to be a greater emphasis placed on the Korean idol training system having humane working conditions for K-pop idols as well as trainees, instead of overworking them as if they are disposable tools so as to continue churning out top quality stars.

Comparison with other countries

While there has been a great focus on the Korean idol training system due to the ongoing success of K-pop globally, the concept of idols has been present in numerous East Asian countries, with the concept originating in Japan in the 1960s, after Johnny Kitagawa founded Johnny & Associates, a Japanese talent agency, as well as created the group Johnnys, retroactively considered the first idol group in Japan. Kitagawa was also known as the pioneer of the idol trainee system, where fresh talents would be admitted into the agency and trained in acting, dancing, and singing until they were ready to make their debut (Fukue, 2009). Idols have also become popular in other countries like China, with numerous Chinese entertainment companies adopting a training system that is most similar to South Korea's idol training system. The following is a look at the idol training system in Japan and China, as well as how it compares to the South Korean idol training system.

Idol Training System in Japan

The idol training system in Japan began when famous Japanese entertainment mogul Johnny Kitagawa began his own male talent agency, Johnny and Associates, and after debuting his first group, "Johnnys", began looking for more talent. They began by looking at applicants who would send their resume to the Johnny's fan club, and after passing an initial screening and interview with agency officials, would become accepted into the agency as "Johnny's Junior", where they would be trained in singing and dance as well as work as background dancers for senior members. After training for a certain period of time, the agency will form a group from these members and begin promoting them (Fukue, 2009). Other than talent agencies, there was also a growing popularity in televised star-search auditions for talent in the 1970s and 1980s, . which became the basis for the development of the Japanese pop idol system in that era (Iwabuchi, 2002).

Nowadays, the Japanese idol industry is run by performer management companies, which are also known as jimusho (meaning "office"), with these businesses being in charge of the development, supervision, and general production of performers (Galbraith & Karlin, 2012). There is also greater emphasis around girl groups, with over 10,000 teenage girls performing as idols in Japan, and famous groups include Momoiro Clover Z, Arashi, and AKB48, which is the largest pop group in the world with the group boasting 130 singers at one point (McAlpine, 2017). Similar to K-pop idols and trainees, Japanese idols are tightly controlled in the area of their personal lives and image, and are often prohibited from doing things such as pursuing romantic relationships (Oi, 2016). This is likely due to the strong influence that jimushos have over their idols, as there is a view in Japan that idols are products of jimushos, and that jimushos work to create idols with the greatest economic potential, hence often there is full coordination of artistic content by company employees, long-term market strategy, and control over all media content relating to the idol, so as to ensure the image of the idol is best suited to maximise their economic potential.

However, one key difference is that unlike K-pop idols, who spend years training under rigorous standards in various areas like singing and dancing before they debut as an idol, in Japan, idols often debut with little to no training, are not expected to meet high standards of singing and performance, and most of the time train and develop their skills after their debut, instead placing emphasis on entertaining and interacting with fans (Park, 2018).

This key difference was highlighted in an episode of the South Korean television show Produce 48, a trainee survival reality show pitting Korean trainees and Japanese trainees and idols to form a girl group. During the program, the Japanese idols and trainees demonstrated lower levels of dance and singing performance as compared to the Korean trainees, and when questioned, the idols shared that they receive little to no guidance when it comes to singing and dancing, and that in their culture entertaining fans and being cute was much more important than being dancing in sync or singing to a high standard, with some top Japanese idols being able to succeed without being able to sing or dance (Park, 2018).

Thus, despite the origins of the idol training system used in South Korea originating from Japan, as well as strong similarities between the two countries in terms of image control by entertainment companies, there are stark differences in the training of idols in Japan as compared to South Korea, which mainly stems from cultural differences between industries.

The idol industry in China has been around for years, but the introduction of Tencent's Produce 101 China, a version of the well-liked South Korean trainee survival reality show where 101 trainees battled to form an eleven-member girl group, saw an increase in the popularity of idols in China, leading to fans dubbing 2018 as “the first year of the idol era” (Wang, 2020). The popularity of such shows also led to the development of several idol agencies, all with the hope of producing talents that will be able to succeed on these talent shows.

According to Li Zhenwu, a Chinese lawyer who specialises in entertainment law, Chinese entertainment agencies can range from big companies like JC Universe Entertainment who provide full on support for trainee idols through professional coaching or moving to South Korea to attend world-class training academies, to smaller agencies who function like idol factories, where they sign up youngsters, provide them minimal training, and send them off to competitions like Produce 101 China hoping for the best (Li, 2020).

Looking at the general landscape of the idol training system, many trainees have a similar regiment to that of South Korean idol trainees, with reports stating that trainees in Beijing-based Banana Entertainment attend classes in multiple areas like music and dance, train more than 12 hours a day, have monthly examinations with the worst performers being expelled, as well as being put on a gruelling diet to maintain their weight (Ma, 2018). These gruelling diets, which usually consist of fruits for all three meals, can be due to the contemporary ideals of female beauty in China having a slim body and small face (Jung, 2018), yet with the long working hours that trainees endure, it can put trainees at high risk of injury.

Besides having similar training schedules and environments, there are also issues of slave contracts which were an issue in the early years of K-pop until revisions from the Korean Fair Trade Commission abolished such contracts. In China, agency contracts typically range from 8 to 10 years, and agencies have almost complete jurisdiction over the idol’s life, whether it be what they endorse or their romantic lives, while the agencies’ own obligations are usually not clear in the contract (Li, 2020). This is similar to the current landscape in South Korea and Japan, and highlights an issue that could be a widespread trend in the idol industry, with idols seen as marketable products that only serve to help agencies fulfil their goals of earning revenue, and thus they are controlled in a way to maximise their economic potential while disregarding their human rights.

Overall, the Chinese idol training system is one that is highly similar to that of South Korea, with the training regimentation and lifestyle almost identical, and the issues that idol trainees in China face, in terms of slave contracts, are also highly similar to that in the K-pop industry in early years. It remains to be seen how the idol training system in China will develop, but definitely these pressing issues have to be rectified by the local Chinese government as the industry continues to grow in popularity.

From its humble beginnings of Lee Soo Man developing the first idol training system for SM Entertainment based on the Japanese idol training system, to the backbone of the K-pop genre that has become one the most significant cultural genres in the Korean creative industries and initiate the growth of Hallyu 2.0 since late 2007 (Dal, 2012), as well as potentially an exportable product as the Hallyu 3.0 continues to grow with more collaborations overseas, the idol training system has evolved from strength to strength over the years. This paper aims to provide an holistic overview of the idol training system in South Korea, beginning from what exactly is the training idol system, the history and evolution of the idol training system across K-pop generations, a comparison of the contemporary idol training system with the training system in the past, assessing the positives and negatives of the idol training system in South Korea, the future outlook of the idol training system in South Korea, and finally a comparison with idol training systems in other countries, specifically Japan and China.

While K-pop has become one of the leading music markets in the world, with Korean popular music being the sixth largest music market worldwide according to the International Federation of the Phonographic Industry's "Global Music Report 2019" (IFPI, 2021), there has not been much academic focus on the idol training system in South Korea. This could be due to factors such as many entertainment companies in South Korea keeping this information confidential, but there is much to be learnt from a system that has managed to produce some of the biggest musical groups not just in South Korea, but globally. This paper features research from a mixture of sources, ranging from books on South Korean popular culture, journal articles on K-pop, as well as online news resources. However, there is much more research that can be done with regards to the idol training system in South Korea, and how certain concepts such as bringing together the brightest minds and talents and placing them in a collaborative environment with access to world-class facilities and instruction, can definitely be translated into other industries. James Josette, client services director at Wunderman and chair of the IPA Customer Experience Group, for instance, stated that he thinks the advertising sector can take a page or two from the South Korean idol training system and use an approach that encourages multiskilled talent while making sure that the creative output remains more compelling than many of the sound-alikes that emerge from the K-pop system (James, 2014).

Overall, the team behind this paper hopes that this paper has given an holistic overview of the idol training system in South Korea, and will pave the way to more academic discourse regarding the topic as well as analysis of how this particular aspect of the K-pop music industry contributes to its massive success. The team would like to thank Dr. Kwan Min Lee, instructor for CS5081: Introduction to Korean Studies, for his guidance over the semester and helping bring this paper to fruition.

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SUCCESS-OBSESSED CULTURE IN KOREA



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INTRODUCTION TO SUCCESS-OBSESSED CULTURE IN KOREA

OVERVIEW

In South Korea, the obsession with the pursuit of success begins from a young age and is pretty much considered a life-long grinding process. For the purpose of our study into this success-obsessed culture in Korea, we will be mainly looking at it from two contexts, mainly in the schools and workplaces.

SUCCESS IN KOREAN SCHOOLS

In South Korea, academic success is highly regarded and seen as a source of pride for the family and society at large and people are often judged by their academic records. If one graduates from a prestigious university (such as Yonsei University, Seoul National University or Korea University, they will be considered successful. With a degree from these top universities, South Koreans will have an advantage when it comes to transitioning to the working world. Hence, many Koreans are pushed to achieve academic success by their parents from a young age, to prepare them for the university admission examination (which we will look into detail later in this section) which will allow students to enter their desired universities.

To push their students to become high-achievers, South Korean schools have rather long school hours. The typical Korean student spends about 12 to 16 hours per day in school. School hours usually begin as early as 8am in the morning and last until 5:30pm or 6pm in the evening. After a short dinner break of around 30 minutes, students will go for their night self-study sessions held in school, also known as yaja. Even though these sessions are meant to be voluntary self-administered programmes, there are many high schools that implement these sessions on a mandatory basis. Such sessions usually end around 10pm, before the students go home for the night and the vicious cycle resumes the next day.

In addition to these long school hours, some parents also resort to sending their children to cram schools or also known as hagwons, which are specialised schools that train their students to achieve particular goals, most commonly to pass the entrance examinations of high schools or universities. These specialised academies also perform several other functions, such as providing supplementary education that many children need just to keep up with the regular school curriculum or remedial education for the children who fall behind in their work. These cram schools are in high demand as parents hope to give their children an added advantage through paying for additional after school education, however it consequently adds to the problem of the already long school hours that South Korean students have to endure and also creates an inequality in the society in that those who are financially capable to spend lots of money to send their children to cram schools will have an added advantage over the poorer families.

One of the most important milestones of a South Korean student in their educational journey is undoubtedly the Suneung, also known as the College Scholastic Ability Test (CSAT). Suneung is a standardised test recognised by South Korean universities taken as a national graduation test for high school students. As the culmination of 12 years of pre-university education, the results of the test determine the universities which South Korean students are eligible to enter. The examination is held annually on the third Thursday of November and is an 8 to 9 hour marathon lasting from 8am to 6pm.

To help ensure a smooth conduct of the examination, numerous special arrangements are made throughout the country on the day of Suneung. The KRX Stock Market opens late on that day. Bus and metro services operate with increased frequency so as to avoid traffic congestions and allow students to get to the examination venues more easily. Planes are grounded during the English listening test so that their noise does not disturb the students. Police officers are also on stand-by to help escort any students who may be running late to their examination venue. Younger students and family members also gather outside examination venues to cheer for the students taking the examinations.

The great lengths at which the South Korean society resort to in order to provide the best conditions for their students to take this defining examination is one of the many testaments towards how South Korea is obsessed with the pursuit of success in its culture.

SUCCESS IN KOREAN WORKPLACES

Overworking is a common phenomenon in the South Korea working world, given its especially competitive nature. Despite having the second longest average working hours in the OECD, South Korea has the lowest productivity. According to the OECD, the average working hours for South Koreans is between 46 - 48 hours, above the OECD average of 42 hours per week. South Koreans believe that working long hours can be seen as a form of dedication to their companies to help improve their social and work standings, improving chances of promotions and rising up the social status and improving their financial standings.

Being busy with work in South Korea is viewed as a positive rather than a negative, even in social settings. Finishing all their work and going home on time is not viewed as hard work but quite the opposite - they either don't have enough work and their position is not important or they are not working hard enough. Hence, by working longer hours and taking up more responsibilities or jobs, South Koreans hope to give off the impression that their job, and by extension them as an employee, are crucial to the operation and successes of the company. This will put them at a position of greater advantage in trying to achieve success in their career in the highly dynamic and competitive modernised working world in South Korea.

In addition to the long working hours, many South Korean companies also adopt the culture of hoesik, which is a popular type of gathering in South Korea where people gather to eat and drink together. Hoesik has already been long recognised as a subculture of an organisation and enterprise in South Korea. Company employees usually have after work dinners and gatherings, which serve as platforms for stress and tension relief, bonding and fostering better relationships between colleagues and sometimes for them to resolve conflict or differences. Such gatherings usually help to enhance understanding among colleagues and help them become closer to each other. By reducing stress on members and eliminating interpersonal and interdepartmental conflicts, it creates harmony among members and increases efficiency of production.

Consequently, a better working team allows the individuals to better contribute in their own expertise and capacity to the success of the entire team and company, which is in itself a key gauge of an individual’s success in the working world in South Korea.

FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO BEING SUCCESSFUL IN KOREA

HIGH-STAKES EDUCATION SYSTEM

South Korea's education system is critically acclaimed to be one of the best in the world. This is because of their high stakes examinations that define the main aspects of the life of a South Korean student. As such, extreme importance is placed on academic excellence at the expense of one's well-being and leisure time because students do not want to fall behind their peers. Students isolate themselves in 'goshiwons' and cram hours of studying in preparation for an 8-hours marathon exam called Suneung.

HAVING 'NUNCHI'

'Nunchi' is what we call emotional intelligence. It is a very well-known Korean secret that all Koreans seem to possess since they were younger. 'Nunchi' literally translates to 'eye-measure' and it is a 5,000-year-old art which involves the sensing of what other people are thinking and feeling. There is a more detailed video which explains the mechanisms of 'Nunchi' found in Appendix 8.1. In Korea, having 'Nunchi' is considered a superpower as it is a secret to living a happier life and it can also help you perform better at your job.

The wonderful thing about 'Nunchi' is that it is not something you have to be born with, but it can be honed by following a set of rules - such as dropping your preconceptions and reading between the lines.

IMPORTANCE OF PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

In South Korea, aesthetic surgery is prevalent as external appearance is considered as an important factor for relationships and achievements. This is especially important for women as compared to men (Beliefs and Trends of Aesthetic Surgery in South Korean Young Adults, 2019). One of the reasons why physical appearance has become such a strong competitive advantage is because the South Korean Market is extremely competitive. As the Korean business society develops more, plastic surgery becomes a norm as South Korean (SK) citizens become wealthier and physical appearance becomes a stronger advantage. As the SK's economy became more stable and people became more affluent, SK people had more time to spare and wealth led people to be interested in beauty and investing in their looks. Hence, beauty started becoming an essential element for survival as citizens' judgement changed society (Young Times).

In SK, the competition for joining Samsung is about 100:1. This means that only 1 out of 1 million candidates can join the company. This reflects the extreme competitiveness in SK's business world. As the business world is so competitive, society has counted physical appearance to be one's ability. Hence, lookism is not considered to be unfair in SK.

Korea's lookist culture seems to have stemmed from way back in their history and culture. There is a paradox with the ideologies of Neo0Confucian and Neo-Liberal governmentalities. Scholar Taeton Kim linked the beauty expectations for women to Neo-Confucianism. This was the nation's dominant philosophy which ruled its "politics, religion, social system and private relations for over 500 years". Hence, under the ideology of Neo-Confucianism, "Women were regarded as subjectless bodies" whose identities were intrinsically embedded in the corporeal. As such, Korean women were compelled to reach for their society's impossible standard of aesthetic perfection. Therefore, Korean women and recently, men, feel obligated to wear makeup and often resorting to aesthetic surgery in hopes of improving marriage and employment prospects.

INCREASING SUICIDE RATE

South Korea (SK) has a relatively high suicide rate as they are ranked second after Japan among 30 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries, in 2004. SK has a suicide rate of 23.8 per 100,000, which further increased in 2005. In SK, the elderly over 65 historically and currently showed the highest suicide rate. This was also the same in other countries where age differences are noticeable in suicide patterns. Females also hold a higher suicide rate as compared to the male counterparts in the OECD gender-specific comparison. Males ranked third at 32.5 per 100,000 while females ranked first at a rate of 15.0.

Korean students have low levels of interest in learning, but their low index of happiness seems to be a more urgent problem. Overall, Korean students feel unsatisfied with their learning and also lives. The students were asked to rate their general satisfaction with life on a scale from 0 to 10, according to a survey conducted by the OECD. The OECD average was 6.2 while Korean students who had just completed primary education held a 4.5 level of happiness. (OECD, 2011). The low index of happiness amongst Korean teenagers has eventually led to an increase in suicide rates. The increase in suicide rate has become a social issue in the country as the number of Korean teenage suicides has increased from 264 in 2000 to 351 in 2010, according to the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology (The Korea Times, 2011). It is a tragedy for Korean society as the number of suicides among 15- to 24-year-olds increased to 15.3 out of every 100,000 people in 2009 (WHO, 2012). This means that one teenager takes his or her own life each day on average.

In SK, there is overwhelming stress tied to academic achievement which is one main cause of the rise in Korean Teenage suicides. 10.1% of students had experienced temptation to commit suicide, as reported by the National Statistical Office (2010), with the key reason being poor test scores. The pressure arises from the great importance placed on academic achievement in Korean society. Naturally, the higher expectations and rewards for achievements lead to more frustrations about poor grades, ultimately leading students to commit suicide.

LOWER HAPPINESS

Out of 156 countries, SK ranks 57th in terms of happiness, with Koreans scoring 5.875 out of 10 (World Happiness Report 2018). On the other hand, SK ranked 29th in terms of GDP per capita, which is a typical indicator of social and economic development (IMF, 2019). Hence, this shows that the Koreans' affluence does not equal to how happy they are with life. In other words, Koreans are not satisfied and happy with life even though they are comfortable and successful in life.

For Korean men, health, family and money are the main conditions that they most closely associated with happiness. For Korean women, health, family and travel are the main conditions that they most closely associated with happiness.

REBEL AGAINST LOOKISM

SK, women in particular, is rebelling against lookism in recent years. Hence, there is movement called “Escape the Corset” (탈코르셋) to dismantle such an institutionalised beauty obsession. This movement is to rebel against the strict, unrealistic beauty standard enforced by society where even normal office workers have to look like K-pop idols. However, little has been done to dismantle such an institutionalised beauty obsession in SK.

Women, like Youtuber Lina Bae, made use of YouTube videos and Instagram posts to encourage greater conversations and awareness on Korea’s beauty obsession through the effective rallying of modern digital platforms. Youtuber Lina Bae has posted her video titled “I Am Not Pretty” (Appendix ...) on YouTube and has since amassed a total of 8 million views worldwide. Due to the video’s viral success, Lina Bae has become a global spokesperson for the Tal Corset movement. She also apple at the OECD forum and published a biography with the title “I Am Not Pretty”.

In conclusion, some women in SK are beginning to not conform to the beauty standards. However, since this is a deep-rooted issue, it is difficult for most women to rebel against the unrealistic beauty standards in SK. But it is still good to see that there is a certain group of women in Korea that do not see the need to conform to these beauty standards in Korea.

CURRICULUM REFORM

Recently, the SK government has changed its state-wide curriculum to overcome the exam-driven learning culture. The focus of Korean education is to shift away from knowledge delivery and toward competency development. This means that the students’ overall happiness would be more important as compared to academic success moving forward.

Teachers are expected to perform more autonomous decision making according to each student as compared to following a detailed prescription of a centralised curriculum. This allows students to have a more personalised learning curriculum as the standard teaching curriculum might not be a fit for them.

PROS AND CONS OF THIS CULTURE

With this success-obsessed culture continuing to this day, it has inevitably led to both pros and cons for South Korea as a whole

PROS

MOST EDUCATED COUNTRY IN THE WORLD

South Korea's chase for success typically begins in school and this has resulted in South Korea being one of the most educated countries in the world. According to OECD, 69% of the 25-34 years old in South Korea had a tertiary qualification in 2021, ranking first in the world, 22% higher than the average across OECD countries (2022). Similarly, South Korea has also managed to achieve universal literacy, where its literacy level amongst those aged 15 and above is estimated to range between 98 and 100 percent (Mani & Trines, 2018).

ECONOMIC GROWTH

The high level of education attainment is also one of the main reasons for South Korea's rise and transformation in its economic development over the past few decades. In the mid-20th century, after the Korean War, South Korea was still an agricultural society and was one of the poorest countries in the world. Then, in the 1980s, South Korea's government began investing in human capital development, research, and technological innovation (Mani & Trines, 2018). This also led to Korean families devoting a chunk of their resources into education, resulting in a drastic expansion in education participation. According to data by UNESCO, between the 1980s and mid-2000s, South Korea's tertiary gross enrolment rate increased fivefold (Mani & Trines, 2018).

This new emphasis on education by Korean households and the focus on research and innovation by the South Korean government played a big role in the economic rise in South Korea. Today, South Korea has the 10th largest economy in the world while also having one of the highest gross domestic product (GDP) per capita (Silver, 2022).

GROWTH OF CHAEBOLS

The chase for success is similar to those in the workforce. Another main reason for South Korea's economic development was due to a form of organising the structure of companies unique to South Korea – called the chaebol. During the same time when the government began investing in research and technological innovation, companies began focusing on export-oriented industrialization through their focus on diversification and vertical integration – allowing the companies to achieve overall better efficiency in production.

Maximising efficiency in production for export allowed South Korea to experience the highest average rate of growth in the world from the early 1960s to the mid-1990s – around 9%, this achievement was later dubbed the "Miracle on the Han River" (Jeong, 2015).

CONS

Although we can see that South Korea's chase for success has resulted in positive development for the country, especially in terms of its economy, it has also resulted in a number of consequences.

HOURS SPENT CHASING SUCCESS

Being one of the most educated countries in the world does come at a cost, especially for the students that have been socially pressured to succeed by those around them. South Korea's students spend more time studying than children in any other OECD country (Mani & Trines, 2018). For example, a typical Korean high school student attends school from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., followed by extracurricular sessions that lasts two to three hours each at after-class prep schools called hagwon (Kim, n.d.). According to a survey by Korea's National Youth Policy Institute in 2014, nearly 53% of high school students did not get enough sleep because they studied at night while 90% of respondents said that they had less than two hours of spare time on weekdays (Mani & Trines, 2018).

INCREASING PRIVATE HOUSEHOLD DEBT

The cost of success does not fall onto the students alone, it also affects the parents of these students. To ensure that their child gets ahead of the competition and is able to succeed, South Korean parents spend large parts of their income on education and private tutoring – dubbed the "educational arms race" (Kim, n.d.). According to a report published by the Korea Institute of Child Care and Education, this race starts early as over 83% of the 704 surveyed parents of five year old children participate in some form of private education (Bak, 2017). Additionally, it has been estimated that approximately $17 billion has been spent by South Korean parents on private education annually (Kim, 2019). This spending on education and private tutoring is one of the reasons for the soaring private household debt in South Korea, standing at 104% of the country's GDP, highest among 36 major economies (Choi, 2022).

COLLEGE EDUCATION INFLATION

Although South Korea has one of the highest rates of tertiary qualification among its population in the world, this has posed a new problem – a "college education inflation". The increased enrollment in tertiary education has led to a devaluation in the value of their degrees as the Korean labour market faces a huge surplus of university graduates with the number of jobs available not increasing at a fast enough rate. In 2016, South Korea had a youth unemployment rate of 11.2%, a number that has not been seen since the Asian Financial Crisis in the late 1990s (Mani & Trines, 2018).

COMPARISON TO SINGAPORE

Singapore's state ideology is that of meritocracy. According to the Cambridge Dictionary, this means that Singapore is a "a society in which people get success or power because of their abilities, not because of their money or social position." In Singapore, the pursuit for success is constantly underlined by this ideology, be it in education or in the workforce. The notion that 'if you perform better, you will reap more rewards' is omnipresent in many Singaporeans' lives, and while it sounds good in theory, this has its own downfalls as well. Similarly to Korea, this results in a population that, while highly motivated in its pursuit to be better than others, is burnt out and overworked.

SUCCESS IN EDUCATION

DIFFERENCE IN ACADEMIC STRUCTURE

Firstly, there is a difference between educational structure in South Korea and Singapore that we have to clarify before we begin to compare the two.

In South Korea, a majority of students basically follow the academic structure of 6 years in elementary school, 3 years in middle school, and finally 3 years in high school. There are normal academic high schools, vocational high schools, and even technical and specialty high schools, but they all culminate in the CSAT or suneung exam as mentioned earlier. This means that the suneung exam is one of the only gateways into higher education in Korea, with almost all Korean students having to take this exam at least once, or even for some, twice or thrice, just to get access to tertiary education. For these students, a lot of their future rides on the outcome of this one examination.

However, in Singapore, students spend 6 years in primary school, where we take PSLE (Primary School Leaving Examination) at 12 years old. The results for this exam come in the form of a cold hard number, and the slightest difference of one or two points can mean an entirely different academic pathway. The secondary school streams offered are briefly the Integrated Programme, Express stream, Normal (Academic) and Normal (Technical) streams. With the introduction of streaming came the concept of 'cut-off' points, where people, typically parents, would analyse the PSLE scores of the students that got into each stream, to find out what is the lowest score to be accepted before one would get 'cut-off'. These scores would then be used as a basis to predict the scores for the next years' examinations. Post-secondary education there is another fork as well, with students potentially going to junior colleges, polytechnics, or technical institutes for tertiary education, all designed to develop different skill sets. The concept of 'cut-off' points rears its head again, creating the impression that those with better scores will get better opportunities, solidifying the perception that some streams and pathways are better than others.

While Singapore does offer a more diverse set of educational opportunities and pathways, as opposed to South Korea where it all streamlines into one singular examination, there is still an ingrained hierarchy between these pathways, that are separated by grades.

GIFTED EDUCATION PROGRAMME (GEP)

A concrete example of this hierarchy and the effect it has on students and parents alike would be the Gifted Education Programme (GEP). The GEP was first introduced in Singapore in 1984, intended to identify the top 1% of young Singaporeans. It consists of 2 rounds of screening through standardised tests that Primary 3 students, who are 9 years old, will have to take in order to select students for this highly prestigious programme. GEP students will then undergo an enriched syllabus as compared to those in the mainstream, which is only currently offered at 9 primary schools. (MOE, 2022).

This has led to many parents seeking out 'GEP tuition', sending their children, as young as the age of six, to supplementary lessons after school in order to prepare them to get into this coveted programme. Tuition has always been commonplace in Singaporean education, with many parents seeking out additional tuition classes for their children to get an edge above their peers (Tan, 2017). This is similar to South Korean hakwon and night study sessions.

This perpetuates the idea that "All schools are good, but some are better than others,". The existence of some schools and pathways that are seen as 'better' than others means the mad dash for them starts from the very beginning of education, and continues to persist for many Singaporeans' lives. Furthermore, a Straits Times' article (Tan, 2019) found that many major companies are still drawn to candidates with good grades as they are a strong marker of capability, which just further perpetuates the cycle of stress and the rush for success in Singapore.

There have, however, been efforts to draw the focus in education away from just grades themselves. In 2018, then-Minister for Education Ong Ye Kung did announce a revamp of the grading system for PSLE, shifting away from hard numbers and towards banded grading, to drive focus in learning away from academic results to become more skill-based.

OVER-TIME / HUSTLE CULTURE AND WORK-LIFE BALANCE

In 2021, a work-life balance survey (Sunil, 2021) revealed that Singapore had one of the most overworked populations across different cities in the world, clinching the second spot behind Hong Kong — with 25.1% of full-time employees clocking in more than 48 hours in each workweek. Evidently, meritocratic values that drive Singaporeans to work harder and longer than everyone else follow many from their academic life into their professional one.

In Singapore, there is a hustle culture, with the notion that those who put in more effort and yield more results will reap more rewards like promotions and pay raises. Unfortunately for many, this means longer hours slaving away at the office, only to gain more responsibilities, leaving little time for oneself outside of work.

It also emphasises values of respect, especially for authority, so unspoken rules like 'you cannot leave before your boss or your seniors' or saikang (tedious and time consuming) work being given to the most junior employees, are still common in many companies in Singapore. Coupled with an increasingly competitive workforce, there is a constant need to be doing more than others, in order to stay afloat amongst fierce competitors. Though there are no chaebols in Singapore, workplace culture here does bear some similarities to that of South Korea.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the pursuit for success in South Korea starts from education, with long hours burning the midnight oil studying for suneung, an examination that could make or break one's future. This mindset continues into adulthood, with many Koreans working long hours in the office in order to prove their worth in their workplace, where other factors such as physical appearance and emotional tact are also taken advantage of to get ahead of the rest. Although this creates a highly motivated workforce, which reaps great rewards for South Korea as a country, such as immense economic growth and a highly educated population, this comes at the cost of individual citizens' well-being, as the suffocating chase for success can lead to lower quality of life with the immense stress that it puts on Koreans, resulting in high suicide rates and lower happiness.

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5

TO WHAT EXTENT HAS THE KOREAN WAVE IMPACTED KOREA AND ASIA?



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INTRODUCTION

Hallyu, also known as the Korean Wave, initially refers to the spread of Korea's television shows, stars, and pop songs. As Hallyu continues to spread its influence globally, it now covers a whole range of Korean culture, popular culture, and lifestyle – from food and music to eyebrow shaping and shoe styles (Visser, 2002). As Hallyu evolves and spreads worldwide, it can be categorised into two phases: Hallyu 1.0 and Hallyu 2.0. Hallyu 1.0 focused on cultural export to East Asia from the late 1990s to 2007, while Hallyu 2.0 refers to the spread of Korean culture from regional to global with the advent of social media in late 2007 (Lim, 2016). According to Jeongmee (2007), there are three possibilities about how the term Hallyu came about: First, a promotional CD of Korean popular music (K-pop) made in 1999 by the Korean Ministry of Culture and Tourism and distributed through its embassies was named 'Hallyu'. After the success of K-pop in China, the Chinese press reported 'Hallyu hits China', resulting in the Korean Press adopting the term 'Hallyu' from then on. Second, the term 'Hallyu' was reported in Taiwan, where they used the phrase 'Hail Hallyu' to refer to the sudden success and widespread of Korean dramas (K-dramas) and music. Third, 'Hallyu' originated in China in 1991 when a Beijing newspaper used 'Hallyu' to express concern at the behaviour of specific sectors of Chinese youth who were becoming fascinated with K- pop and K-dramas after seeing the rapidly increasing popularity of Korean popular culture in China. Based on these three possibilities, we can derive that Korean dramas and music were the most influential and crucial factor in spreading the Korean Wave into East Asia.

The origins of Hallyu can be traced back to the Asian Financial Crisis in 1997, when South Korea's government's key concern was "to transform the Korean Wave into a sustainable source of income" (Cho, 2005). In the later paragraph, we will discuss further how the Asian financial crisis aided the development and spread of Hallyu.

With the support from South Korea's government, South Korean dramas and music gained popularity in Asian countries such as China and Japan from the mid-1990s to the mid-2000s; From the mid-2000s to 2010, the rise of Korean boy and girl bands such as Big Bang, Girls Generation, and Kara catapulted Hallyu to the global stage. Additionally, the release of PSY's "Gangnam Style" in 2012 and a surge of K-pop boy group BTS further led to a widespread K-pop craze worldwide, significantly impacting Korea's economy.

According to Korea's current Culture Minister, Park Yang-woo, "Hallyu content gave us confidence that we can become one of the leading countries with the most cultural influence. However, Hallyu is now standing at a crossroads, and it is time for the government to implement supportive measures that do not interfere with the interests of the private sector" (Kwak, 2020). In other words, the Korean government realised that the anti-Korean sentiments and concentration of Hallyu on K-pop and K-dramas hindered the continuous spread of Hallyu, which played an integral part in its economy. Consequently, the South Korean government created the 'Hallyu Support and Cooperation Division' in 2020 to conduct in-depth research on Hallyu and its business environment to further support and assist Korea in exporting Hallyu-related content. As seen above, Hallyu has become a trend that affects people in various countries, and its influence is gradually expanding. Therefore, this article aims to investigate how and to what extent Hallyu has affected Korea and the Asian region. We will first examine how Hallyu has affected South Korea internally, then look at how Hallyu has affected other Asian regions using China, Middle East, and Singapore as case studies.

DIFFERENT ASPECTS OF KOREAN WAVE

The key driving force for the start of Hallyu are K-dramas and K-pop. Hence, among the many aspects of Hallyu, we will introduce Korean dramas and music.

Korean Dramas

One of the most influential and popular drama that drove the Hallyu craze was 'Dae Jang Geum' (Jewel in the Palace), a historical drama series about royal cuisine, which aired between 2003 and 2004 in Asian countries. It was exported to 91 countries around the world including Japan, China, and Turkey, which expanded the scope of the Korean Wave into Korean food, fashion, and medicine while drawing global interest in Korean culture (Korean Culture and Information Service , 2019). Furthermore, 'Winter Sonata' produced by Yun Seok Ho in 2002, swept across Asia in 2003 and helped melt the barriers between Korea and Japan. Following the broadcast of Winter Sonata by NHK, a Japanese public broadcaster, the craze of the drama drove Japanese tourists to visit Nami Island in Chuncheon, the drama's filming location. In 2016, K-drama series such as 'Guardian: The Lonely and Great God', 'Love in the Moonlight', and 'Descendants of the Sun' reignited the Hallyu craze in Hallyu 2.0, which continued to have an economic impact in Korea.

There are a few factors that contributed to the success of K-drama in Asia and globally: (1) The Confucianism values portrayed in Korean dramas, which emphasise the importance of family, loyalty, personal ethics, and morality, resonate with the Asian audience, making it very popular among Asian countries. (2) The unusual and unexpected plotlines or storylines that pique the audience's interest and make them want to keep watching to find out the development of the story plot. (3) Korean culture is portrayed in K-dramas, such as mannerisms, food, and language in Korean and period dramas, in which the audience can see different dynasties or eras of Korea. All these elements contributed to the international interest in K-dramas.

Korean Pop Music

Korean popular music, more commonly known as K-pop, has become a global phenomenon. The three largest music entertainment companies SM, JYP and YG entertainment form groups of 4 to 24 people and vigorously train them for debut. The K-pop factory produces and promotes idols like an all-rounded product that can sing, rap, dance and are visually attractive. Behind the idols are groups of support staff members involved in their performance, image, and activity scheduling. K-pop idols are trained using the Japanese pop business model whereby: (1) potential stars are trained from a young age in all entertainment aspects, (2) have strict control over their image and (3) signed long contracts with the entertainment companies (Tudor, 2014). The success of this system was evident in the 1st generation K-pop groups like S.E.S. and Shinhwa. Soon after, 2nd generation groups like Girls Generation rode on the success of their predecessors and achieved international stardom.

In Hallyu 2.0, the release of 'Gangnam Style' by Psy in 2012 led to a widespread of K-pop craze around the world. The Gangnam Style music video is the first video to reach one billion views on YouTube (BBC News, 2012). The advancement of social media platforms and its influence in cultural products played a huge part in the exportation of K-pop globally (Jin & Yoon, 2014). Social media increased the accessibility of Korean cultural content consumption as compared to traditional media (Jin & Yoon, 2014). Korean idols are also able to carry out real-time communication with their fans from around the world through social media. This helps to create meaningful bonds with their fans through a more personal method of engagement. Audiences are further exposed and want to learn more about Korean culture and language. Alongside social media, K-pop is proven to be a significant component of Hallyu.

IMPACTS OF HALLYU IN KOREA

The 1988 Seoul Olympics and joint hosting of the 2002 World Cup with Japan contributed to the emergence of Hallyu. As national scale events, these boosted South Korean's morale, built, and strengthened the collective society (Grix et al., 2021). South Korea was able to also showcase their technological advancements, enhance their relationship with other nations and push for Hallyu globally (Grix et al., 2021). The strategic organisation of sports events allowed for South Korea to gain traction from the world and improved its country's image. This subsequently served as a leverage for Hallyu which contributed to tourism, economic and political gains.

Tourism

Korea used to be seen as an unfavourable tourist destination due to the student riots and perceptions of political instability. However, since the improvement of the country's image, Hallyu has also contributed to the increase in tourism in South Korea. Consumption of K-pop and K-drama has piqued foreigners' curiosity in Korea and Korean culture. K-drama is a strong pulling factor as viewers will develop an interest in filming sites and visit the country that produces the films. Viewers' familiarity of Korea culture and locations from watching K-drama adds to the pull factor. In 2004, a survey by Korea Tourism Organisation (KTO) indicates that 47% of respondents visited Korea due to the influence of K-drama (Bae et al., 2017). K-drama viewers' emotional involvement and attachment to the drama have increased tourists at these prominent filming sites including but not limited to: Namsan Tower (as shown in 'Boys Over Flowers') and Dae Jang Geum Park (in 'The Moon ThatEmbraces the Sun').

Other than K-drama, tourists are also attracted to Korea for K-pop, fashion, food and cosmetics. A more recent survey by KTO revealed that Hallyu-related tourism comprises of 55.3 percent of respondents (approximately 8 million people) (Hong, 2020). Tourism does not just stop at satisfying tourists' needs and enjoyment; the ripple effect on the economy benefits many people in Korea. Focusing on the positive impacts on tourism, tourists will spend money in Korea and the increase in demand for goods and services can create jobs and boost the economy.

Soft Power

With the growing Hallyu phenomenon and dispersion of cultural products like K-pop and K- dramas, South Korea attained 'soft power'. 'Soft power', as coined by Joseph Nye refers to the ability to persuade people using attraction rather than coercion to obtain preferred outcomes (Nye, 2004). The soft power strategy is particularly important for South Korea as a smaller country, to overcome its geographical and resources limitations (Kalinowski & Cho, 2012). Hallyu can develop global reach and is a source of influence via cultural power for South Korea.

Notably, K-pop boy group BTS attended the United Nations General Assembly in 2021 as special presidential envoy for future generations and culture alongside South Korea's President Moon Jae-in (Vigdor, 2021). They were given the opportunity to make a speech on an international platform, and they touched on the Covid-19 pandemic. Afterward, an analysis showed that BTS was a key driver of health discourse and positively influenced the large K-pop fandom to exercise positive health practices during this pandemic (Chang et al., 2021). BTS's popularity and influential power is evident in the mobilisation of people. K-pop entertainment companies also hold global auditions and debut idols who are non-Korean to represent K-pop. K-pop girl group Blackpink consists of four members who are from Korea, Thailand, and New Zealand. Blackpink took the world by storm and remarkably, they were eighth on Billboard Global 100.

In addition to K-pop, South Korea achieved significant breakthroughs in the film industry in recent years. The film "Parasite" was the first non-English language film to be awarded 2020 Oscar for best picture, and the first film to win both Best International Feature Film and Best Picture Oscar (CJ ENM, 2020). Netflix K-drama "Squid Game" also made history and took home awards from the 27th Critics Choice Awards in Los Angeles (MacDonald, 2022). "Squid Game" actress HoYeon Jung even graced a solo cover of American Vogue as the first person from Asia in 130 years (Valeriano & Nissen, 2022). Hallyu has allowed for fulfilling the representations of Asians in western media. South Korea's achievements in both K-pop, K-drama and film make a name for herself and allows for greater visibility and opportunities globally.

South Korea's utilization of soft power can also be seen in the political relations between South Korea and Taiwan. Due to the increasing Taiwanese fans of K-drama, this led to the increase in Taiwanese tourists in South Korea. In 2014, the Civil Aviation Agreement was re-established between the two countries in recognition of the greater demand (Hahm & Song, 2021). More agreements were made and signed in 2012 and 2018 to ease the travelling procedure between the two countries (Hahm & Song, 2021). Without coercion, the success of South Korea's cultural products led to government policy changes.

History of Hallyu in Asia

To further understand the Hallyu Wave, we trace back on its history to when Hallyu first spread to China and Japan, later to Southeast Asia, such as Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam, then to several countries worldwide where it continues to have a strong impact (Roll, 2021).

Asia has been the largest cultural market for the Korean cultural industries, other parts of the world, including North America, western Europe, and South America, have gradually admitted Korean products and popular culture, such as through both audio-visual and digital technologies (Elaskary, 2018). Since then, Korean television dramas have rapidly taken up airtime on television channels in countries such as Taiwan, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam, and Indonesia which saw media liberalization beginning in the 1990s (Shim, 2011).

Situations that Permitted the Growth of Hallyu in Asia

It is understandable that the Hallyu Wave has had a strong impact on many countries in Asia and will continue to do so. As such, we look more in depth into the factors that led to the rise and growth of the Hallyu Wave in Asia, whereby some of the factors would include the infamous Asian Financial Crisis of 1997 as well as the lifting of foreign travel ban on Koreans.

Asian Financial Crisis

One of the most important bases that permitted the growth of Hallyu in Asia can be attributed to the Asian Financial Crisis (Roll, 2021).

The Asian Financial Crisis which lasted from July 1997 to December 1998 began specifically on 2 July 1997, when the Thailand currency in relation to the U.S. dollar was devalued. This marked the beginning of a deep financial crisis across much of East Asia, encompassing countries such as Malaysia, the Philippines, Indonesia and South Korea. Across these countries, capital inflows reversed direction or slowed, causing their economic growth to sharply decline. Banks came under significant pressures, investment rates plunged, and some countries entered deep recessions, producing important spillovers to trading partners across the globe (Carson & Clark, 2013).

In response to the spreading crisis, the international community sent out large loans totalling $118 billion for Thailand, Indonesia, and South Korea, and took other actions to stabilize the most affected countries. This financial support came from the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, and governments in the Asia-Pacific region, Europe, and the United States. The basic strategy was to help the crisis countries rebuild official reserve cushions and buy time for policy adjustments to restore confidence and stabilize economies, while also minimizing lasting disruption to countries' relations with their external creditors (Carson & Clark, 2013).

However, with regards to the financial crisis, researchers have found that South Korea's plunge into the financial crisis was not simply caused by a shortage of foreign exchange reserves but also by the structural weakness in its economy. Therefore, if there are still prolonged economic overhaul, it holds the potential to cause another crisis (Song, 2003).

Impact of Asian Financial Crisis on the Hallyu Wave

Due to the impact of the Financial Crisis, many global stakeholders held belief that South Korea was in a bad shape, thereby branding them with a serious yet negative image problem. As such, South Korea lost foreign direct investments, lacked tourism, and faced global scepticism. To solve this, the incoming president Kim Dae-Jung pushed for information technology and popular culture as the two key drivers for the future Korea (Roll, 2021), such that the diversification of revenue sources would combat potential future financial collapses (Elaskary, 2018).

In addition, due to the economy downfall during the financial crisis, South Korea began restricting cultural imports from Japan, leading to the South Korea's Ministry of Culture embarking on a mission to strengthen local culture within Korea and build on their own talents. The government started to heavily invest in the creative industries, creating 300 culture-based departments in universities across Korea and studios began producing high-quality Korean films and K-dramas very cheaply. These cheap Korean media entertainments was preferred as Korean television dramas were a quarter of the price of Japanese ones, and a tenth of the price of Hong Kong television dramas as of 2000. The cheap prices allowed for distribution to China before sweeping across to the West, piquing the curiosity and capturing the imagination of the 90s generation (Lee, 2003).

Lifting of the Foreign Travel Ban

Another factor that played a role in the infiltration of the Hallyu Wave to Asia would be the lifting of the ban on foreign travel for local Koreans (Roll, 2021).

Due to worries about foreign currency depletion at a time when the foreign debt was rising, the South Korean government placed restrictions on foreign travel of South Koreans (Jameson, 1998), such that only Koreans over the age of 40 were issued passports permitted for overseas tourism, although with various conditions attached (AP News, 1988). However, in the late 1980s, the Korean government made the decision to lift the ban on foreign travel for Koreans, in which they started by lowering of the minimum age required for overseas tourist travel from 40 to 30. By the 1990s, the South Korean government had lifted the last of their travel restrictions, allowing for Korean tourists in their 20s to travel outside of their home country. Thus, according to Lee Chan Jae, then Transportation Ministry's international tourism section chief, the number of Koreans traveling abroad with the lifting of the travel ban was estimated to increase to around 700,000, which was a number much larger than previous annual level of 500,000 (Jameson, 1998).

Impact of Lifting of the Foreign Travel Ban on the Hallyu Wave

The lifting of the foreign travel bans not only allowed Korean locals to explore the countries differing in culture such as the West, but also the countries neighbouring them (Roll, 2021), and in doing so, allowed for the infusion of Korean culture and the Hallyu Wave to countries outside of South Korea.

An example of how the lifting of the foreign travel ban allowed for the first stage of K-pop (1992-2004) to begin would be when bilateral relations between South Korea and China were normalized in 1992 (Embassy of the Republic of Korea in China, 2015, as cited in Liew & Sun, 2019). Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the frozen Sino-South Korean ties thawed and gradually came to be pivotal in propelling Korean popular entertainment into China through trade, migration, and tourism. As a result, the increasing number of Korean enterprises, students and tourists in China led to the importation of K-pop into the country as well (Liew, Sun, 2019).

Growth of Hallyu in Asia

China

One of the first countries to be influenced by South Korea's Hallyu culture would be China, where this early transmission is attributed to the inroads made by K-dramas with themes that are culturally familiar to general Chinese households (Liew, Sun, 2019).

Coincidentally, the transmission of Hallyu in China also corresponded with the Chinese state's liberalization of the media and the resultant growth of the media industry. During this period, as China was slowly becoming more affluent, there was also rising prosperity of independent Chinese consumers which led to the rise in home ownership of media devices (Latham, 2007). Since the digital revolution was just beginning in the early 2000s, Hallyu was mostly spread through the medium of analogue media, such as analogue print and broadcast media (Liew, Sun, 2019). As such, the increase in analogue media devices allowed for easy proliferation of Hallyu into China's media and lifestyle of the people there.

Middle East

Up to today, Hallyu has become a big part of the lives of the citizens of the Middle East, and this can be traced back to the history of development of Hallyu in the countries of the Middle East, with claims that that Hallyu has been well received in the Arab world due to the similarities between Korean and Arabic or Muslim cultures, social habits, and customs (Elaskary, 2018). For instance, the secular Jewish communities and religious Muslim communities in Israel find Hallyu as a common cultural ground where they build communication networks (Otmazgin, Lyan 2013, as cited in Otmazgin, Rhee, 2016), providing them with greater mutual understanding.

In addition to providing entertainment that are in line with values, customs and culture of the Middle East, a fact has been held that Koreans producers keep in mind Arab customs and religious backgrounds when airing K-drama in the Arab world. One such circumstance would be how these producers keeps in mind the importance of the Muslim prayer times, and thus would avoid airing Korean TV programs during these times. They also note of the details relating to the strict sexual and moral code that would make certain Korean dramas a bad fit for the Arab market (Elaskary, 2018).

Singapore

Singapore is also one of the early recipient countries of K-dramas and K-pop due to its cultural, political, economic proximity with Korea, allowing for economic relations to be formed. In terms of business, Singapore is a small consumer market in terms of population size, but it represents an important aspect of K-pop cultural entry in Southeast Asia as it offers Korean companies a convenient platform to penetrate the regional Southeast Asian market (Lim et al, 2016). This means that large imports of Korean products and media would be imported into Singapore, thereby raising the awareness of Hallyu in Singapore.

Relating heritage and the rise in Hallyu, as the majority race in Singapore would be the Chinese, Korean popular culture in Singapore aids the reinforcement of local boundaries of ethnicity by catering to the tastes of the ethnic Chinese majority in Singapore, where it has been noted that the demand for Korean popular cultural products has mainly come from ethnic Chinese in Singapore. However, seeing as Singapore is home to a multicultural and multiethnic society, the understanding of the Korean-Chinese history and the acceptance of Korean products by individuals of other ethnicities thereby results in a deeper acknowledgement and internalization of Korean culture in the local context (Lim et al, 2016).

The impact of Hallyu on China, Middle East and Singapore will be further elaborated in the subsequent sections of this paper.

Origins of Hallyu in China

Since the late 1990s, the rapid growth of a new cultural phenomenon named Hallyu was seen in China. The term Hallyu generally refers to the popularity of South Korea's culture such as Korean Dramas (K-Drama) and Korean Pop Music (K-Pop Music). This was first used by Beijing Youth Daily in February 2000 to describe the popularity of Korean boy band H. O. T's concert held in Beijing Worker's Gymnasium (Kim, 2011). Later, the term Hallyu was acknowledged by Koreans themselves. Since then, it has been widely used to describe the popularity and influence of Korean culture worldwide.

However, the popularity of Hallyu was observed earlier than February 2000 in the form of K- Drama instead of K-pop Music. Back in 1997, China Central Television Station (CCTV), one of the Chinese state-owned broadcasters, broadcasted a Korean TV drama named: What Love Is All About. Another popular Korean TV Drama: A Wish Upon a Star, was also broadcasted on Phoenix TV in 1998. Both dramas recorded high ratings in China, with What Love Is All About ranked second highest rating in the history of Chinese television for foreign imported dramas (Kim, 2011). As a result, it sparked an interest for Hallyu in China as a whole and eventually impacted China greatly in the long run. The impact of Hallyu in China could be categorized in three different sections: K-Pop Music, K-Drama and Korean Culture.

Impacts of K-wave in China

Korean Pop Music in China

Chinese audiences first become familiarised with Korean songs through famous television drama theme songs such as Jae-wook Ahn's "Forever" and gained further success through radio programmes. Beijing FM station created a two-hour long weekly programme named "Seoul Music Hall" which plays K-pop music specifically (Jang, 2012). Numerous radio stations in China started producing K-pop music only programme in an effort to capitalize on the success of K-Pop and boost listener ratings. For example, Beijing Traffic Station broadcasting K-Pop music in its daily programme named "Night-time at Han River" (Jang, 2012). These instances show that the demands of Chinese television stations expedited the expansion of Hallyu in China.

Following the success from radio programmes, Korean dance music were also tremendously famous among young teenagers in the late 90s and early 00s. The main force was represented by Korean idol musical bands such as H.O.T, NRG, S.E.S, and were passed on to TVXQ, Super Junior, Girls Generation and so on. In 2000, boy band H.O.T's concert was a great success and subsequently prompted the Chinese media to highlight the Hallyu phenomenon in the form of K-Pop music. After which, K-Pop music went through a period of stagnant due to the gradual disbandment of these Korean idol musical bands from 2001 to 2005. Members of these Korean idol musical bands started their own individual career but were no longer as successful in China's public eye as they did in their respective group before the disbandment. This was deemed as Hallyu 1.0 in China and with the advancement of digitalization and expanded internet excess came Hallyu 2.0 (Jang, 2012). Through the usage of popular video-sharing websites like Tudou, Youku and YouTube, K-Pop music videos, performances can be transmitted in real time. Second generation Korean idol musical bands were able to benefit from this and in turn gain large number of Chinese fans despite not promoting physically in China.

Korean Drama in China

Hallyu in the form of K-Drama begin back in 1997 when popular series like 'What Love Is All About', 'A Wish Upon a Star' and so on was introduced to the Chinese audiences. Following the prior success, more series from Korea such as 'Winter Sonata' (2002) and 'Jewel In The Palace' (2005) were imported into China. K-Drama imported into China could generally be classified under two types, Historical and Contemporary. Historical Dramas usually revolve around well-known historical figures and events. Fictional elements are also added in to complement the unrecorded part of the history and stimulate viewers' interests (Kim, 2011). Contemporary Dramas are usually fictional and takes place in the setting of modern Korean society. The central themes of Contemporary dramas vary from love and family to that of politics (Kim, 2011).

K-Drama Hallyu was able to reach its pinnacle in 2005 when Jewel In The Palace was reported to have average 3.15% in 31 medium and large cities in China (Chinascope, 2007). Also, Hunan Satellite Television who bought the distribution rights of Jewel in The Palace for 10 million yuan, was reported to have doubled its investment simply by reselling the rights to other regional stations (Chinascope, 2007). The popularity of K-Drama could be attributed to the refined principal characters and lines, as well as the stunning setting and music inside the dramas (Kim, 2011).

Korean Culture in China

Through the exposure of Hallyu culture, the number of Chinese people being interested in Korean culture have increased greatly. According to a survey, 54.2% of Chinese tourists visit Korea because they are interested in Korean popular culture, 54% are interested in Korean traditional culture/history (Park, 2021). According to Korea's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), many people, especially students worldwide, have moved to Korea in order to study the language and learn more about the culture. In fact, Korean was the only language to experience significant growth in the United States over the past few years, with the number of students studying Korean increasing by 44.7% even though overall language enrolment decreased by 6.7% (MOFA, 2020). As a matter of fact, Norway even has a study programme at Hadeland Folkehøyskole called K-Pop Korean Wave which teaches Korean culture, history and cuisine while offering an exchange programme in Korea to their students (Lim et al, 2016).

The export of K-Drama and K-pop music have also helped in the promotion of Korean food culture and cosmetic culture in general. According to the Korea Pharmaceutical Traders Association (KPTA), exports of related lifestyle goods amounted to US$1.067 billion in 2012, with an increase of 30.3% from a year earlier (Lim et al, 2016). This marks the first ever time where Korea's cosmetics exports were able to exceed its imports. It is accomplished by using the celebrity influence on advertising campaigns—such as featuring the newest K-pop group or a seasoned actor or actress—and the product placements technique to win over many K-Drama and K-Pop fans.

Furthermore, K-Dramas such as "My Love from The Star" (2013) was able to spark off an idol worshipping trend and generate an enormous Chimaek (Chicken and Beer combination food set) craze among K-Drama fans in China. Riding on to the bandwagon of the drama, the fried chicken restaurants in China gained a 30% increase in their sales by selling the Chimaek (Lim et al, 2016). Also, when Kim Soo-hyun's character within the show, was shown consuming a bowl of noodles, the sales of Korean instant ramen in China increased by 60% almost instantly (Lim et al, 2016).

Reasons for Hallyu's success in China

The first reason for Hallyu's success in China could be attributed to the ideology of Confucianism. Korea is known to have adopted Confucianism since the Joseon Dynasty and was known to be one of the most Confucian societies in the world. Confucian values such as family-centric behaviours, respect for the elders and loyalty to the hierarchy was reflected in K-Dramas. The Chinese were very interested in this component because Korea's Confucian culture could be explained in connection with China's ancient culture. In other words, even though Korean culture contains a modern aspect of a capitalist society, the ideas included in it are very traditional, valuing filial piety and righteousness (Park, 2021). To put it simply, Hallyu was able to skilfully blend Western and Asian value to create its own [quality], which makes it more approachable for Chinese audiences to accept (Kim, 2011).

The second reason for Hallyu's success in China could be attributed to providing alternatives to Hollywood and Japanese culture. Since the opening of China's economy in the 1990s, China was unexpectedly exposed to the influx of foreign businesses, goods, and cultures. Despite Beijing's strict restrictions on any cultural imports, the growth of social media and widespread use of internet helped to speed up the encounter (Kim, 2011). The two dominant pop cultures from the US and Japan, were unable to appeal to a broad audience in China as the public still finds it difficult to relate to the violent and suggestive content within these cultures. Additionally, there are a lot of anti-American and anti- Japanese emotions out in the public that are motivated by historical memories of war and colonialism, which has reduced the positive responses to both American and Japanese cultures (Kim, 2011). In other words, Korean culture or Hallyu was chosen by the mass public as a better option among the choices, therefore accelerated the spread of Hallyu.



Sentiments towards Hallyu in China

Anti-Korean sentiment, which reveals the negative views socially, culturally, politically, and diplomatically on Korea's cultural content in China, gradually formed in late 2005 (Park, 2021). After Jewel In The Palace was broadcasted in 2005, initiatives to limit the importation of Korean drama series began to take shape. Critics supported the Chinese production businesses' grievances of Chinese consumers giving Korean dramas preferential attention, and the general public sided with them as well. To safeguard the indigenous drama industry, critics requested that transmission of Korean dramas be curtailed. This idea was supported by the Chinese government, who set restrictions on the number of hours and time slots that international drama series may air each day (Jang, 2012). By adopting a program to diversify the number of foreign nations it imported from, it also tightened screening requirements and essentially reduced the number of Korean drama imports (Jang, 2012). The national arts and culture industry is now being protected and developed as part of government strategy. As a result, starting in 2006, imports of Korean drama substantially decreased.

However, during this period, China denies a ban was imposed in on Hallyu. It can only be said that Hallyu has encountered a cold war in China (Jang, 2012). In September 2016, to better defend South Korea and the American military in the region against North Korea's nuclear capabilities, the South Korean government unilaterally consented to the deployment of the Thaad missile defense system on their soil (Chai, 2018). The Chinese government protested strongly because of the South Korean government's improper political antics, which they viewed as a threat to their security. As such, China gradually targeted some of South Korea's important cultural exports, particularly Korean Wave products like K-Drama and K-Pop Music, as well as some peripheral industries driven by the "Korean Wave," such as tourism and cosmetics, as a form of response to South Korea's "unreasonable" action (Chai, 2018). Before this political event, China has recently overtaken Japan as the country that exports the most South Korean entertainment in recent years due to the popularity of South Korean culture there. As such, China imposes sanctions on South Korea indirectly and most profitably through the so-called "Korean Performing Arts Activities Ban" (Chai, 2018). Without a doubt, the prospects of a Hallyu in China after the wake of this political event will be unsettling, and the impact of the "Korean Performing Arts Activities Ban" in Korea will only be known in the future.

CASE STUDY: MIDDLE EAST

History of Middle East and Korea Relations

Korea and Middle Eastern countries share an intricate relationship, dating back to the rapid industrialisation era under Park Chung Hee's Fifth Republic between 1960 to 1979. During this time, South Korea began to rapidly industrialise and develop its economy, with a focus on heavy industries such as shipbuilding, chemicals, steel and textiles. In order to achieve this, the South Korean government actively courted foreign investment and technology, with the Middle East being a key partner in achieving South Korea's goal of developing an industrialised economy (Levkowitz, 2010). During the 1970s and 1980s, South Korea's "export-oriented" development strategy led to a dramatic increase in trade with the Middle East. By the early 1990s, the Middle East had become South Korea's second-largest export market after the U.S (Hae, 2020).

The oil-rich Middle Eastern countries played an integral role in South Korea's economic development due to the mutually beneficial relationship established during the Vietnam War. Conglomerates like Hyundai, Daewoo and Hanjin set up factories and supplied manpower to oil-rich but underdeveloped countries like Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Libya (Armstrong, 2014). As South Korea is a country with scarce natural resources, they are heavily reliant on crude oil and natural gas imports from the Middle East to drive their industrial conglomerates. As a result, South Korea is now one of the top importers of natural gas resources from the Middle East.

Fast forward to current day, South Korea has established diplomatic relations with 18 countries in the Middle East region, where high level diplomatic exchanges between South Korea and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) occur frequently. While the relationship between South Korea and the region was initially founded upon economic interest and innovation technology development, the priorities have started to shift gravitate towards the cultural development of Middle Eastern countries, notably Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the UAE.

Characteristics of Middle East Countries

To understand how the Korean wave slowly started making its' mark within the Middle East societies, we must first examine the social climate and characteristics of the region. The Middle East is a region that is generally conservative, both politically and socially. This conservatism is often based on religious beliefs, particularly in countries where Islam is the dominant religion. The region accounts for 20% of the Muslims globally and more than 90% of the Middle Eastern population are Muslims (Wormald, 2015). Islam plays an extremely important role in the Middle Eastern societies, having influenced the culture and politics of the countries in the region. It is no surprise that Middle East countries such as Iran, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan rank amongst the world's most conservative countries (Hancock, 2017). The conservatism extends to gender inequality, human rights violations and strict socio-cultural expectations or values. In terms of gender inequality, women do not enjoy the same rights as men and the World Economic Forum Gender Gap Report revealed that it would take 115 years for the region to achieve gender equality (UNICEF, 2021). For example, in Lebanon, out of the 128 parliamentary seats, only 6 are occupied by women. To further prevent women from entering politics, the Lebanese parliament rejected a proposal to increase the quota of female parliamentary participation to 30% in 2017 (Abifareh, 2019).

Rise of K-wave and factors of success in the Middle East

Middle Eastern countries have widely been negatively perceived as conservative and authoritarian. In recent years however, countries like Qatar and Saudi Arabia have been slowly warming up to international influences such as Hallyu. The first impact of Hallyu can be first traced to 2006 when imperial drama 'Dae Jang Geum' was the first Korean series to be broadcasted on free-to-air TV in Iran. The series is widely believed to be the key that unlocked the region to a greater world of Hallyu as it garnered over 90% viewership (Woo; et al, 2016). Series like 'Dae Jang Geum' and 'Jumong' can be attributed to Hallyu's success in the Middle East and opened the South Korea entertainment industry to a region with 80 million population.

On the surface, the Middle East region and South Korea do not seem to share cultural similarities and it thus came as a surprise when Hallyu became a popular culture in the region. However, upon closer inspection, there are key reasons as to why Hallyu was able to break into an unfamiliar market. Firstly, Hallyu content is extremely palatable for the conservative audience as it promotes Asian values that the Middle Eastern audience is familiar with. Unlike Western media, Korean content rarely contain nudity, profanities or extreme violence. Korean culture scholars have also classified K-dramas to be 'safe' for the consumption of conservative viewers who are not exposed to liberal Western values (Elaskary, 2018). The lack of obscene content or language used is also related to the similar values that Korea shares with the Middle Eastern audience. While Korea is much more globalised and dynamic in their entertainment industry, the content produced strays away from themes that deemed unacceptable by the general public (Boman, 2022). The cultural compatibility between the two regions forms the foundation to which Hallyu content is widely acceptable and loved by Middle Eastern audience.

Although the Korea shares cultural similarities with the Middle Eastern region, the uniqueness offered by Hallyu content explains the proliferation of Hallyu among Middle East audiences. Cultural proximity can be used to sum up the interesting relationship between Middle Eastern audiences and that of K-dramas or K-pop idols. Cultural proximity refers to "material that is closer to and more reinforcing of traditional identities, based on regional, ethnic, language, religion and other elements," (Straubhaar, 1991). As aforementioned, Hallyu content appeals to Middle Eastern audiences due to the shared cultural identity and value. But beyond that, it also offers content that is akin to a breath of fresh air in the region. Despite influenced by neighbouring culture such as J-pop and Mandopop, Hallyu combines the distinctive traits of the different Asian cultures and adds in their own sense of uniqueness that cannot be replicated by other cultural waves. This form of appeal is extremely captivating, especially to Middle Eastern audiences, due to their highly censored media industry. According to a survey by the Doha Film Institute, television programmes are the most important entertainment source, with 76% of the respondents relying on television as their primary source of entertainment. While Middle Eastern viewers are becoming increasingly exposed to media content, the region is still home to extreme media censorship laws. For example, due to political rivalry between Qatar, Turkey and Saudi Arabia, popular Turkish soap dramas were banned from being broadcasted on Saudi Arabia's national channel MBC (Alhindi, 2020). Censorship is also extremely prevalent to prevent viewers from being exposed to Western ideologies or content that are frowned upon by Islam. Islamic teachings hold great power in the region and are often used as justification to censor television programs that do not fit within the promoted ideologies. This is extremely common in the region, which has banned foreign films or drama series that portray sexual content on grounds of "uniting the citizens of the country" and to prevent racial or religious divisions (Davidson, 2013). As such, Hallyu content is perceived to be a suitable escape for the Middle Eastern audiences due to both the cultural proximity and the unique value it brings about the people in the region.

Lastly, Middle Eastern viewers or fans, especially women, are able to seek comfort in the K- drama characters or K-pop idols amidst a climate of gender inequality and oppression. As the most common theme in K-dramas is romance, with the male leads often portrayed as a knight in shining armour, it is no wonder that K-dramas pander to and fulfil the inner desires of Middle Eastern women. Laws in the Middle East do not favour women, with outrageous laws that reinforce gender-based violence laws do not prohibit marital rape and deems a woman's testimony to weigh less as opposed to that of a man (Plan International, 2020). Any form of discourse or activism to protect the rights of women would be deemed as an infiltration for Western ideals and a corruption of Islam traditions and preaching (Kharroub, 2015). As such, K-dramas portrayal of men provides a sense of comfort to the women in Middle East. Iconic characters such as Do Min Joon (You Who Came from the Stars), Yoo Su Jin (Descendants of the Sun) and Kang Jun Sang (Winter Sonata) represent the ideals of women, not just in Middle East, but also globally, as they portray a gentlemanly and devoted image. Apart from K-drama characters, K-pop idols create a parasocial relationship with fans and provide a strong reason to belief in the image they have curated. In recent years, K-pop idols have been seen going the extra mile to connect with Middle Eastern fans not just by respecting their culture, but also by acknowledging the unique Middle Eastern cultures. For example, girl group 3YE performed a cover of 'Taj', a 2018 hit by Moroccan pop star Manal (3YE, 2019). Furthermore, K-pop groups have also displayed cultural sensitivity towards the Middle Eastern fans by avoiding revealing outfits when performing in the region (Scott, 2022). The positive image radiated by K-pop idols provide Middle Eastern fans with a figure to look up to and devote their time and attention, creating fandom culture,which also provides a sense of community amongst women.

Impacts of K-wave in Middle East

The influence of K-wave in the Middle East has provided the region with an opportunity to open up to the rest of the world. Similar to the mutually beneficial economic relationship shared in the past, Hallyu is seen to be the gateway for globalisation in Middle Eastern countries. On the flipside, the Middle Eastern region is filled with an untapped market for K-pop groups. At the forefront of the Hallyu movement is Saudi Arabia, who most recently hosted the KCON convention with groups like New Jeans, ATEEZ and The Boyz (Augustman Malaysia, 2022). Beyond KCON, Super Junior was also the first ever international group to receive an invitation from the Saudi Arabia Royal Commission to attend the winter season of Tantura, Saudi Arabia's annual cultural festival (KpopStarz, 2020). From a macroeconomic perspective, Hallyu's impact in Middle East does not stop at K-pop groups performing in the Middle East but has a greater impact on the tourism and the cultural-economy. In 2022, Saudi Arabia and South Korea signed a Memorandum of Cooperation to reflect both countries commitment in enhancing tourism marketing and promotional efforts, so as to boost the tourism industry of both countries (MOFA, 2022). As stated by H.E Sami M. Alsadhan, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the Republic of Korea, BTS being the first ever foreign artist to hold a solo concert in the Kingdom reflected their vision in developing a robust cultural collaboration (Asia Society, 2021).

Apart from the economic impacts of Hallyu in the Middle East, the fandom culture has also brought about socio-political impacts across the Middle East. Hallyu fandom culture can be seen as an indirect catalyst for the rise in feminist movements across the region. In recent years, the region has witnessed a rise in feminism, which can be attributed to the increasing digital literacy and exposure to global movements like the #MeToo movements (Tazi and Oumlil, 2020). Hallyu fandoms create a digital community of likeminded individuals, who are mainly active on social media platforms like Twitter and Facebook (Elaskary, 2018). #LetWomenGoToStadiums is a key example of how fandom culture brought about a sweeping feminist movement in Iran. Up till 2019, women were not allowed to enter stadiums to watch sport matches. It was not until September 2019 when a young woman was killed after getting caught for attempting to enter a soccer match while disguised as a man. This sparked major outrage, which forced the Iranian government to lift the ban for women. Upon lifting the ban, Iranian women were seen in stadiums banded together and chanting "blue girl, blue girl" in honour of the Iranian that sacrificed herself for the uplifting of the law (Esfandiari, 2022). The community spirit of being part of a fandom provides individuals with a safe space to express themselves. This spirit is commonly seen in K-pop concerts where be screaming fan chants at the top of their lungs.

In all, the Middle Eastern region remains to be a large untapped market for Hallyu, despite already leaving their mark economically and socio-politically in the Middle Eastern societies. As a standalone region, there remains much room for development, especially in terms of gender equality and openness to globalisation. The Hallyu wave has thus proved its' ability to reach out to marginalised and obscure communities around the world, particularly in Middle East as seen from this case study.

Origins of Hallyu in Singapore

In contrast with its Asian counterpart countries, the rise of Hallyu in Singapore only started in the late 1990s to the early 2000s (Lim, 2016). As a cultural melting pot, Singapore's high digital proliferation rate and globalised trade position has made us extremely welcoming to foreign cultures, including Hallyu (Ang and Stratton, 2018) While the rise of Hallyu is considered to be rather recent, traces of Hallyu culture stemmed from neighbouring cultures from Northeast Asian Countries.

Influence from Northeast Asian Countries

Hallyu first emerged in the countries from Northeast Asia such as Hong Kong, Taiwan, and China before spreading into Southeast Asia, or specifically Singapore. Hong Kong, Taiwan and China alongside Singapore are known to have its population made up of majority Chinese. Looking into Singapore's demographics, ethnic Chinese made up at least 70-75% of Singapore's population (Shim, 2013). As a result, Singapore's very own media was heavily influenced by the media industries from these Northeast Asian countries to cater to majority of the population. Some examples include Lian He Wan Bao, which is a daily Chinese afternoon newspaper in Singapore that was well known for reproducing content from magazines and newspapers from Taiwan and Hong Kong respectively (Shim, 2013). There were also many Korean video compact discs that was circulated in Singapore in the early 2000s, whereby the Korean dramas were dubbed and subtitled to cater to the Chinese-speaking audience in Singapore.

Weak Media Industry in Singapore

In the past, Singapore attempted to create a more competitive media identity through the establishment of Mediaworks in 2001 as Singapore has always depended on the media imports from countries such as Hong Kong and Taiwan. However, the attempt to promote their own domestic film was very unsuccessful, causing Mediaworks to merge with MediaCorp in the year of 2004. Singapore's media and shows were mostly centred around its local themes, with commercials and shows related and sponsored by government-related agencies and enterprises. This did not appeal to the youths at all, causing them to dislike their very own domestic media. (Shim, 2013). As a result, the weak competitive scene of the local media industry created very favourable conditions for the growth of the Hallyu culture such as Korean dramas into Singapore.

Impacts of Hallyu in Singapore

Emergence of Koreatown

When Hallyu initially affected Singapore, many South Korean entrepreneurs, also known as Chaebols, took it as an opportunity to set up South Korean related shops and restaurants in Singapore. As a result, what would be known as Koreatown was established in Tanjong Pagar, Singapore. The streets located along Tanjong Pagar road were packed with many authentic Korean-related restaurantsthat sells popular South Korean dishes such as Korean-Barbeque, Korean-Fried Chicken and so on. In the year of 197, there were only approximately 20 over Korean-related restaurants. However, due to the impacts of Hallyu in Singapore, the numbers rose to an astonishing number of at least 200 restaurants in the year of 2017 (Woo, 2020). Many other Korean-related shops such as beauty salons which specialises in hair, nails and so on are also set up to spread the South Korean culture. Some of these shops are even named after very popular South Korean landmarks. One example would be the beauty salon in Singapore named CHEONGDAM: Korean Skin Management.

K-Pop Music

Influences of Hallyu in Singapore can also be seen in the rise in popularity of K-pop music among Singaporeans. Spotify, a media and audio streaming application that is widely used around the world, first came into Singapore in 2013. Since 2013, Singaporeans spent a total of 1.7 billion hours listening to the K-Pop genre music from year 2013 to 2018 (Kwok, 2018). In 2021, Singapore's top 5 most streamed groups are K-Pop groups BTS, Blackpink and Twice (Karean, 2021). K-Pop remain as a popular genre of music in Singapore over the years which is evident in the listening habits of Singaporeans. Other than K-Pop fans participating in material consumption like attending K-Pop concerts and buying of merchandise, the interest in K-Pop led to the formation of SKarf in 2012 which consists of Singaporean and Korean members. The 'S' in the name SKarf stands for Singapore and 'K' stands for Korea This collaboration is significant as this is the first girl group comprising of Singaporean members. The Singaporean representation in the K-Pop industry portrays Hallyu's influence in the Singapore music scene and friendly ties between Singapore and South Korea.

Film Production

Hallyu has facilitated a growth in Singapore's film industry, which has typically been criticised to be underdeveloped due to the low recognition and support from the government (SBR, 2013). One such film that is directly influenced by Hallyu is 'Ajoomma', a Singaporean Korean inspired film that is directed by Singaporean Director He-Shuming. The film saw rare success at both the Busan International Film Festival and Golden Horse Awards. To ensure success globally, Director He made a point to feature a familiar face to international audiences. The film featured a cameo by South Korean star Yeo Jin Goo, which has proven to be a wise move as it generated attention from international audiences who are unfamiliar with local faces like Hong Hui Fang and Shane Pow.

CONCLUSION

Hallyu has come a long way since its beginnings, spreading South Korean culture not just locally but also becoming a global phenomenon. It has been fascinating to see how Korean Wave developed over the past 20 years in Asia through various case studies (China, Middle East, Singapore) presented in the essay. Overall, there is no denying that Hallyu propelled Korea into the international stage. With so much interest being shown in Korea's culture scene and creative economy on a global scale, Korea must be able to promote and develop its identity authentically in order to maintain Hallyu for an extended period. It will be interesting to watch how Korea innovates in the future and capitalizes on the enormous potential and success of the Hallyu to maintain its attractiveness to audiences around Asia. Afterall, the novelty and newness Hallyu have been one of the key factors contributing to its meteoric rise in popularity throughout the region.

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CRIME IN KOREA



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INTRODUCTION

This paper will explore the topic of crime in South Korea, specifically crimes targeted at women. Even though South Korea is a relatively safe country, our research uncovers the underbelly of crimes that women experience and how South Korean law fails to protect them effectively. This paper aims to shed light on such crimes and find out more about how South Korea is tackling this issue.

Laws in Korea and their limitations

South Korea has several laws set in place to punish wrongdoers that commit crimes, particularly crimes of sexual nature that women are commonly subjected to.

Some of the laws include:

Quasi sexual misconduct (Korean Criminal Law Article 298, Article 299); When aperson, through violence or duress, violates the integrity of another individual. This can warrant 10 years of imprisonment or a fine of up to 15 million won.

Quasi Rape (Korean Criminal Law Article 298, Article 299); When non-consensual sexual intercourse is committed. This can warrant a minimum of three years imprisonment.

Offence of Criminal Voyeurism (Special Act Law, Act 14 Section 1); When the perpetrator uses a camera or other recording device to take a non-consensual video of a victim's physical area which can arouse feelings of sexual desire or sexual violation. This can warrant up to 7 years of imprisonment or a fine of up to 50 million KRW.

The Special Act for the Punishment of Domestic Violence; This legislates the punishments for the crimes of domestic violence. It is to be noted that spousal rape is not considered under this act.

However, despite these laws set in place, the cases of South Korean women falling victim to such crimes continue to rise.

According to research conducted by Korea Women's Hotline, 90% of the women who participated in the survey stated that they had been physically or emotionally abused while dating or during courtship (The Korean Herald, 2015). Women in relationships are commonly targeted by their male partners and become subjects of abuse.

Moreover, a report released by the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family (MOGEF) in 2021 states that the number of crimes against women, such as sexual offenses and dating violence, have increased over the past years. In 2019, a total of 32,000 sex crimes against women were, up from 20,000 cases tallied in 2010. This means an average of 86 sex offenses occurred every day (Yonhap News Agency, 2021). It can be seen that cases of crime committed against women continue to be on the rise despite the laws set in place to protect them.

Historical background

To develop a deeper understanding of the cause of these crimes, we must look into South Korea's history.

Choi (2004) uncovered the cultural connection that modern-day domestic abuse has to Korean history. She writes that it dates back to Confucianism, which became the ruling belief during Joseon Dynasty. Korean cultural values, which are mainly derived from Korean Confucianism, suggest that married women are supposed to sacrifice themselves for the sake of their families. Confucianism advocates for several practices that put women at an inferior level, making them vulnerable. One such practice is Namjon Yubi, where women are inherently inferior to men and incompetent (Choi, 2004). These long-standing customs for treating women have influenced Korean women's viewpoints, attitudes, and ways of thinking. They also serve as the foundation for Korean women's subjugation and vulnerability to crimes committed by men.

Although such beliefs may not be as heavily practised in modern-day South Korea, it still continues to manifest itself in other aspects of society. This can be seen through Korean women being paid about 38% less than men and the percentage of high-ranking female officials who can make influential political decisions being only 4% (Tekkas, 2020). This highlights society's perception of women being inherently inferior to men, which contributes to the crimes that women are subjected to.

Therefore, it is evident that the deep-rooted issue of crime committed against women stems from the traditionalist Confucianism practices that have become ingrained within South Korea's society, even up until modern times.

There will be a focus on three specific areas of crime in Korea: domestic violence, hidden cameras known as "Molka," and stalking. These crimes are commonly targeted toward women and have remained a long-standing issue for the past few decades.

Domestic Violence in Korea

Domestic or dating violence can culminate when "a partner in an intimate relationship abuses the other partner verbally, emotionally, economically, sexually or physically" (Bahk, 2021). The violence occurs most often in relationships with males who abuse their female partners, possibly stemming from Korea's history of gender inequality. The two primary domestic violence laws in Korea include the Prevention of Violence Act and the Special Act for the Punishment of Domestic Violence. The laws are non-specific to gender, and no single law protects against violence against women (Baker Mckenzie, 2022).

Prevalence

Although domestic violence arrest numbers fell 10.8 percent from 2019 to 2020 during the pandemic, Yoon (2002) explains that "the presence of the victims' partners at home, who are in many cases the perpetrators of domestic violence, would have made it more difficult for them to report abuse." However, online reports doubled during the same period, suggesting reporting methods on domestic violence have shifted, but the same issue remains.

Domestic violence continues to be a significant issue, as a staggering "79.7 percent of South Korean men had abused a girlfriend during the dating period" (The Straits Times, 2017). These numbers form a majority of Korean males in a relationship, emphasising how domestic violence has been normalised as many did not constitute violent acts towards their partners as abuse. Many overstepped relationship boundaries as females reported "being controlled by the male partner," experiencing "psychological and emotional violence, physical violence and sexual violence" (Hong et al., 2015). Han & Choi (2021) found that both genders "lack awareness that domestic violence is not right," showing the need for Koreans to understand the issue more greatly.

The reason for domestic violence against females involves warped views of gender statuses. Despite differences in their acts of display, males still hold some prejudice towards women that "if older Korean men see themselves as patriarchs who oversee women, younger Korean men see themselves as victims of feminism" (Park, 2021). Older men feel that they have a higher social status compared to women, while younger men are frustrated at the push for feminism as it jeopardises their advantageous social status over women. Furthermore, for males who "restricted their partners' movements, the behaviour stems from a deep-rooted patriarchal attitude of South Korean men" (The Straits Times, 2017). Korean men still hold on to problematic beliefs that women are less deserving than men. Korea ranks 11th on the United Nations Gender Inequality Index Rank (UN Women, 2020), highlighting the glaring differences in treatment between men and women.

Case study

In 2021, Hwang Ye-jin, a female, was attacked by her male partner for telling others they were dating and died from her injuries three weeks later. Hwang's mother released video footage of the incident, showing how "Hwang collapses on the floor after her attacker pummels her against a wall several times. Later, the video shows Hwang lying on the floor unconscious, and the attacker drags her bleeding into an elevator" (Bahk, 2021). The violent act emphasised the problem of domestic violence as it went to the extent of males murdering their partners. Within a month, the petition made by Hwang's mother reached 350,000 signatures, showing increased public awareness of domestic violence.

Hwang's case is just one of many. The Hankyoreh 21 Report analysed domestic violence against women from 2016 to 2021. Um (2021) explained that "in 31% of the 107 cases of femicide referred for trial on homicide charges, the brutality of the crimes was mentioned as an aggravating factor," showing that extreme domestic violence was highly prevalent in Korea. Moreover, out of the 500 femicides, "29% (were) murdered after breaking up and refusing to get back together" (Um, 2021), an alarming number of murders committed after falling out of relationships.

Even though extreme violence cases continue to rise, Korea remains reluctant to interfere with personal affairs. There is insufficient legal protection towards women due to "Korea's social definition of dating violence as simply "lovers' quarrels" (Bahk, 2021), leading to authorities who downplay or avoid the issue. In Hwang's case, the local court rejected an arrest warrant for the abuser, quoting that "he was unlikely to flee or destroyevidence" (Bahk, 2021). Authorities continue to regard domestic violence as an insignificant issue, creating systems that protect the abusers rather than the victims. Korea needs to move past its social stigma and increase its protection towards domestic violence survivors while imposing more severe punishments on abusers.

MOLKA IN KOREA

Molka (Korean: 몰카), short for molrae-kamera (Korean: 몰래카메라), is a Korean term for hidden or secret cameras installed illegally to capture sexually explicit images and videos of individuals. In South Korea, the use of spy cameras started to increase since 2010, with some being installed in small holes inside walls of public spaces such as women's restrooms and motel rooms. The voyeuristic images and videos captured are then sold online across various platforms, including popular social media sites like Twitter and Tumblr, without the knowledge or consent of those on camera. 'Molka' can refer to both the actual cameras and the footage later posted online.

Prevalence

A common form of Molka is the filming of women in crowded public places using cell phones and miniature cameras hidden in shoes at stairs and subways, capturing pictures of women from under their skirts. Due to the common use of cell phones for Molka, South Korean cell phone manufacturers are required to have phones that emit loud shutter noises when taking a picture (Kim, 2018).

More recently, it has become more common for Molka incidents to involve tiny cameras hidden in public bathrooms, changing rooms, and even hospitals. As early as 1997, some of the first cameras were found hidden in public areas, being installed in the ceiling of a women's bathroom in a Sinchon department store (Lee, 2018).

Along with digitisation and advances in technology came an increase in Molka crimes, where the recording and selling of Molka footage became easier and more prominent. According to reports, Molka cases proliferated from 1,300 cases in 2010 to 6,800 cases in 2018 (May, 2018).

Molka crimes are considered under article 14 of the "Act on Special Cases Concerning the Punishment, etc. of Sexual Crimes," which states that taking or distributing unauthorized pictures or videos is punishable by law. However, the law remains vague enough that most Molka incidents are easily privatised and classified within the scope of normativity (Kim, 2017).

Molka crimes can result in jail time or fines. The filming or distribution of intimate videos- including if the subject consents to be filmed but does not consent to the distribution of said video - can result in up to five years in prison or a fine of up to 30 million won (May, 2019). However, as of 2017, nearly 80 percent of fines implemented are less than 3 million won, and nearly 80 percent of fines are imposed on the suspect who distributed the footage rather than those who installed and initially filmed from spy cameras (Kim, 2017).

Social reactions

There have been various reactions to the rise of Molka crimes, including increased discussions and physical demonstrations regarding the issue. In South Korea's most Tweeted about social issues in 2018, 'Molka' ranked third, outranked only by #SchoolMeToo and 'feminism' to be ranked first and second respectively (TwitterKorea, 2018). These issues all relate to the sexual inequality and violence that women face. In May 2018, then-president Moon Jae-in addressed that the issue of Molka has become a part of daily life' in South Korea, even acknowledging that there should be greater punishment for offenders (Our Foreign Staff, 2018). However, Molka incidents and other forms of gendered violence are considered by many as outliers and blame "extreme individuals" - ignoring the systemic misogyny and the use of power to silence sexual violence against women (Kim, 2017).

CASE STUDY

The "Nth Room" case is a criminal case that occurred in South Korea between 2018 and 2020 (Yonhap, 2020). The case revolved around a man nicknamed 'god god' selling sexual exploitation videos on Telegram channels and groups. It was reported that 'god god' illegally filmed and obtained the personal information of young women, including minors. He would then blackmail them into releasing the footage to the public, causing the victims to follow his commands. He forced victims to take sexual videos of themselves, which he would sell with the Molka footage (Yonhap, 2020). It has been confirmed that at least 103 women were exploited, with 26 of them being minors (Li, 2020). Pictures and videos of the victims were shared and sold to over 60,000 users, all transactions occurring through cryptocurrency (Yoon, 2020).

The first report about the "Nth Room" case was brought about by a man who raised the issue in male-dominated communities. When reported to the police, they did not consider the case credible and ignored it (Joohee, 2021). As the Telegram groups became bigger and the issue grew, two female university students in July 2019, going by the name of Team Flame, started an investigation (Joohee, 2021). With anonymous testimonies from victims and interactions within the Telegram groups, further investigations were sparked involving the police and other larger journalism groups being involved (Yoon, 2020). On May 12, 2020, Moon Hyung-wook, nicknamed 'god god', was arrested and sentenced to 34 years in prison, along with his accomplice Ahn Seung-jin (엄지원, 2020).

The "Nth Room" case was a wake-up call for the nation. With public outcries and physical demonstrations filling the streets, the Supreme Court of South Korea announced its plans to make sentences harsher for digital sex crimes (Kim, 2020). Before the revision, only the distribution, sale, lease, and provision of illegal photographs were subject to punishment; the current law added regulations that also sentenced those who possess, purchase, store, and watch illegal sexual photographs up to three years in prison or fined up to 30 million won (Joohee, 2021). Even if the video was filmed by oneself, the law clarified the rule that if someone spreads it against their own will, the disseminator would be punished, and the sentence would be raised. However, people are skeptical that government policies will prevent more such cases
from occurring. It is in the hands of the government and people of South Korea to understand the struggles of women and work on their system of protection and equality.

Prevalence

Stalking is defined as the "abnormal or long-term pattern of the threat of harassment directed toward a specific individual and obsessional following" (Sin, 2008). Particularly in Korea, this severe crime has been reduced to society's misconstrued view of stalking as a mere "expression of excessive love" (Jae-Seong, 2022).

The history of Korea's anti-stalking law began in 1999 when the first anti-stalking law was proposed. This initial law deemed stalking-related crimes as misdemeanours punishable through fines of 100,000 won (~SGD$100) and below (Jae-Seong, 2022). However, after decades of increased public demand for harsher punishment and legal ground formation, South Korea enacted an anti-stalking law in Article 18 in October 2021 (Jae-Seong, 2022). Through this new law, stalkers may be imprisoned for up to three years or fined up to 30 million won (~SGD$30,000), and up to five years or fined up to 50 million won (~SGD$50,000) for stalking with a weapon (Jae-Seong, 2022). While the overall process of handling stalking cases is improving regarding awareness of severity and punishment, there are still loopholes and room for improvement.

Five months since the latest anti-stalking law took effect in October 2021, the Korean National Police Agency analysed 5,248 investigations among 5,707 reported stalking incidents as of March 2022 in a 237-page report (Jae-Seong, 2022). There are three main findings revealed. Firstly, victims are often targeted by previously-known individuals, as 41% of arrested stalkers have had relationships with victims to varying degrees (Jae-Seong, 2022). This includes romantic partners (20.9%), acquaintances (11.4%), and neighbours (4.1%) (Jae-Seong, 2022). Secondly, 4 in 5 victims of stalking are women – an alarming finding that raises the prominence of stalking as a gender-based crime against women (Jae-Seong, 2022). Thirdly, 29% of 3,039 open cases were thrown out due to a loophole in the law (Jae-Seong, 2022). According to Article 18-3, stalking is unpunishable upon the victim's objection – a highly-debated point during the National Assembly review for legislation for its potential of motivating stalkers to harass victims to drop charges (Jae-Seong, 2022).

Case study

Earlier this year, a 28-year-old woman was murdered during her evening shift at a subway station by a man who had been stalking her over the years (Mackenzie, 2022). The harassment dates back to 2019, one year after the pair started working together (Mackenzie, 2022). Attacker Jeon Joo-hwan, aged 31, had called the victim over 300 times begging her to date him, including threats to harm her and distribute illegally filmed footage if she refused (Mackenzie, 2022). In October 2021, Jeon was fired and arrested upon the victim's report. However, despite a police investigation and a request for detention, Jeon was never imprisoned or given a restraining order, as the court felt there was no risk of him escaping or destroying evidence (Oh, 2022). After a month of police protection, the case was closed and Jeon continued to threaten and stalk the victim (Mackenzie, 2022). In 2022, he stabbed the victim to death one day prior to his stalking sentence (Mackenzie, 2022).

This case sparked public outrage across South Korea. The wall beneath the plaque outside the subway station's women's restroom that reads 'Women Friendly Seoul' has since become a shrine of Post-it notes that detail the anger, fear, and sadness of South Koreans (Mackenzie, 2022). Messages such as "How many more women need to die for this country to change?", "I want to be alive at the end of my workday" and "Is it too much to ask, to be safe to reject people I don't like?" reveal the public's desperation for authorities to revise the current anti-stalking law and to take violence against women as a serious matter (Mackenzie, 2022). Furthermore, Min Go-eun, the lawyer representing the victim, expressed her frustration at the "failure by law enforcement and the court to act more proactively to prevent the murder" (Chan-kyong, 2022).

In response, MOGEF Minister Kim Hyun-sook told reporters that she did not believe this was a gender-based hate crime and that misogyny was not a factor (McCurry, 2022). She further explained that the crime could have been avoided if the victim had taken preventive measures or approached the ministry helpline (McCurry, 2022). This demonstrates the disregard from authorities from their perspective of stalking as a crime being largely targeted at women and perpetuates a harmful societal culture of victim blaming.

Overall, this case exposes the gaps in South Korea's anti-stalking law of its inability to protect victims and prevent stalking occurrences. Since the anti-stalking law was instituted, 7,152 stalking arrests have been made, with only 5% of the suspects detained (McCurry, 2022). Moreover, one in three police requests for detention was denied by the courts (McCurry, 2022).

Moving forward, South Korea's President Yoon Suk-yeol has acknowledged the insufficiency of the country's anti-stalking laws and has since ordered the Justice Ministry to review them (McCurry, 2022). The Supreme Court has also proposed that stalking suspects who are not in detention should be given restraining orders. Professor Lee Soo-jung, a criminal psychologist, recommended that the ministry remove the clause that requires the victims' agreement for prosecution (McCurry, 2022). However, people are sceptical regarding such changes as a similar call to action had been stalled in the National Assembly for over a year but to no avail (McCurry, 2022). It is crucial that South Korea re-examine the investigation process and protective measures against stalkers to work towards returning basic human rights and due dignity to women in South Korea.

CONTRIBUTING FACTORS TO GENDER-BASED CRIME

Poor Justice Response in South Korea's Criminal Legal System

The criminal legal system in South Korea has been notably lenient in the conviction and sentencing of sex crimes. Although sexual harassment and assaults are illegal, there has been little to nothing done to deter such violence against women (Brito, 2022). For example, despite the recent national outcry and demands for authorities to crack down on such systemic gender discrimination heightened from the "Nth Room Case", responses from the South Korean government have been largely lukewarm.

There is generally a poor response and reception of such violence against female victims in the legal system. South Korean courts often view domestic violence and sexual assault episodes as private matters, in which they believe they should have no say. This can be problematic in appropriately punishing offenders and protecting victims in sexual violence cases.

With only 30 percent of judges and four percent of police officers being female (Brito, 2022), the majority of the police officers in South Korea are men. It is common that they would mock and dismiss victims, trivialise their complaints, interrogate them in abusive ways, and even compel them to collect evidence of their own (Barr, 2021). Such a poor justice response in South Korea then encourages a system of violence and re-victimisation that discourages victims from coming forward in the future. Even when some of these cases have been convicted, many victims are frustrated by the sentences that seem unjust and minor compared to the hurt they have experienced.

Lack of Civil Remedies

There is a lack of civil remedies made accessible to victims of sexual violence. Civil remedies help victims to get a court order that compels offenders to delete or stop spreading explicit images and even pay damages for compensation. However, these remedies are not readily available as there is a general lack of access to legal assistance, procedural barriers, and risks of disclosing the identities of victims (Barr, 2021).

Inappropriate Sexuality Education in Schools

The South Korean Ministry of Education established the "National Level of School Sexual Education Standards" in 2015 to be standardized across Korean schools. As the current curriculum is taught separately between males and females to create a safe space for each group to learn about sexuality, there is a need to be objective in educating them. However, the existing curriculum is neither appropriate nor comprehensive as it largely focuses on abstinence and shamefulness around the topic of sex (Brito, 2022). It perpetuates violent stereotypes and sexist attitudes towards women and suggests that girls are the ones at fault for any sexual violence committed towards them. For example, the curriculum emphasises how they should "behave properly" and "not wear anything short" in front of men, such that they do not invite the sexual advances of men's "natural impulses" (Goh, 2020).

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Maintaining Support Services and Facilities

The impact of Covid-19 has affected the operations of many shelters, hotlines, and services across Korea (Yoon, 2022). This resulted in many victims, especially of domestic violence, who could not access and receive the help they needed. Since then, ongoing efforts have been introduced to strengthen support services and facilities, such as allowing reporting mechanisms and services to be accessible online. Such efforts should be maintained as a priority, even after post-pandemic eras, to be fully prepared and readily adaptable to future unforeseen circumstances so victims are able to receive support regardless.

Influencing Societal Mindsets and Attitudes

The impact of Covid-19 has affected the operations of many shelters, hotlines, and services across Korea (Yoon, 2022). This resulted in many victims, especially of domestic violence, who could not access and receive the help they needed. Since then, ongoing efforts have been introduced to strengthen support services and facilities, such as allowing reporting mechanisms and services to be accessible online. Such efforts should be maintained as a priority, even after post-pandemic eras, to be fully prepared and readily adaptable to future unforeseen circumstances so victims are able to receive support regardless.

A significant step in the right direction would be for leaders and public figures, especially those in power and the government, to acknowledge the existing obstacles in achieving gender equality in Korea. The voices of those elected and in power would be of a strong influence on the development of a more inclusive society.

However, current South Korean President Yoon Suk-yeol has publicly expressed misogynistic intentions, such as proposing plans to abolish MOGEF and not believing that systemic gender discrimination exists in Korea (Gunia, 2022). This prevents the country from achieving any real progress in addressing the consequences of the existing gender stereotypes prevalent in society.

Improving Sexuality Education in Schools

The sexuality education curriculum in Korea needs to be refined to encapsulate a more holistic view. This would be crucial in shaping how future societies view the dynamics between men and women. Compared to the current system that perpetuates violent stereotypes and sexist attitudes, the curriculum should focus on discouraging violence of all sorts, increasing awareness of the rise of digital sex crimes, and teaching consent in healthy relationships. Additionally, the presence of a committee in schools to ensure that sex crimes in schools are being taken seriously would also benefit student victims.

CONCLUSION

Laws in Korea have remained insufficient in addressing crimes against women, as the number of sexual violence cases continues to rise. The effects of Confucian values dating back to history continue to influence Koreans' understanding of gender roles, as many have internalised that women are of a lower social standing compared to men. The three aspects of domestic violence, "Molka," and stalking, demonstrate the high prevalence of such gender-based crimes in South Korea, even with many unreported cases. With digital sex crime rates being 7.5 times higher in 2020 compared to 2003, sexual assault rates have also jumped by 1.6 times (Jang, 2022). It is important to note that women are the most commonly victimised here.

While the problem might not entirely be an issue of pitting men against women, it is fundamentally a perpetuation of the issue of gender inequality in South Korea. This results in more people forming discriminatory perceptions against women that compromise their safety and protection in society.

More can be done to address the core issue of gender inequality that has resulted in disproportionate crimes against women. While the government plays a vital role in crime prevention, individuals must recognise that they are part of the community and should play an active role in making society a safer place for women. The public can play a more prominent role in voicing concerns about such crimes by signing petitions and raising awareness on social media. Such people-led movements create awareness and garner attention, prompting greater action for change.



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7

THE COMPETITIVE EDUCATION SYSTEM IN SOUTH KOREA



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INTRODUCTION

Since the introduction of the PISA assessment in 2000, South Korea has consistently ranked highly in international assessments of their student's academic aptitude. In 2009, South Korea was the top performing Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) country in mathematics and reading, and is among the top 3 performing countries in science (OECD, 2014). The consistency of performing well in international academic ranking is a testament to how South Korean highly prioritised the education of their students, and the academic rigour put in place to attain such achievements. The intense academic rigor, however, comes with its controversy, and South Korea has the highest suicide rate in OECD, with suicide being the leading case of deaths for young people between the age of 10-24 years old (Statistia, 2022). Many have criticised the rigid education system in Korea for placing undue stress on students, and in 2019, a poll conducted showed that 39.8% of suicidal teens cited academic stress as the leading reason for contemplating suicide, followed by anxiety for the career and future at 25.5% (Yu, 2021). Is the South Korean education system really to blame for all of the student's woes or are there deeper structural problems within South Korean society itself that led to such outcomes? In this paper, we will explore more about the conception of Korea's education system, its impacts on society and how it fares alongside the rest of the world.

Historical Overview of Korea's Education System

Even though the focal context of this paper is mainly contemporary Korea, a brief historical overview of Korea's education system is essential in setting a context for the historical, social and political factors from which its competitiveness possibly originate. Discussions on the historical development of Korea's education are often anchored in a tripartite division: (1) pre-modern era (4th-19th century), (2) modern era (1880-1945) and (3) current era (1945-present) (Kim-Renaud, 1991).

Pre-modern Era (4th-19th Century)

The origins of formal education traceable to the three-kingdom era (57 BC to 668 AD). Goguryeo established the first Korean university Taehak ("Great Learning", now still used to refer to a college) in 372 AD; Baekje implemented a system of Paksa ("Erudite Scholar", now still used to refer to a doctorate); Silla adopted Hwarangdo, a system to train young men for physical and mental strength to prepare them for national defense. After the unification of the three kingdoms, Unified Silla introduced Kukhak ("National College", national school system) in 682 AD) (Kim-Renaud, 1991).

There are two main characteristics of the education system in the pre-modern era. The first characteristic is the Confucianism-centric ideology and pedagogy (Kim-Renaud, 1991). Confucianism believes that a society should be governed by men of talent and virtue, which are best attained by studying Confucian classics that emphasise ethics and self-discipline (e.g., "five constant virtues" of benevolence, righteousness, etc.) (Tzu, 1966). As such, during the pre-modern era, Confucian studies topped the curriculum hierarchy while other technical subjects e.g. agriculture, maths were ranked inferior. Secondly, education served as a social selection device with the explicit goal of selecting capable leaders through civil service examinations (Kim-Renaud, 1991; Seth, 2004). Such formal education - as a means of acquiring public positions and attaining so-called "moral perfection" - was a "major preoccupation" in Korea's pre-modern era (Seth, 2004). This was arguably the earliest origin of competitiveness in Korea's education system, whereby the obsession on educating oneself to fulfil society's moral standards and attain social status has long since been entrenched in the nation's psyche.

Current Era (1945-Present)

During the modern era, there was a weakened rule of the Joseon dynasty, infiltration of Western/Christian democratic ideals and concepts of universal education introduced in the early 1900s (Kim, 1983). According to Kim-Renaud (1991), there are three main characteristics of the education system in the modern era. First, the modern era witnessed the rise of Western-style private schools opened by foreign missionaries catered to women (vs. men only previously), such as Ewha Women's University founded in 1886. Second, there was a paradigm shift in pedagogical focus, away from Confucian classics and towards "new education", e.g., maths, geography, foreign languages, which were subjects deemed unimportant in the pre-modern era. Third, the effect of the Japanese colonial rule on education. The Japanese discriminated against the Koreans, viewing them as backward and inferior. As such, the Koreans were only provide basic education, had limited access to upper levels of education and were allocated to inferior schools. Middle class families were frustrated by unmet needs for educational advancement, which was argued by Seth (2004) to be "a key factor in explaining South Korea's 'education fever' since the end of the Second World War".

Modern Era (1880-1945)

Post-liberation from the Japanese, there were two important policies that intensified education fever in South Korea (Seth, 2004). First was the ending of strict tracking. Previously under the Japanese rule, students were streamed into the academic (focused more on literary, humanities skills) or the vocational (focused more on practical skills e.g., agriculture) route. Despite the ending of such strict tracking post-liberation, division on different focus still exists, and both routes were not terminal and could lead to higher levels of education. This meant no "structural winnowing", and all could and did seek higher education, thus intensifying fierce competition (Seth, 2004).

Second was the state's commitment to making basic education accessible and uniform to all. While this eliminated structural and social disparity and enhanced social cohesion, it also generated strains between Koreans' overwhelming demands for higher education and the state's attempts to limit an excessive supply of advanced degree holders that was not necessary for economic development. The outcome was intensified competition for entry into higher education, i.e., an intensified "education fever" (Seth, 2004).

Contemporary Education in South Korea

Public Education

Public education in South Korea operates based on a single-track system, which can be broken down into six years of primary school, three years of middle school, three years of high school, and four years of university. Among the four aforementioned components, primary and middle schools constitute the nine years of compulsory education for children in South Korea.

Preschool Education

It is of note that before entering primary school, parents in South Korea have the option to put their children through preschool education. Preschool programs in South Korea typically serve children aged from 3 to 5, and the current national preschool curriculum is known as the Nuri Curriculum. Before the emergence of the Nuri Curriculum, there existed different curricula across different childcare centres and kindergartens. However, after the Nuri Curriculum was created, the government took the effort to mandate its implementation across different childcare centres and kindergartens, in the hope of standardising the educational experience for all children.

According to South Korea's Ministry of Education (2012), the Nuri Curriculum is claimed to serve the purpose of developing "basic capacities and upright character needed for five-year-olds" and "building the basics of democratic citizens." (p. 13). Nevertheless, the findings of an empirical study conducted on the perceived role of kindergartens seemed to have pointed out the inconsistency between the ideology publicly endorsed by the authorities and real-life practices, suggesting that kindergarten focused relatively more on preparing children for the beginning of formal studenthood, as compared to character building (Jun et al., 2012). Hence, having undergone several revisions throughout the years, the latest version of the Nuri Curriculum now adopts a more holistic approach to learning as seen in its emphasis on child-centred and play-based learning, as opposed to focusing merely on academic performance(Ministry of Education [MOE] & Ministry of Health and Welfare [MOHW], 2019).

Primary Education

Upon completion of the preschool program, the child advances to primary school, which serves to equip them with rudimentary knowledge and skills that are essential in life. It is of note that during the first two years of school, children do not only have to pick up mainstream subjects like Korean and mathematics, but also general social formation subjects named "Good Life (바른 생활)", "Wise Life (슬기로운 생활)", "Happy Life (즐거운 생활)" and "We Are First Graders (우리들은 1학년)" which are claimed to facilitate the transition to school life (National Center on Education and the Economy [NCEE], n.d.). Meanwhile, subjects including English, social studies, science, physical education, music and the arts are only available from the third grade onwards. Promotion to a higher grade is determined by the student's performance on internal assessments developed by the school.

As of 2021, as high as 98.4% of children within the age range of six to eleven were reported to enrol in elementary school (Statistics Korea, 2022). Taken together with the legal imposition of compulsory primary education and the waiver of educational expenses at the primary level, it is suggested that these all seem to signify the nation's profound appreciation for education. In fact, it seems that the government continues to strive to improve their education system, which is evident in their effort to revise their national primary curriculum every 10 years (Mani & Trines, 2018).

Lower Secondary Education (Middle School)

Like primary education, expenses incurred by lower secondary education are covered by the government. In fact, since 2021, the funding scheme has also been expanded to include all but a small number of elite high schools.

Since the 1970s, a so-called school "equalisation policy" has been implemented in South Korea, whereby entrance examinations are abolished because they are claimed to subject students to immense stress, which manifested in the form of compulsion to sign up for private tutoring and cram schools (Lee, 2020). In place of the exams, primary school graduates nowadays are assigned by a computerised lottery system to schools that are located within their residential districts, thereby reducing the competition over admission into prestigious schools.

The subjects offered at middle schools do not vary much from those of primary schools, except for the addition of one subject chosen out of the following two options: Technical Education and Home Science. Upon completion of lower secondary education which normally lasts for three years, students are awarded a certificate as a proof of graduation from middle school.

Upper Secondary Education (High School)

While the “equalisation policy” is found to be implemented at the upper secondary level as well, the authorities seem to be less forceful in enforcing it, in that the policy is only imposed on high schools that are located within the designated “equalisation zones.” Within these areas, admission is determined by a lottery system, but with the prerequisite that the student met the minimum standards on a general competency examination. Meanwhile, schools outside the equalisation zones are generally more competitive, as they usually have more requirements in place, including GPAs, interviews and teacher recommendations.

There exists different kinds of institutions offering upper secondary education in South Korea, most of which can be categorised as either general or vocational in focus. In general academic high schools, every student in grade 10 would be taking the same set of core subjects, whereas those in grades 11 and 12 would get to decide which elective subjects they want to add to their existing curriculum which includes subjects like Korean, English, mathematics and a second foreign language. Up until 2002, students were faced with the difficulty of having to choose between the natural sciences-oriented track and the liberal arts-oriented track. However, the segregation between the two tracks was later abolished in the same year in the hope of nourishing creative thinking among students (Mani & Trines, 2018). So, high school students nowadays can freely choose any combination of subjects out of the natural sciences and liberalarts curricula.

Similarly, the first year in vocational high schools consists of a standard core curriculum for every student, before they specialise in a particular field in grades 11 and 12. However, it is of note that far fewer graduates from vocational high schools advance to tertiary education as compared to those who graduated from general high schools (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2016). Hence, it is suggested that vocational high schools primarily serve the purpose of preparing students for entry into the labour force, rather than as a bridge to higher education.

Tertiary Education (University)

High school graduates who intend to further their studies at the tertiary level have to sit for the national University College Scholastic Ability Test (CSAT), more commonly known as Suneung (수능). As the enrollment in a prestigious university is often considered as having a profound impact on one’s job prospects, a substantial proportion of the teenagers study impatiently in preparation for the high-stakes examination, hoping that their performance on the test could possibly help them to secure a place in one of the top three universities in South Korea, namely Seoul National University, Korea University and Yonsei University (often abbreviated as the SKY universities).

The eight-hour long examination is made up of six sections—Korean, mathematics, English, history, social studies and a second foreign language—conducted back-to-back. Throughout the years, the authorities have gone to great lengths to ensure a conducive environment for the exam sitters. On the day of the examination, offices would start operation later, and the frequency of public transportation services including buses and subway is increased, so that students can arrive on time. Planes are also grounded so as to not create any disturbance, especially during the listening section of the exam. Interestingly, the fact that the COVID-19 pandemic did not stop the authorities from holding the exam (Kim & Lee, 2020) seems to serve as the key evidence which illuminates the extent to which education is valued within South Korean culture.

Hagwon

Aside from regular schooling, many students in South Korea participate in after-school lessons held at private educational institutions, also known as Hagwon. Hagwon (학원) is the Korean term for private educational institutions, and many Hagwons are run in a similar manner to for-profit business, by private individuals not associated with any governmental institutions (Beach, 2011). A regular Hagwon teaches subjects that are taught in the school curriculum, such as Math and Sciences, but some Hagwons also offer atypical lessons such as flower arrangements and driving lessons. The Hagwon industry is a lucrative industry and spendings has only increased over the years. In 2021 alone, the total spending on Hagwon was 23 trillion won, or about 16.2 billion USD (Statista, 2022).

Many parents send their children to Hagwon, with some children starting from as early as 5 years old (Bak, 2017). There are numerous reasons for why parents wish to send their children to Hagwon, but the most common reasons are due to the peer pressure of other students attending Hagwon, and hoping to advance further than the rest (Statistia, 2022). As explained previously, the Suneung exam places great pressure on Korean highschoolers to perform well, and this has even led to an intense competition among Hagwons themselves. The most popular and desirable Hagwons are known to set their own entrance exams and reject applicants who do not meet the cut. In fact, it has even led to the creation of Sekki ("cub") Hagwons, hagwons meant specifically for preparing students to enter more prestigious hagwons (The Economist, 2015).

Education is central to the average Korean student's life, and with over 75% of students participating in some form of private education (Statistia, 2022), the Hagwon industry is bound to have a great impact on not just students, but even their families and society itself.

Impact of Hagwon on Students

The Hagwon culture and South Korea's competitive educational system undoubtedly have a negative impact on the students' physical health. This is mainly caused by the hectic schedule of students where their day begins at 8 am and staying for hagwon classes after school until 10 pm (Peter, 2021), or even later. Students who do not have a healthy work-life balance tend to frequently burn out. Lack of sleep is another factor that impacts their physical health. A high school student in South Korea gets an average of just 5.5 hours of sleep per night (Peter, 2021), making South Korea as one of the countries with the worst sleep habits. The lack of sleep not only has an impact on their health but as well as their capacity for concentration the following day (Peter, 2021).

It was reported that only the top 2% of students are able to enrol in these prestigious universities (Kim, 2021), and as a result of the enormous stress and pressure to get into SKY Universities, it has impacted students' health negatively. Children as young as 5 years old (Bak, 2017) can receive a private education in the pursuit of better future prospects (Kim, 2021). Since the source of their degree—in this case, ideally from SKY universities—determines their future, they are under pressure to succeed even at a young age for their Suneung. Otherwise, it would be next to impossible for them to get a job at a conglomerate, also known as chaebols. Why is it so stressful to a great extent, aside from the fear of what the future may hold? This is due to the high level of youth unemployment (Sharif, 2018), as it may be difficult even for students from SKY universities to land a good job, let alone the rest of the student population. Additionally, many of them lack ambition to break free from the cycle of poverty and avoid society's mistreatment, as it was found that 41.7% of lower-school level citizens stated that they had not received a desirable treatment in the society (Lee, 2005).

Furthermore, high stress levels will unavoidably lead to depression and even suicide. According to a report, young people aged 11 to 15 in South Korea have the highest levels of stress (Sharif, 2018). This is also supported by Dr. Kim Tae-hyung, a South Korean Psychologist, who stated that children are forced to study hard and compete with their friends in order to be "better" than their peers (Sharif, 2018). This frequently leads to isolation, which can lead to depression and is a major contributor to suicide.

Suicide has been deemed as the leading cause of death among young people aged 10 to 30 (Sharif, 2018). A 19 year old student, Lee committed suicide after failing to meet the CSAT score requirement for a liberal arts school (Kim, 2003), despite having acquired acceptance on a rolling basis previously. In another case, a female student committed suicide two days after
taking the Suneung due to extreme pessimism about her suspected CSAT score (Pakman, 2014), and after her death, it was revealed that her score would have enabled her to enrol in SKY universities.

Aside from the impacts on physical and mental health, the competitive culture of hagwons lingers long after the student graduated. The pursuit of success does not end with university. The "overworked" culture of adolescence has carried over into adulthood as well. According to an OECD report, South Korean adults work the second-longest hours of any country while being paid less (Kasulis, 2017). Even adults cannot escape the harsh and competitive reality, and adult suicide rates remain high.

In order to mitigate such negative effects, a village known as the Don't Worry Village was established in the southern port city of Mokpo (Lee, 2020). It was created to serve as a haven for young and stressed people who are experiencing a quarter-life crisis and are unsure of what they truly want in life. Though it takes several rounds of interviews to get in (Lee, 2020), it provides successful applicants with a quiet space to plan for their future.

Impact of Hagwon on Parents

The first direct impact on parents would be financial. A typical hagwon costs around 350,000 won (John, 2022), or around $270 USD per month. The minimum age to begin such private education is 5 years old and an average Korean highschooler enters university at the age of 18, the estimated cost for sending their children to Hagwon for 13 years is around $41,500 USD. The cost may increase if parents provide their children with more resources, such as attending more hagwons and having private tutors.

The existing economic inequality and the vicious cycle would also have an impact on the parents. Such unequal playing fields of middle and upper-income families spending five times as
much as low-income families (John, 2022) can provide an idea of how much more resources their children can have access to, which translates to greater chances of great future prospects as they can receive more help and support to keep them on track to enter these SKY universities. As a result,family planning may be compromised as parents are likely to focus more resources on a single child and hence be discouraged from having more than one child (Hu, 2015), due to the increased costs of rearing them.

Impact of Hagwon on Government

Concerning the aforementioned point on family planning, it concerns another stakeholder: the South Korea's government. With the world's lowest fertility rate, the hyper competitive society has undoubtedly exacerbated fertility rates, as the cost of raising a child is undeniably a significant factor. As a result, even more dire consequences emerge, including an increase in the elderly dependency ratio, a shrinking workforce, and even the risk of secular stagnation (Kim, 2022), which essentially means a stagnant economy due to a chronic lack of demand.

As the leaders of the country, the government is responsible for enforcing policies that promote socio-economic equality for a more fair and just society. While such inequalities are inevitable as a consequence of the natural fault lines such as social status and gender, the prevalence of Hagwon Culture exacerbates the increasing inequality gap between the rich and the poor.

Moreover, the government has been constantly at odds with Hagwon and similar entities. Several former South Korean presidents have attempted to neutralise the threat. In 1980, President Chun Doo-hwan (Swanberg, 2020) attempted to outlaw hagwon by prohibiting private tutoring in order to free parents from conforming to societal pressure and spending up to 30% of their salary, which is concerning. Under the administration of Ex-President Lee Myung-bak, he attempted to curb the rapid expansion of price brackets (Park, 2017), as the gap between cheap and expensive private lessons widened, causing greater inequality. Finally, former President Park Geun-hye attempted to impose curfews on hagwons and their proponents (Park, 2017), to varying effects.

In addition to policies crafted to combat the threat of hagwon, the government established a "Fail Expo" to counteract South Korea's obsession with success (Lee & Steger, 2019). This expo was inspired by similar exhibitions held in Sweden and Finland. It aims to alter people's perceptions of failure by emphasising self-help and mental wellness themes and showcasing successful examples of people who struggled to find employment or who had failed businesses but later overcame them.

Impacts of Hagwon on Teachers: Foreign and Korean Teachers

Last but not least, even though Hagwons are prospering as a result of high demand because it is considered a "necessity" for kids to attend a prestigious university, it was achieved at a tremendous cost.

Many teachers are suffering as a consequence of the inadequate regulation of their working conditions, which has a detrimental effect on Hagwon teachers. For foreign teachers who usually teach English, Hagwons control almost every aspect of their lives in South Korea. These hagwons will alter their living arrangements—including their residence and roommates—at their discretion without informing the instructors (Swanberg, 2020) . In addition, Hagwons have a tendency to fire these teachers just before the bonus payments in order to avoid paying more. Overtime work is also not reimbursed. These teachers also lose their sense of freedom because the Hagwons keep their passports for "safe-keeping" (Swanberg, 2020).

As for local teachers, it was reported that they are treated far worse than foreign teachers (Gardner, 2022). The Korean teachers frequently have to teach subjects other than their assigned ones and may even have to manage three classes at once. They also have far fewer breaks and are unable to sit for 8 hours straight (Gardner, 2022). Teachers are also being closely monitored, as CCTVs with allegedly embedded audio recordings are installed in every corner of the schoolsto ensure that no one speaks negatively about the Hagwons (Gardner, 2022).

Consequently, the inhumane conditions gave rise to a common phenomenon known as "Midnight Running," in which teachers who can no longer tolerate their bosses' constant abuse leave quietly without leaving a trace (Gardner, 2022) and without informing anyone, in order to escape from the torment of these hagwons.

COMPARISONS OF EDUCATION SYSTEMS ACROSS THE WORLD

Singapore

The Singaporean education system takes after the British education system, following many years under them as a colony. With the British control over many aspects of the country, including politics and education, the education system has been moulded to closely resemble that of Great Britain's till today, despite decades since independence from them. This resemblance can be easily observed in the overall education structure in the country, with Singapore's overall system following a path of nursery, kindergarten, primary school, secondary school, junior college (instead of 6th form) and university. Punctured in between would be national-level exams, some in reminiscence of Great Britain, like the O' Levels examinations and the A' Levels examinations conducted post secondary school and junior college respectively. The Compulsory Education Act (Ministry of Education, 2003) pushed by the government codified compulsory education for children of primary school age in 2000, with exceptions being special-needs children.

However, there are some differences to be noted. Firstly, unlike Great Britain, Singaporean students are required to sit for a nation-wide examination at the end of their primary school education, known as Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE), which determines the secondary school and stream to enter subsequently. Secondly, in accordance with the results from PSLE, students can choose between 3 tracks for secondary school - Express, Normal Academic and Normal Technical - and 2 specialised school programmes - the Integrated Programme (meant to be a direct path to junior college) or the International Baccalaureate. The third and final difference would be the offering of vocational schooling post-secondary school education. This means students can choose to pursue either academic school through junior college, or enter local vocational schools known as polytechnics.

One of the main criticisms regarding the Singaporean education system would be the heavy academic rigour and the over-competitiveness bred as a result. With students as young as 12 having to sit for national level exams that would determine their fate for the next few years, first-hand accounts and research have found the overall system promoting test anxiety and stress-related disorders from a young age (Poh, 2018). The over-competitive culture in education has also resulted in an amalgamation of a cultural concept significant in Singapore, known as "kiasuism" - understood to be the fear of losing out (Bedford & Chua, 2017). This idea of kiasuism only feeds into the already-present social problems in the local education system, with both parents and students falling trap to it.

In response, the local government has proposed and begun to implement changes to redirect the education system from being focused too much on academics, but to becoming more holistic in nature, by restructuring the grading system of PSLE (Goh, 2021), and revising the possible secondary school tracks by 2024, which originally categorised in accordance with students' learning capabilities but in the future will be more subject-focused instead (Davie, 2019). However, the effectiveness of these changes is still questionable, with parents stating that they promote a "different element of stress" for both them and their children (Ang, 2021).

Malaysia

The Malaysian education system bears very close resemblance to the Singaporean system, in terms of its structure. Its main differences remain in the streaming offered for the secondary school students, following a subject-based streaming as opposed to Singapore's current capabilities-based streaming. For Malaysian students, they are required to sit for exams known as the Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM), their equivalent to O' Levels, and Sijil Tinggi Persekolahan Malaysia (STPM), their local version of A' Levels, which is also being offered separately to students looking to study overseas for university. Tertiary education in Malaysia, hence, offers many different education structures for students who wish to go overseas, through the A' Level track and the AusMat, and for students who wish to remain locally, through the STPM track and the vocational school tracks.

One of the biggest criticisms the Malaysian education system has received would be the heavy politicisation of it. Due to nationalistic ideologies present within Malaysia with the government and the government control over education, education as a whole has became a way for the government to push forth the idea of Malay supremacy for Malays onto students from a young age (Woo, 2019). This politicisation of education and the focus away from actual historical narratives and knowledge has been claimed by students to be a big reason for the drop in education standard and quality in the country (Alatas, 2021).



Hong Kong

The Hong Kong education structure follows closely with that of Singapore and Malaysia, due to the heavy influence of the West on the country. The country offers national examinations like the Hong Kong Attainment Test, the exam students sit for following the end of their primary school journey, and the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE), their version of A' Levels.

Due to the afore-mentioned heavy influence of western countries like the US and UK, the local education system makes it quite difficult for local students in Hong Kong to connect with Chinese culture and mainland China (Xin, 2017). Many teachers in Hong Kong are greatly influenced by Western education and thus prefer to discuss issues of freedom, democracy and human rights as opposed to strengthening their identities with the mainland.

One of the criticisms the Hong Kong education system receives is the high-pressure and stress-inducing environment (Fung, 2020), a recurring theme present in Asian education systems. For Hong Kong however, this pressure stems from the poor economic conditions within the country, such as the high cost of living and the lack of mobility from one social class to another. This problem has resulted in a growing crisis that the Hong Kong government is attempting to curb, known as the "Brain Drain", with more numbers of Hong Kong students and new office workers migrating overseas for better work and education opportunities (Mak, 2022). The education system has also been said to be too rote, because it encourages students to memorise, not apply their knowledge, therefore being unable to develop their critical thinking skills. Another factor affecting the education standard in Hong Kong would be the constant pressure of the mainland Chinese government (Jung, 2020). The conflicting ideologies and narratives presented by both countries make it difficult for the local government to develop a curriculum that satisfies both parties, leading to the unhappiness of locals about the information imparted onto students.

The Finnish education system is one that has drawn praise from all around the world, for the kind of students it nurtures. Its only national-level examination would be the Finnish Matriculation Exam (YLIOPPILASTUTKINTOLAUTAKUNTA, 2021), for students finishing their secondary-school education. One of the major features of the education system is school autonomy (Saarivirta & Kumpulainen, 2016), with each school being able to design their own curriculum based on their teaching needs. Pupil-led education is highly prioritised here, with pupils being encouraged to take charge of their own education to build on their independence. As a result, the system does not do any sort of education streaming that has been observed in Asian countries thus far. The Finnish education system has also attempted to move towards a phenomenon-based learning (Hayes, 2015) to replace subject-based learning in order to develop skills like creativity and critical thinking.

Despite the praise it has received, Finnish students have started to underperform at global competitions and rankings, with its ranking dropping from 2nd place in 2002 to 8th place in 2015 in the PISA Global Rankings (Coughlan, 2016). This drop can be attributed to one of the key strengths of the Finnish education system - the egalitarian belief in equity for everyone. While this belief means that struggling students are well-supported by the school, it also results in high-potential and high-achieving students being left-behind by the education system (Chung, 2019). With the lack of education streaming, the education system makes way for a teaching concept known as “mixed-ability teaching”, where teachers are expected to manage different ability levels in class. This however, can prove to be a problem for many, especially those without experience. As a result, rather than raising standards to boost overall student scoring, Finland’s education system lowers the bar accordingly to match the weaker-performing student’s talent and skill set (Tanninen & Saukko-Rauta, 2015). This is a stark contrast with the systems in Asia, which require students to work to meet a universal standard and catch up if necessary by their own volition.

USA

The American education system is structured differently from the above systems, in that it, for one, does not have a nation-wide examination that is administered fully across the country, and two, offers no education streaming. The system's two answers to those two differences would be the Scholastic Ability Test (SAT), which is common but only to be written on a voluntary basis for university admissions, and the Advancement Placement (AP) classes, which are classes students can take in high school to clear some credits in university. These differences can be attributed to the primary fact that rather than being planned out by the government, curriculum planning falls onto the state governments, making it difficult to be standardised throughout the country.

In the US, extracurriculars are given a lot more importance (Buckley & Lee, 2018), with many universities stating criterias for acceptance being volunteer service, leadership, sports, performing arts, etc. definitely more holistic education compared to the others. However, this holistic education approach has become a source of criticism, due to a lack of focus on results (Hood, 1993). Students are expected to focus on multiple aspects in their schooling life in order to be seen as the cream of the crop, resulting in a drop of standard in their results and knowledge. Furthermore, the education system also seems to be politicised, in that it is used to push American ideals and the idea of "the American dream" onto its students, many of whom are immigrants coming to America for studies.

Another criticism would be the lack of support for the teachers, with many having to resort to spending their own money to buy resources and materials for their classes and students (Subaru of America, 2021). With the state governments' control over the syllabus and the lack of support they receive, teachers do not have much say in what and how they can teach their classes, wasting their expertise, and hence directly impacting students, as claimed by students themselves (The Learning Network, 2019).

As seen in Table 1, there is an observable trend that most Asian education systems tend to focus heavily on academics, leading to criticisms such as being overly stressful and breeding competition amongst students. In contrast, teaching seems to be the centre of focus for Western education systems, particularly regarding the support and expectations placed on teachers. As a result of the differences present in both systems, the team has found that they nurture two different types of students - an academically-strong student of the Asian education system, an the independent and opinionated student from the Western education system.

Proposed Solution

Table 1

Comparisons of Education Systems Across the World

Countries	Primary Medium	Heavy Focus On	After-School Education	Criticisms
South Korea	Korean	Academics	Hagwon	Stressful, over-competitive
Singapore	English	Moving towards holistic	Tuition	Stressful, over-competitive
Malaysia	Malay	Academic	Tuition	Too politicised, too rote
Hong Kong	Cantonese	Academic	Cram schools, tuition	Stressful, spoon-fed, reciting material, politicised
Finland	Finnish & English	Holistic	Leisure activities organised by Schools	Mixed ability teaching
USA	English	Holistic	—	Lack of support for teachers

Given the negative impacts of the education system present not just in South Korea but also in other Asian education systems, the most ideal solution would be to revamp the education system to match the less-stressful Western education system a bit more. However, it should be acknowledged the immense difficulties involved in making this large-scale solution feasible. South Korea is deeply entrenched in the culture of competitiveness due to its historical roots, and hence, this culture of competitiveness is not easy to change.

Its reliance on its human resources, as well as demographic changes like shrinking population, has made education all the more important for the people, hence the need for implementation of such rigorous standards.

Hence, one proposed solution would be to create and sustain a strong support system for students to rely on. Such a system should enable them to learn how to better cope with academic stress, adjusting to school environments, and other academic hurdles that they have to overcome. For example, the implementation of a well-being initiative within the school, including teachers and seniors the students can turn to, will ensure that students have someone to turn to in times of educational troubles. Lastly, a shift in mindset would greatly benefit the students, as the education shifts from a rigid, academic learning, to more balanced, holistic learning for the students and would also ease undue pressure on the students. This solution should be approached with much care and sensitivity, and will take a long while before results can be seen. However,
through the accumulation of efforts over decades, and with time, improvements can surely be made, positively impacting students' lives for the better.

CONCLUSION

It should be remembered that education systems around the world are built upon years of history and culture that have been long entrenched into the different countries and their identities. These systems are set up in order to prepare the youth to fend for themselves in the future, especially in their work-life. These two regions of the world have two very different working lifestyles - the more fast-paced and intensive Asian worklife, and the more laidback and team-culture focused European work-life. Both have their benefits and disadvantages, but our education systems do their best to make us as prepared as possible for the future. If the proposed recommendations above are implemented, students in the South Korean education system will
profit from not only a strong academic foundation, but a well-supported welfare system in their education system, cementing the South Korean education as one of the most all-rounded and top systems in the world in the next decades to come.

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HOW HAS K-POP IMPACTED CONTEMPORARY KOREA AND THE GLOBAL COMMUNITY?



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INTRODUCTION

IK-pop is a form of popular music with South Korean roots that is a part of the nation's culture. In the 2000s, "K-pop" gained popularity. Although the term "K-pop" can be used broadly to refer to any South Korean popular music or pop music, it is frequently used to refer to all Korean music and artists who are connected to the nation's entertainment and idol industry, regardless of genre.

It includes styles and genres from around the world, such as pop, hip hop, R&B, and many others. Some key characteristics of K-pop would include having large groups, hybrid sounds, vigorous training system and extensive choreography. (Masterclass, 2021)

Contemporary K-pop can actually be dated back to a particular date which is on 11th April 1992. (90 Day Korean, 2022) This was when Seo Taiji and Boys first performed on TV, debuting with the breakout track ‘I Know’ which had American genre influences infused together with contemporary pop. This was a breakthrough as ballads were seen to be the norm and was highly popular back then. This led to the birth of various entertainment companies who started to create Korean idol groups that catered to the rising demands of such music trends. Such examples of entertainment companies would be SM, JYP and YG Entertainment. K-pop today has become a huge phenomenon, and as such, we would like to examine the impacts of K-pop both domestically and internationally in the following paper.

ECONOMIC IMPACT

REVENUE

In 2012, PSY released his music video, “Gangnam style” and instantly gained worldwide recognition through the recognizable invisible horse dancing. It was one of the most important moments for K-pop as it was the first time Westerners got to experience this new style of production and music. Being the singular person to hit 2 billion views and having the highest number of likes on YouTube in such a short span of time, PSY managed to make an impressive $8 million solely on YouTube revenue alone (TheEconomicTimes, 2013). In addition, the song became a source of national pride and was South Korea’s biggest cultural export. The increase in net exports contributed to a higher GDP in South Korea in 2012, (CNBC, 2013)

Next, the most influential K-pop band in this generation, BTS, played an even larger role in South Korea's economy. One example, their first all English song “Dynamite” managed to peak number one on the billboard global chart for 18 weeks. This generated 1.7 trillion South Korean Won, estimated to be able to provide 7928 jobs during the covid pandemic (News18, 2020). A research done in 2018 estimated that BTS contributed a whopping $3.6 billion in a year (Sarah Midkiff, 2019). Currently, the figure is still continuing to grow, with the latest estimated contribution standing at around $5 billion per year (Impakter, 2022). In addition, aside from their music, BTS holds one of the most impressive intellectual property asset portfolios, trademarked “Bangtan Universe”. This proves how BTS plays such a vital role in South Korea's economy. BTS' contributions to the economy overall has been very positive so far and it makes people wonder whether future K-pop groups would also do likewise or exceed our expectations.

BRANDING

Besides K-pop’s positive impact on the economy, K pop has also boosted consumption rates in terms of marketing. Firstly, South Korean stars are now commonly appointed as brand ambassadors. High end brands have been collaborating with the K-pop industry to reach a larger audience, especially the younger generation. They showcase their clothing and accessories as part of their lifestyle to create brand content, participate in photo shoots as models or on advertisements on a daily basis. As a result, consumers who idolise these K-pop groups or stars tend to have a higher inclination to purchase such items.

One recent example in 2021, as Kai, a member of EXO collaborated with Gucci and released a sweater. That sweater sold out on the day it was released in Singapore and Thailand (Allkpop, 2021). Hence, we can see how K-pop industries capitalise on K-pop stars effectively to generate a larger revenue for both themselves and the brand itself.

Such marketing tool strategy is not limited to luxury brands but also normal goods. One successful example in 2020 includes McDonald’s BTS meal which was made available in 50 markets all over the world. Although there was only a slight difference in the packaging, McDonald and BTS managed to earn an impressive $8.5 million (Soompi, 2021). Compared to the same quarter in 2020, McDonald’s revenue rose by 57%. Chicken nuggets sales jumped 250% compared to the previous four weeks (NME, 2021). Again, we see the influence K-pop groups have on not only its local economy but also globally.

FAN’S ECONOMY (INDIVIDUAL LEVEL)

When we think of how K-pop groups have affected the economy negatively, there would barely be any. However if we look at it on an individual level, from a consumer's perspective, we realise the “fans economy” suffers detrimental effects. Consumers are spending more than they should on albums, concert tickets,
merchandise, online events and so on. In most cases, they buy these items to support their idols, for collection and to satisfy themselves. A study by iPrice in 2020 suggests that each fan buys at least one merchandise item and concert item (iPrice, 2020). It is so bad that in 2021, China's social media platform Weibo banned a fan club of BTS to restrain obsession and excessive spending (CNA, 2021). The surge in consumption spending is mainly due to companies’ marketing tools, for instance, albums offering special collectibles such as a photo of a group member. As such, fans would want a complete set and purchase multiple albums to collect them. This leads to the “overspending tendency” whereby it perpetuates massive consumerism and wastefulness, diminishing the fan’s economy. It illustrates how fans or consumers are as influential as K-pop groups too, they influence social media and with their total spending power, they have the ability to affect the economy in very real ways.

INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION

Proponents argue that K-pop is more concentrated domestically and would not be able to compete internationally. For example, K-pop is mostly sung in Korean language and foreigners would not be able to understand or relate to it as much as western music. This was considerably true in 2010 whereby based on the popular music category, American pop had 31 million votes compared to K-pop which had only 19 million initially (GroomTigerTimes, 2016). However, in the later years, K-pop took the lead, having a ratio of 100 million to 30 million compared to American pop in 2016 under the popular music category. It demonstrates the progressiveness of K-pop in terms of its competitiveness and how a foreign language can still be influential. Although it makes us question whether K-pop would dominate the music industry in the future, it is highly unlikely due to globalisation. Many countries are coming up with new sorts of music styles and competition would still continue to exist.

DOMESTIC COMPETITION

As much as K-pop seems to be a rising influence in the world, people are worried about the competition domestically. Looking at the four main companies, Bighit (BH), JYP, YG and SM, people would argue that BH is monopolising the K-pop industry. However a true monopoly is nearly impossible to achieve, BH will never reach that level of competitiveness. Although statistics highlight that BH is pulling way ahead of the big three firms in terms of market value and total revenue, for instance being three times ahead of their nearest competitor JYP, when looking closely at other individual competitors, each industry is still bringing in positive profits. (Koreaboo, 2020) BH would be described as a conglomerate as seen in their expansion strategies such as having subsidies that diversify its source of revenue. The big 3 and their artists would not be leaving anytime soon and though their contributions may seem pale in comparison to BH, as long as they continue to exist as they do now, the danger of monopolisation is not high. BH is expanding but not in a way that will pose a threat to the music industry, their expansion would only be beneficial to the economy in the long run and not weaken it.

Ultimately, K-pop's economic impact has come a long way and its success is mostly due to the government's policies in supporting the entertainment industry. The economic benefits of such nation branding based on Korean cultural contents have been largely offset by the government actions that have made cultural content available. In addition, the government's focus on fostering a business friendly environment enabled K-pop industries to further advance Korea's cultural industries to a global level. On the other hand, K-pop industries strict regulations on trainees, grooming its idols even before they debut requires massive scale of investments is a risk that they have to take. Although it was not the industry's intention to be the flag carrier of Korea, it happened with the global spread and the digital platforms introduced in our daily lives. Today K-pop continues to face growing interest from around the world, aiding Korea in its exports and eventually economic development.

SOCIAL IMPACT (DOMESTIC)

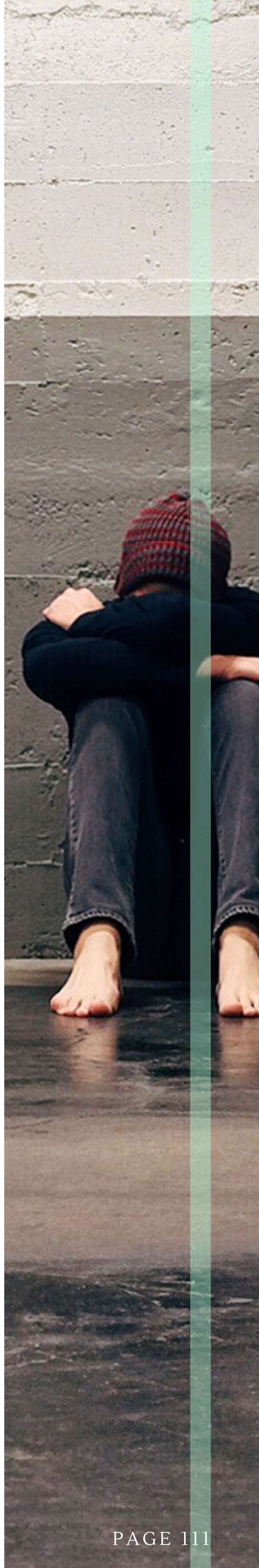
BULLYING

Korean idols get a lot of attention as they are put in the spotlight. However, it may not always be a good thing because they are also subjected to constant criticism by netizens. One example would be Park Hyung Sik, an actor from the company named Star Empire. Before joining Star Empire, Park Hyung Sik was part of another agency when he was a high school student. Hyung Sik had a close relationship with his manager and trusted him with his personal problems. Witnessing how special their relationship was, some of the other trainees spoke ill of Hyung Sik. Hyung Sik became an outcast as he was excluded during mealtimes and often ignored by the trainees (A.P, 2015). This form of bullying had adverse effects on his mental health, causing him to suffer from depression (Kyung, 2022).

Another tragic incident involved a member from SHINEE, Kim Jonghyun. In December 2017, Jonghyun ended his life with carbon monoxide poisoning. Jonghyun was believed to have suffered from depression. It was believed that cyber bullying has led to the suicide of Jonghyun (Park, 2017). A mental health counsellor commented that due to the malicious comments made by netizens, Jonghyun had been suffering from depression for a long time. Jonghyun was attacked by feminism-centered groups since he referred women as "muse", an inspiring figure toartists, during a radio show in 2015. Many furious anti-fans spammed Jonghyun with messages through social media such as Facebook and Twitter, arguing he depreciated the female sex. Moreover, allegations that the singer was gay had spread through social media with some Twitter users claiming to have witnessed the singer entering a famous gay club in Seoul.

Jonghyun's death note reflected extreme mental fatigue and loneliness. He mentioned that he had always felt alone and wanted to run away from his tiresome life. The nasty comments made against him are seen as critical, since he was already suffering from depression, it made his depression grow worse. Also, despite the terrible passing of a K-pop celebrity, a cyberbullying campaign continued unabated. On the news pages of the web portal, they posted critical remarks.

Next, actress and singer Sulli was also a victim of online bullying. Sulli was a former member of the group f(x) and when she was 25, she died of suicide at her own home. Conventionally, the K-pop industry had careful brand management and conservative social attitudes towards young women. However, Sulli revealed her romantic relationship and was vocal about not wearing a bra, defying the above conventional notions (Hollingsworth & Seo, 2019). She was hence subjected to waves of malicious online comments. In 2009, Sulli was also accused of being in a sex video that went viral on the internet. This had caused her to suffer from severe depression, panic disorder and social phobia (Shin & Yi, 2019). Therefore, since Sulli did not fit into the typical image of a K-pop idol, she was often a target of online bullying and her death was a reflection of how dark the K-pop industry can be.



Next, K-pop has also led to the promotion of unrealistic beauty standards. One harmful effect of Korea's strict beauty standards is that K-pop fans may have an unhealthy and altered perspective on body image.

Actresses and K-pop stars have long served as symbols of beauty. In order to improve their physical appearance, South Koreans have been driven to undergo various types of plastic surgery due to the strict Korean beauty standards and harmful effects of lookism. Due to the K-pop phenomenon's immense popularity in Korea, idols frequently get plastic surgery as a condition in their contracts with their respective firms. Plastic surgery is not stigmatised in Korea. Instead, a lot of Koreans are even given the option of getting plastic surgery as a high school graduation present. However, this has created intense pressure on society.

There is constant stress to live up to Korea's beauty standards. For example, teenagers who view their idols on magazines and television shows will quickly associate being important with looking beautiful, which is an unhealthy perception to have. Moreover, due to lookism, there is prejudice or discrimination of people who are considered physically unattractive. Judging people based on their physical appearance can lower one's self-esteem that can later cause different mental health problems such as depression and self-hatred.

Because it costs a lot of money to undergo surgery just to "fit in" with everyone else, cosmetic surgery may be more detrimental than beneficial because it doesn't address underlying emotions of inadequacy and insecurity. It is merely a mask that gives off a phony and flimsy sense of assurance and, in the long run, only feeds the cycle of self-criticism (Cho, 2020). The desire for plastic surgery among Korean guys has also been motivated by K-pop stars like G-Dragon and Taeyang. According to a poll conducted by the Korean Association for Plastic Surgeons, under the influence of K-pop male idols, 44% of South Korean college males contemplated having plastic surgery. (Halim--Joshua, 2018).

The same ridiculous beauty standards apply to one's size. Extreme importance is placed on female idols having a slender physique. The pre-comeback diet of IU (Lee Jieun), a South Korean singer, was well-known. She ate one apple for breakfast, one sweet potato for lunch, and one protein drink for dinner. This is an extremely dangerous quantity of food to consume in one day, especially for an idol who spends many hours a day performing high-intensity dances, but South Korea is home to thousands of videos and articles about the "IU diet." Many have been influenced to try the IU diet, however this extreme diet has been proven to be bad for one's health (LaMay, 2019). As a result of unrealistic beauty standards on K-pop idols, many other idols have also been criticised for their weight.

EXTREME FAN BEHAVIOUR: SASAENGS

Derived from the word sasaenghwal (사생활 or “private life”), Sasaengs (사생) are extremely obsessive fans that stalk and intrude on their idols' personal lives. The extreme actions of Sasaengs are objectifying their idols, especially denial of subjectivity whereby Sasaengs do not care for their idols’ experiences and feelings. (Hung, 2015) They believe idols owe them attention and end up violating moral and social boundaries but believe their actions are out of love for their idol. (Saeji.at.el., 2018) They also see it as a form of pride, especially if they are able to obtain exclusive information that only they know about. Most of them do it in hopes of being recognised and remembered as a loyal fan when in reality, most idols are disgusted by them.

Sasaengs usually obtain exclusive information either from company staff or even airline workers that sold this information for money (Zafirah, 2019). Such information could include flight information, residential addresses and even contact numbers.

One of the most popular options for Sasaengs to chase their idols would be sitting on the same flight as them. Other extreme measures done by Sasengs would include taking photos while they are sleeping, using the toilet immediately after their idols use them and even asking flight attendants to record their voices for them. (Ha, 2022) Apart from flights, some Sasaengs even break into apartments to steal their idols’ belongings, as a ‘souvenir’.

Furthermore, there are even sasaeng taxi services available whereby taxis will chase after idols vans. Sasaengs have actually brought a lot of trauma to the artists. It brings immense stress, and affects their mental health by causing anxiety. More importantly, it poses great danger to the idols. One such example would be the infamous stalker, Josh1994, a German citizen known to be a Sasaeng of Nayeon from Twice. He boarded the same plane as her before and claims that he will kill Nayeon if he finds out that she is secretly dating because it is a ‘crime’. Despite her company taking legal action against him, this has not stopped him from travelling to South Korea to try to meet her personally.

However, are Sasaengs solely at fault? As much as Sasaengs are criticised heavily by the media, ‘good’ fandoms and even the public, majority of them still consume Sasaeng’s materials. These could be materials such as photos, private details (eg. dating details, scandals) and even sharing about their own personal experiences. Additionally, by giving Sasaengs’ attention by criticising them or even just spectating, this not only encourages the Sasaengs but would still inevitably lead to the intrusion of idols' privacy. (Saeji et. al., 2018) Unless all of us do not care about idols’ infotainment, this would then allow idols to truly live a private life, which is rather impossible in this day and age especially in the media industry. As such, there is no possible way to eliminate Sasengs completely as the public themselves are also interested in the idols’ personal lives.

SOCIAL IMPACT (INTERNATIONAL)

BRINGING POSITIVITY

In the first few generations of K-pop, most song lyrics were usually about love songs and sad breakups. However, with the start of the 4th generation, most song lyrics have started to change, centering on finding their own personal identity and being proud of who they are. This is more evident especially in girl groups where innocent and fresh concepts are transitioning towards cool concepts. Such an example would be ITZY's 'Wannabe', where the lyrics state: "No matter what they say I'm me, I just want to be me". This helps to amplify the message to the current youths that they need not be confined to a specific stereotype. This especially resonates with the Western ideology whereby their society is a lot more individualistic and thus places more emphasis on personal choice and freedom. This also explains why K-pop songs are becoming increasingly popular especially in Western countries during this new generation of K-pop music.

Another well-known group that is known for bringing positivity would be no other than BTS. One big factor for the immense success would actually be due to their relatable song lyrics. (Parc, 2020) They usually contain lyrics about the real world such as difficult real world issues like bullying, inequality, stereotypes, mental health and so much more. These stories in their song lyrics appeal to the younger generations and thus also provide a message of hope and comfort for them that they are not alone in experiencing this. Especially with the message they stand by, 'Love Yourself', the group wishes for people to develop self-love for themselves and stay true to themselves. They also speak openly about mental health in their lyrics and even on huge platforms, becoming icons of positivity to the fans. This has also allowed fans to develop a parasocial relationship with BTS, whereby they feel like BTS has become their best friend that would 'accompany' them through life. (Pasinringi, 2020)

INCREASING AWARENESS OF OTHER'S CULTURE GLOBALLY

With the globalisation of K-pop, this has led to a surge of international fans. As Asians are seen as minorities especially in the Western countries, Western fans who enjoy K-pop therefore are people who also support such minorities. As such, the K-pop fandom allows people of diverse cultures to mingle, allowing like-minded people to share about their different cultures. With the majority of K-pop fandoms being rather supportive, this in turn would allow them to become more confident in expressing themselves through their culture as well as being more open minded towards others. This can bring good as this allows people, especially minorities, to be able to voice out their concerns with many people supporting them, especially through social media. It also allows people to become more conscious of the things they say and do especially if it may be deemed as culturally inappropriate and have a community that is willing to educate each other.

However, with Korea being a rather culturally homogeneous country, this has led to many Korean citizens and even idols unaware of certain cultural taboos which may lead to cultural appropriation. With global keyboard warriors becoming more entitled and ready to discipline idols anytime, ignorance as a K-pop idol in this day and age is deemed unacceptable. On top of the fact that foreign fans are drawn to K-pop idols because they are deemed more perfect and have a cleaner image, this just places even higher expectations on the idols to not make a mistake. (Saeji, et.al,2018). One scandal may ruin their image forever, which may even lead to the boycotting of the idol. Thus, K-pop idols must be very careful when dealing with culturally sensitive issues as their mistake could cost them greatly.

Even Korean entertainment companies are not excluded from this global scrutiny and backlash. Tiffany Red, a black American singer-songwriter who writes K-pop songs for Ekko Music, a music production subsidiary under SM Entertainment, had experienced turmoil during the Black Lives Matter movement. However, Ekko Music had sent her an email regarding her payment showing no signs of concern even though the Black Lives Matter movement was occurring during that period of time. She then posted about it online on her social media as she realised that it showed that the K-pop industry did not really care about the Black community even though the industry tends to use a lot of Black influences in their music, styling and fashion just to bring something 'unique' to the table.

This led to a public outcry by the Black community as Korean entertainment companies, especially big companies like SM Entertainment, source their songs from Black songwriters and many K-pop groups also do have a rather large Black fanbase. This led to a trending hashtag #SMBlackout on twitter by a K-pop fan who did so in order to raise awareness of the importance of Black K-pop fans and creatives. This also caused SM Entertainment to quickly release a statement to show their support for the Black community. However, many fans were not happy with the statement as they felt that it was rather insincere since there was no action plan done by SM.

CHARITY

With fandoms also cultivating a team spirit, power as a fandom can actually bring about many positive changes too. K-pop fandoms are extremely competitive and this not only comes in the form of music streams or album sales, but even charity (Bruner, 2020). Fandoms will try to outdo others by donating more. Even though it may seem rather superficial, this does not diminish the power of the donations because with more money, more help can be provided to places who truly need it. Fandoms usually do this in order to remove any bad connotation related to their fandom (such as Sasaengs) so that the public can view them and their idols in a positive light. Furthermore, it is a rather practical way for fans to show their support as compared to fan gifts as the majority of the fan gifts ended up being thrown away since it is impossible for an idol to keep all of them.

Donations usually come in the form of rice wreaths whereby people believed that it was a staple required for Koreans. (Annex D) They are usually donated during the idols' main events such as a drama debut, huge concerts and even major life events such as weddings. Other forms of donation include monetary donations even for their own local communities but in the name of their idol. One example would be the 2021 Typhoon Rai in the Philippines whereby Filipino BTS fans donated about 200,000 Philippine pesos (USD3,900) for relief efforts. (Koh, 2022)

POLITICAL IMPACT

SOFT POWER IN KOREA

K-pop music is a part of South Korea's soft power image. Soft power refers to the ability to achieve the desired results based on the attractiveness of culture, values, language and other aspects. In addition, it is a way to attract foreign audiences without being forced (Nye, 2004). It is used to make its political mark in the international stage and strengthen its diplomatic ties with other countries. This non-coercive power enhances South Korea's image and attractiveness (Gnedash et al., 2021). This is outlined more specifically by the South Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs, where it says, "Korea's public diplomacy entails promoting diplomatic relations by sharing our country's history, traditions, culture, arts, values, policies, and vision through direct communication with foreign nationals. By doing so, we enhance our diplomatic relations and national image by gaining the trust of the international community and increasing our country's global influence." (Bajenaru, 2022)

INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL IMPACT

The K-pop music industry is an important force of cultural diplomacy because music can distill identities, personality and values in the listener (Bãjenaru, 2022). Thus, it is a resource that can be utilised to build positive opinions and associations for Korea, while being an empowerment and peacemaking force. This form of soft power and influence is recognised, with K-pop idols often appearing in state dinners and formal functions with dignitaries for diplomacy. For instance, BOA played an important role in kick-starting relations with Japan, which paved the way for Japanese's adoption of Korean culture. In 2003, the Japanese Foreign Ministry officially invited BoA to attend a diplomatic dinner between Koizumi and South Korean President Roh Moo-hyun (Bartlett, 2022). In 2018, Red Velvet performed in Pyongyang, North Korea, a rare event in which President Kim Jung Un attended.

BTS partnered with the United Nations in 2017 to launch a campaign titled, "Love Yourself", which aimed to draw funds for causes to end child violence and improve children's confidence and wellbeing. The campaign was so successful it was taken in by UNICEF Japan, UNICEF USA and UNICEF Great Britain as well (Bãjenaru, 2022). In 2022, the White House invited BTS to speak with the U.S. President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris about anti-Asian hate crimes, Asian inclusion, and diversity. Thus, BTS are thought to be cultural diplomates as they use their influence to bring awareness to social issues, promote positivity and love around the globe. It also helped to uplift Korea's international image and position as a middle power, while reducing cultural differences. They were so successful at improving bilateral relations, especially between South Korea and the United States that they received the James A. Van Fleet Honorary Award established in 1995 awarded "to one or more distinguished Koreans or Americans in recognition of contributions in promoting US-Korea relations." They were given the award along with two other recipients, US Korean War Veterans Association and the Korean Chamber of Commerce and Industry in 2020, for their positive messages and music, as well as strengthening of Korean American relations (Bãjenaru, 2022)

DOMESTIC POLITICAL IMPACT

Domestically, K-pop music has been used as a source of empowerment and motivation for political activism. For instance, Girls Generation's songs promote self-love, equality, and human rights. Their song, "Into the New World" became an empowerment theme for women, political protesters, and members of the LGBTQ+ community. The song was also played during candlelight vigils calling for the impeachment of former South Korean President Park Geun-hye (Bartlett, 2022) .

K-POP FANDOM POLITICAL IMPACT

In addition to the K-pop idols being a force of diplomacy, the fans themselves have much capability to promote socio-political causes, using their ability in social media to thwart white supremacists and promote the Black Lives Matter movement. It is not that these fandoms are political, but rather they are interested in issues concerning empowerment. For instance BTS's "Love Yourself" song calls for self- empowerment which the fans identify with, and this causes them to be more expressive in other areas, such as politics. The passionate and enthusiastic character for K-pop can be translated to political actions (Coscarelli, 2020). ARMY, which is the fandom of K-pop group BTS donated $1 million through its #matchamillion campaign to a variety of organisations supporting the Black Lives Matter movement in 2020 (Romano, 2020).

In another instance, fans also spammed the Dallas iWatch app with fancams of their favourite idols after the Dallas Police Department called for reports of illegal activity from the protests. The fans kickstarted this movement using Twitter, with an original tweet being retwitted over 40, 000 times and gaining more than 100, 000 likes (Haasch, 2020). This was an effort by K-pop fans to protect the identity of Black Lives Matter protestors and resulted in the app being temporarily shut down. This shows that one cannot undermine the mobilisation power of K-pop fans. Another instance of K-pop fan's prowess in mobilising forces was seen when K-pop fans and teenagers bought tickets to Trump's Rally at Tulsa, Oklahoma only not to show up. This resulted in only 6000 in attendance although the initial demand for tickets was one million (Lorenz et al., 2020). Fans feel an affinity with the Black Lives Matter movement because many of them are Black and some K-pop songs take inspiration from the black culture. The push for this social cause is in a way to pay tribute to the hip-hop styles and black music that the K-pop music industry has taken reference from (Coscarelli, 2020).

THE LARGE CARBON FOOTPRINT OF THE K-POP ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY

The K-pop ‘experience’ can be summarised into 2 distinct parts. On one hand, there is the digital aspect. where the biggest initial buzz is generated from, artists smashing viewership records, reaching charting milestones and raking up streams. However, on the other hand is the physical aspect. From physical album sales to concerts, this is arguably the most lucrative part of the music industry in general. At the same time, it also arguably leaves the biggest carbon footprint. Ever since the inception of the music industry, album sales and live tours have been its beating heart. It is through these avenues that a large proportion of an artists’ revenue is earned.

As a result of all the tours and gigs, K-pop idols frequently fly in and out of Korea attending festivals and concerts all around the world. However, frequent flying has a very high carbon footprint. The aviation industry as a whole accounts for 2.5% of the world’s carbon emissions (Ritchie, 2020).

With countries relaxing their covid restrictions, more and more concerts and festivals that feature K-pop artists are emerging. Just between January to October 2022, there have been over 8 K-pop music festivals globally (Herman, 2022) which features as many as 10 K-pop idol groups in their lineups. Worst still, solo world tours are even more carbon intensive as crew and equipment are also flown around the globe.

THE PROBLEM WITH OVERCONSUMPTION AND THE PANDEMIC

The problem of overconsumption in K-pop has also been a huge topic of contention recently. As K-pop continues to expand its ever growing fanbase beyond Asia, the demand for K-pop albums and related merchandise will naturally increase. It was reported in 2016 that total cumulative CD sales reached 10.6 million copies (Yang, 2022). However within just 5 years, this figure quintupled to a massive 57.09 million copies sold in 2021 (Hicap, 2022).

This meteoric rise in sales has been mostly attributed to the covid-19 pandemic. Never mind the countless covid laws governments placed, K-pop fans have not only grown in numbers but have become more zealous spenders (Herman, 2022). Lee Gyu-tak, a professor of cultural anthropology at George Mason University Korea comments that “the global health crisis has triggered a trend of ‘revenge spending’ among K-pop followers,” Adding that “due to the virus epidemic, they cannot go to concerts or actively participate in other fan activities. So they have turned their eyes to physical albums as an alternative.”

Additionally, the pandemic has introduced the concept of “online fan-signs” where during a limited period of time, purchases of a K-pop idol’s latest album equates to chances to win a minute and a half long video call with the very K-pop idol as well as a hand signed copy of the purchased album. This subsequently resulted in exuberant bulk buying by fans (Yin, 2022).

Furthermore, the advent of the “million seller” title, commemorating a grp’s album sales crossing a 1 million copies sold. The allure and prestige that comes with the title has driven K-pop entertainment companies to push for more aggressive marketing strategies to boost physical album sales. One strategy is to re-release a repackaged version of an idol’s album with some additional songs.

Overall, a lot of waste is created because fans tend to only collect the collectible items while the physical album and CDs inside are thrown away by bulk buyers. Making things worse, most albums packaging are made of a mix of plastic and paper and so they are often unrecyclable.

CURRENT STEPS TO CUT WASTE AND FUTURE EXPANSIONS

Growing to be more self aware of the fandom's impact, fans across the world have launched ground up initiatives from tree planting to fundraising for victims of climate disasters, all in the name of doing good for the environment. Though as mentioned by Grace not all are purely benevolent in nature.

K-pop entertainment companies have adopted more eco-conscious business
practices in recent years (Tuleconghoa, 2022). Improving upon the packaging of albums, new albums now use soybean-based ink for printing instead ofpetroleum-based ink. Companies also ensure paper used is FSC certified as well asreducing the inclusion and usage of plastic. K-pop entertainment company.

Moreover, an increasing number of idol groups have been designated as ambassadors for peace and sustainability causes. example being 'Blackpink' being designated as advocates for the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (Tuleconghoa, 2022).

Despite all these efforts, as mentioned earlier, the largest carbon contributor in the music industry is touring and as society has already started to normalise pre-pandemic activities like concerts, additional steps have to be taken to help further shrink the carbon footprint of K-pop. Touring does not have to be carbon intensive, as proven by American Singer-Songwriter "Jack Johnson" (Sistine, 2022). As part of efforts to reduce the carbon footprint of his concerts, single-use plastics were strongly discouraged. Instead encouraging his fans to bring their own reusable bottles and even selling reusable bottles at his concert.

Similarly, such eco-conscious practices should be normalised for tours outside of the western music scene and into the K-pop industry.

CONCLUSION

In a nutshell, K-pop, the multinational juggernaut has impacted contemporary Korea and the global community in many ways. Although there are negative impacts of K-pop, active measures are currently being taken to address and mitigate these costs. K-pop is still highly influential as seen from its highly lucrative nature, to the big waves it has made on Koreans and human society as a whole, to the powerful message peace and love it advocates and finally to the environmental costs it incurs. Ultimately, K-pop has made a mark on history, exceeding expectations and we believe that it will continue to leave a strong and positive presence in the long run.

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TOURISM INDUSTRY IN SOUTH KOREA

Cai Ping, Ying Xuan, Hillary, Geraldine



TABLE OF CONTENTS

01 Festivals & Traditions

02 Cosmetics & Pop

03 Food Culture

04 Economic Impacts

05 Environmental Impacts





01

FESTIVALS & TRADITIONS

3 POPULAR FESTIVALS

Jeju Fire Festival





Jinju Namgang Yudeung Festival

Chuseok



JEJU FIRE FESTIVAL



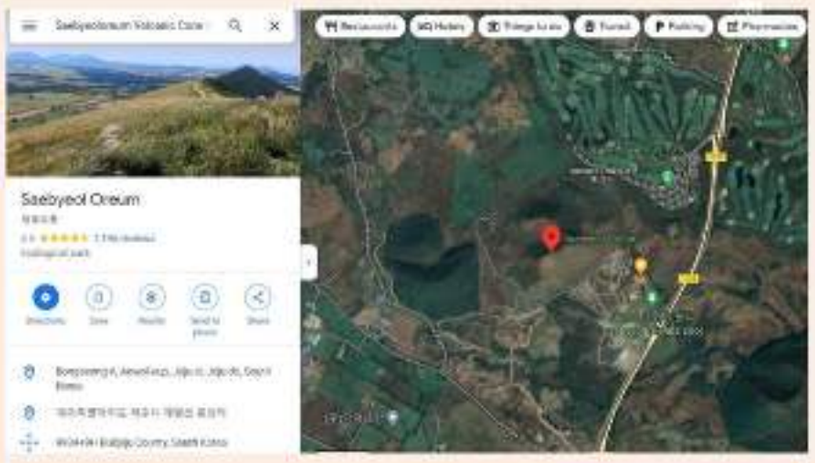
Saebyeol Oreum Volcanic Cone















Jinju Namgang Yudeung (Lantern) Festival

Originates from the floating lanterns that were used during the Jinjuseong Fortress Battle of the Imjin War (1592-1598) as a military strategy to prevent Japanese troops from wadding the Namgang River

HIGHLIGHTS

- Floating of lanterns along the Namgang River
- Parade of lanterns created by local students
- Various events & programs such as
  - Fireworks
  - Water lighting show
  - Cultural performances
  - ...



CHUSEOK



TRADITIONS & CUSTOMS

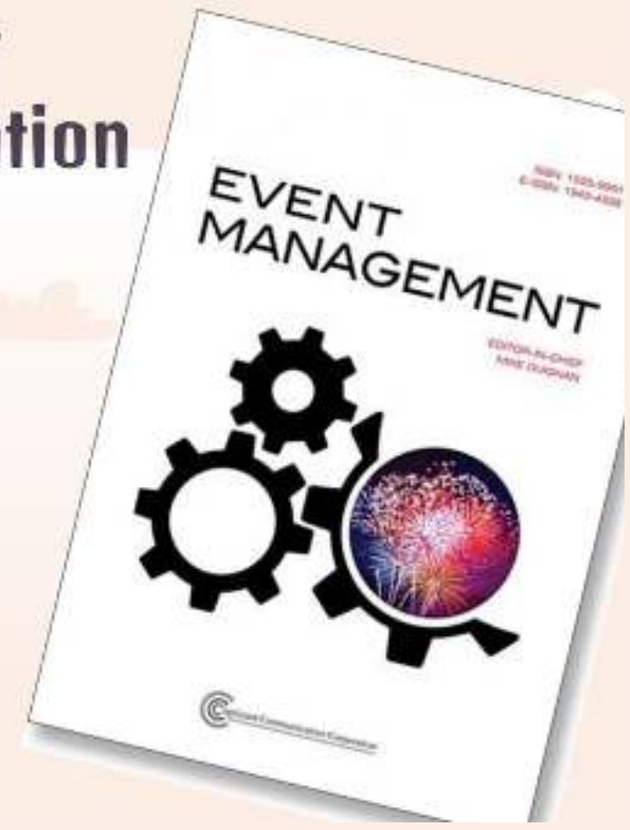
- Charye (Ancestor memorial services)
- Seongmyo (Visit to family graves
- Traditional Folk Games
  - Samulnori (Percussion quartet)
  - Talchum (Mask dance)
  - Ssireum (Korean wrestling)
- Food:
  - Songpyeon
  - traditional liquor
  - Jeon (Korean pancakes)

How Local festivals affect tourists choice of destination

RESULTS:

More awareness of festivals

More likely to consider them as an important factor in their destination choice



Authors: Min-Jung Oh & Timothy Jeonglyeol Lee

HOW HAVE FESTIVALS AFFECTED TOURISM?

Hampyeong-gun

A typical small rural town located in the Southwest part of the Korean peninsula with fertile land.

Major industry is agriculture.

However, the industry has declined for a long time due to the outflow of younger generation & the import opening of agricultural products.



HOW HAVE FESTIVALS AFFECTED TOURISM?



Hampyeong Butterfly Festival



1,620,000

Number of tourists in 2000

1910 JOBS

2013 Festival created

$720,000

Alone in ticket sales

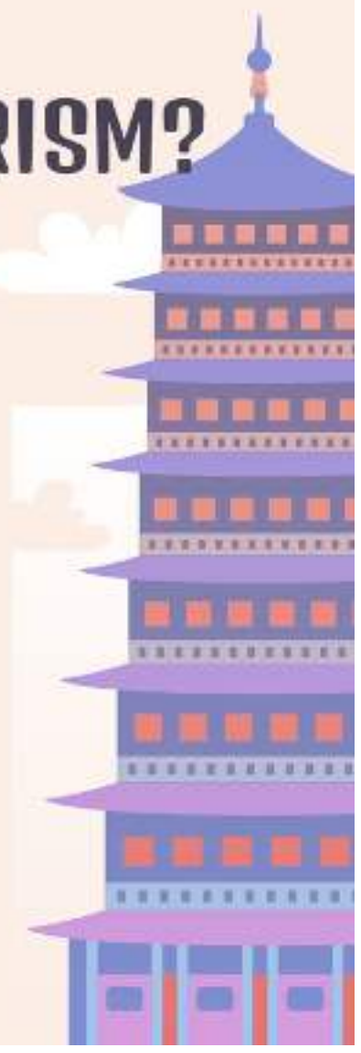


$302million

Overall economic effectiveness

HOW HAVE FESTIVALS AFFECTED TOURISM?

ECONOMIC BENEFITS	SOCIAL BENEFITS
Increasing number of visitors	Community cohesion
Job creation	Sense of identity
Economic development	







02

Cosmetics and Pop



Cosmetics Industry in SK

POPULAR COSMETIC BRANDS











And many, many more...

K-Beauty's effect on tourism

- **Tourists visit Shopping Districts**
  Tourists will tend to visit the shopping districts in search for their favourite brands

- **People looking for local brands**
  There are many K-Beauty brands that are not readily available internationally and thus will drop by the shopping districts in search for these brands

- **K-Pop Ambassadors**
  The beauty brands bring in various K-pop idols to be ambassadors and promote the brands in Korea, which attracts fans



PLASTIC SURGERY CRAZE

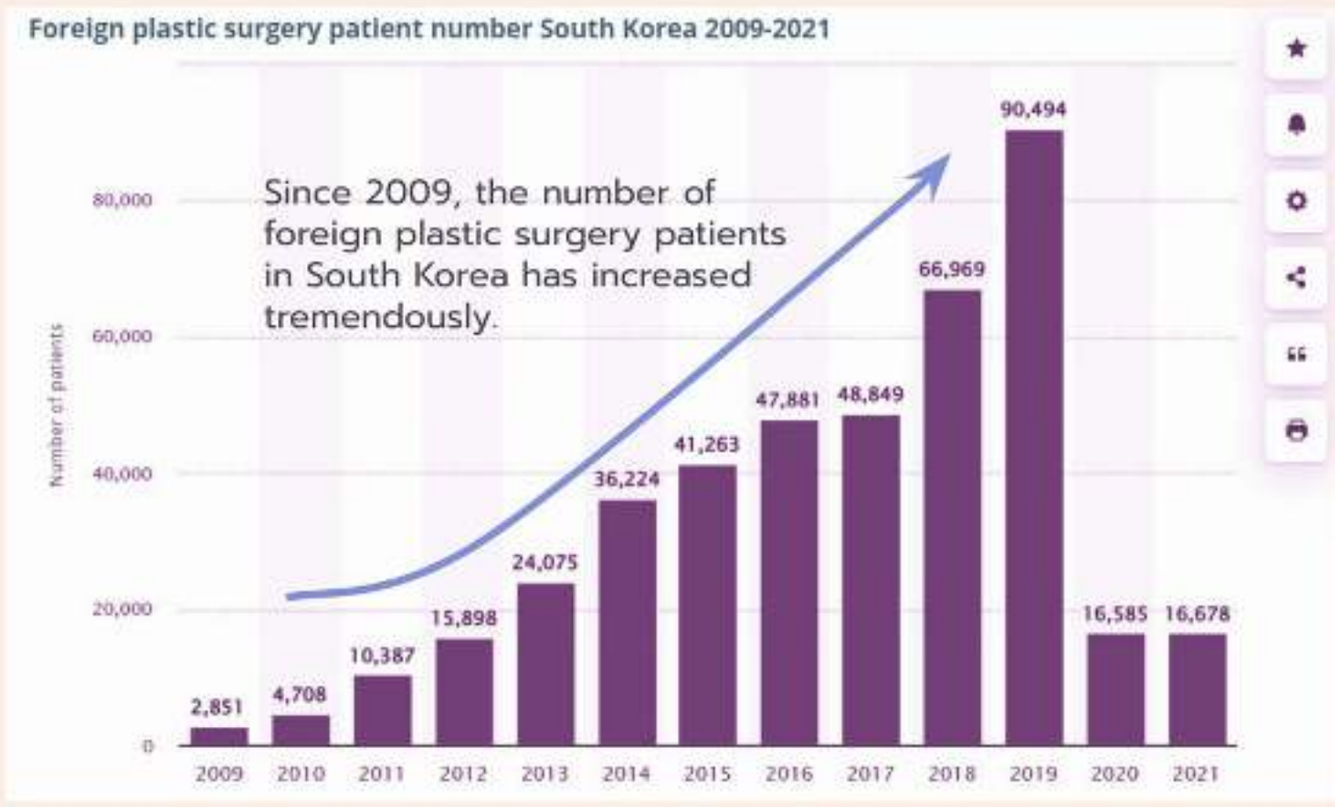


- The start of the plastic surgery craze was due to word-of-mouth and the Hallyu Wave

- There are many medical tourism vacation packages for international visitors



Effect on Tourism





Pop Culture in SK

KOREAN WAVE - HALLYU WAVE



K-POP



K-Variety



K-Drama

South Korea's (KTO) efforts





Ce







Hallyu Wave effect on tourism

- **K-Drama and K-Variety**
  Fans of popular shows visit South Korea in search of some of the specific locations introduced in the shows.







- **Concerts**
  Fans definitely will visit Korea for the concerts and to try their luck at meeting their favourite idols





- **Tourism Expenditure**

03 FOOD CULTURE & TOURISM

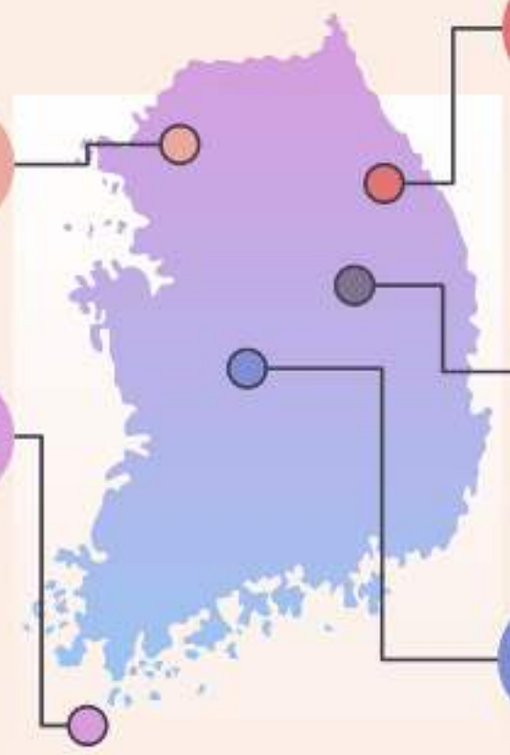


UNIQUE KOREA REGION SPECIALITIES



SEOUL

City Area where most traditional dishes can be found and many Street Markets



MOUNTAINOUS N.E. REGIONS

Famous dishes with plenty of wild ferns and native roots in them



BUSAN

Famous for Pork-Rice Soup and Wheat Noodles



JEJU-DO

Famous for fresh seafood dishes, named as UNESCO City of Gastronomy



RICE-GROWING VALLEYS

Chonju City: famous *Bibimbap*



GASTRONOMIC TOURISTS

Describe tourists who pursue diverse ethnic cuisine



GOVERNMENT EFFORTS TO PROMOTE K-FOOD

2012

START OF EFFORTS

Government started comprehensive strategic approach 'K-Food'

2013

UNESCO HERITAGE

Kimchi & Kimchi-making culture listed down

2014

INTERNATIONAL OUTREACH

Held Food Fairs and Exhibitions overseas

2015

K-FOOD FESTIVAL IN SEOUL

Provide international tourists with food-themed tourism programmes

2017 & 2018

SIGNIFICANT INCREASE IN TOURISTS VISITS

Firstly concentrated in Seoul, then dispersed to Busan and Jeju-do

HOW HAS TOURISM IMPACTED FOOD CULTURE IN KOREA?

NEGATIVE IMPACTS

- *Kimchi* was originally spelt as *Gimchi and Kimchee*.
- Standardised Korean food names to make it easier for foreigners to remember.
- Impacted by Western influence, inherent Korean foods are disappearing and children refuse to eat Korean food such as Kimchi, which is becoming a societal problem.





POSITIVE IMPACTS

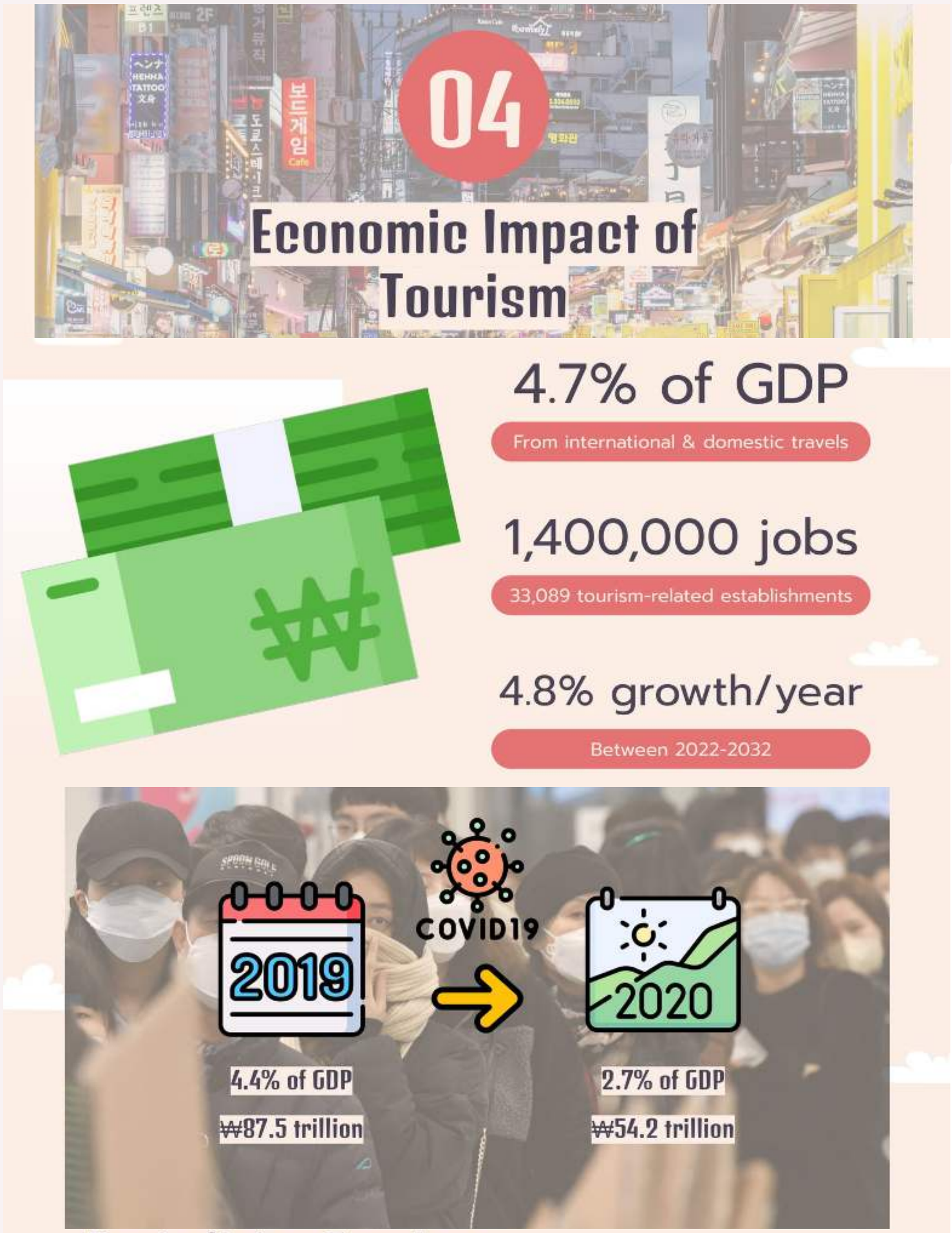
PROMPTED KOREA TO PROTECT ITS FOOD ON THE MAP

The government pushed to make Korean food become a cultural product for the long-term survival of their traditional food.



ADVANCEMENT IN TRANSPORTATION & ACCOMMODATION

To increase awareness of K-Food, tourists need the transport and accommodations at rural regions. Hence, increasing employment.


04
Economic Impact of Tourism
4.7% of GDP
From international & domestic travels
1,400,000 jobs
33,089 tourism-related establishments
4.8% growth/year
Between 2022-2032
2019
COVID19
2020
4.4% of GDP
₩87.5 trillion
2.7% of GDP
₩54.2 trillion
Revitalising Tourism
COUPON
Vacation Coupons
Kick start tourism with coupons
Invest into industry
Ministry of Culture & Arts invested $82m
Job retention
Government cover 90% of subsidies to prevent layoffs

06



Environmental Impact of Tourism

Impact on Environment



~20% of plastic waste

Hygiene products and packaging

AMOREPACIFIC



Leading cosmetics conglomerate in Korea

AMOREPACIFIC







Sulwhasoo innisfree LANEIGE



Recycled plastic bottles, biodegradable plastic



Recycling campaigns



New nature-friendly cosmetic applicators

Eco-friendly Products



Ratio of new eco-friendly products released

Reduction of plastic usage

159 Tonnes

Usage of recycled + bio-based plastics

281 Tonnes

Reducing carbon footprint







https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qwYuALEe9eM&t=440s

Question 1

What is the festival initiated by Seok-hyeong Lee that has boosted the tourism rate in South Korea?

(Hampyeong Butterfly Festival)

Question 2

What did the government do to promote K-Food in 2013 and 2014?

A. Started government initiative named K-Food
B. Kimchi and Kimchi-making culture listed down under the UNESCO Heritage
C. Held food fairs and exhibitions overseas
D. Provided food-themed tourism programmes

(B, C)

Question 3

What has AmorePacific done to minimise the environmental impacts of their corporate activities? Choose all the correct options.

A. Collecting empty product containers through campaigns
B. Recycling empty containers into plastic bottles
C. Encourage consumers to get refills that are in biodegradable plastics
D. Created more nature-friendly cosmetic applicators

(A, B, C, D)


TOURISM INDUSTRY
IN SOUTH KOREA
Cai Ping, Ying Xuan, Hillary, Geraldine
Earn free ice cream
from Carousell


definitely will
meeting th





South Korea's Tourism

CHENG SHI MAN, JOEY (U1930469C)
HAN QI RONG (U2222627D)
KUA WEI SHING (U2011381A)
SHANESE TAN HUI SHAN (U2011730H)
VANESSA GRACE NG WEN HUI (U1931031H)



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02 WHY KOREA ? & TOURIST ATTRACTIONS

03 IMPACTS OF TOURISM IN KOREA

04 COVID-19 IMPLICATIONS ON TOURISM

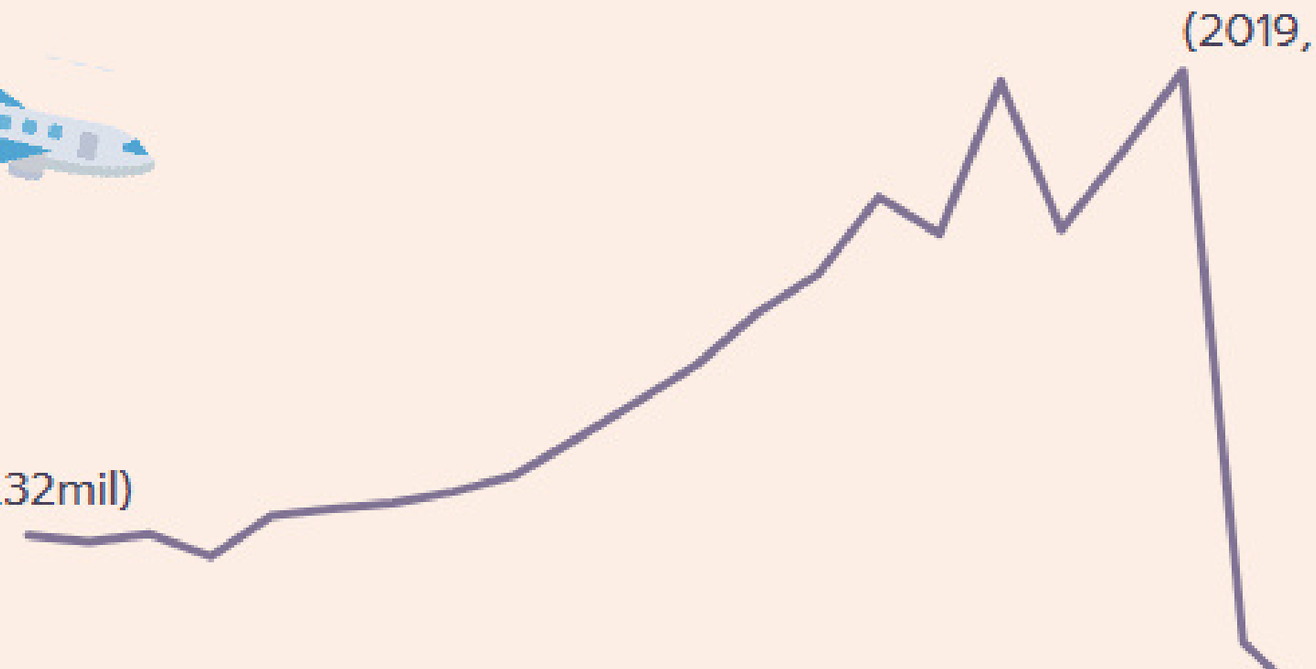


01

INTRODUCTION



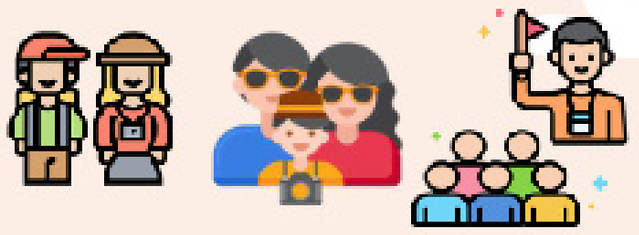
OVERWHELMING DEMAND





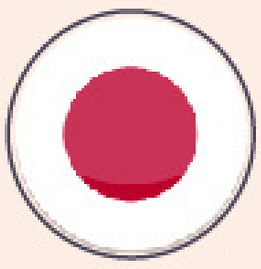
21.6 Billion USD

LARGEST MARKETS





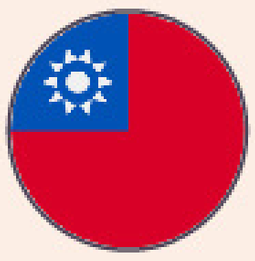
CHINA



JAPAN



USA



TAIWAN

50%
SOME STATISTICS...



4.4% In 2019

forecasted to grow at an average rate of 4.8% annually from 2022-2032



WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM

15th In 2021

4th in Asia, behind Japan, Singapore and China

INTERNATIONAL EVENTS



1988
OLYMPIC GAMES



2002
FIFA WORLD CUP

Boosted South Korea's national image and pride

KOREAN TOURISM ORGANISATION (KTO)

한국관광공사
KOREA TOURISM ORGANIZATION

- Established in 1962
- Central role in marketing and promoting South Korea domestically and abroad as a world class destination
- 8 offices abroad

Mission	To advance tourism as a key driver for national economic growth and enhancing national welfare
Vision	A leading global tourism organisation that creates a better environment to travel

IMAGINE YOUR KOREA

" the surprises that await you in a place that exceeds expectations"



INTERNATIONAL AIRPORTS

INCHEON INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT (ICN)

- Serves over 80 local and international airlines
- World class airport
- Highest ranking in Skytrax: 1st in 2009 & 2012.

INTERNATIONAL AIRPORTS

GIMPO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT (GMP)

- Converted into a largely domestic airport after 2001.
- Carries most of South Korea's domestic flight traffic
- International flights to neighbouring cities such as Tokyo, Shanghai and Taipei.

INTERNATIONAL AIRPORTS

JEJU INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT (CJU)

- Originally a military facility
- Second busiest airport in South Korea
- CJU-GMP topped OAG's world's busiest domestic air routes in 2022.
- Focuses on domestic flights to 14 major cities in Korea
- Services international flights to Japan, China, Singapore and more.

TRANSPORTATION

Seoul Metropolitan Subway

- Consists of 23 lines.
- Operates from 05:30-00:00
- Serves Incheon and Gyeonggi province and major cities: Busan, Daegu, Gwangju and Daejeon



TRANSPORTATION

City Buses

- Classified into 4 colours that indicates their area of coverage

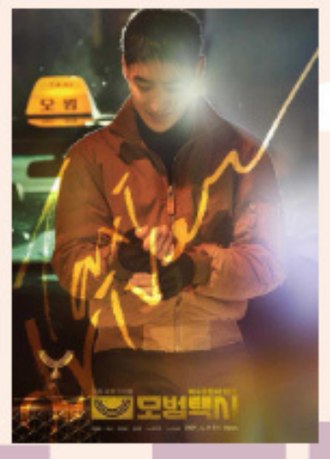


TRANSPORTATION

Taxis

- Classified into:
  Standard, Electric, Deluxe and Jumbo
- Also offers tourist-friendly
  International taxis





TRANSPORTATION

Korea Train Xpress (KTX)

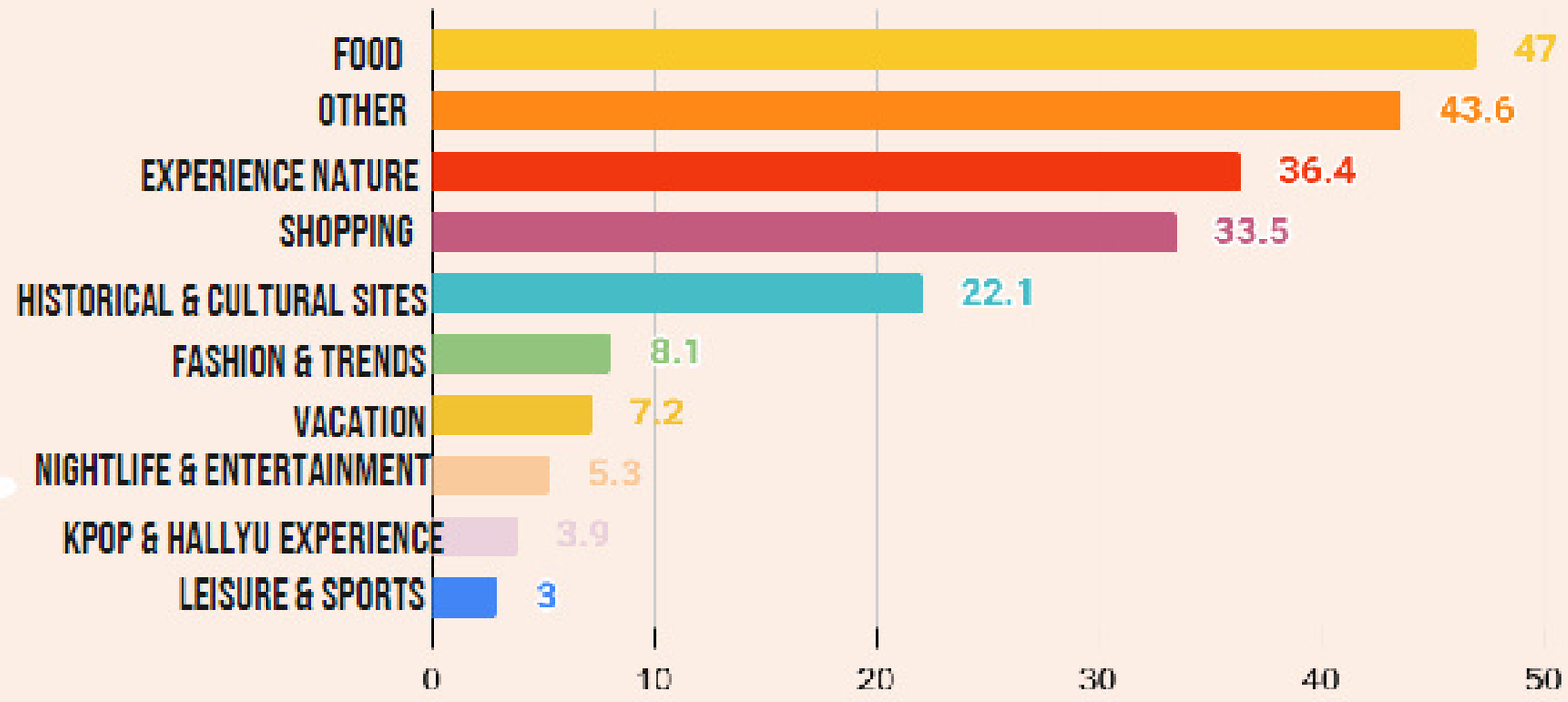
- Travels up to 421 km/h
- Reaches as far as Yeosu and Changwon on the southern coast.
- Korail Pass
  - an exclusive railway pass for foreigners that allows unlimited use of all trains, including the KTX, for a selected number of days.

02

WHAT MAKES KOREA AN ATTRACTIVE TOURIST DESTINATION?



Why tourists travel to South Korea?



Statistics.com, 2021

KEY FACTORS



Korean Wave



Popular Attractions



Culture & Arts



Korean Festivals



Korean Food



K-Beauty

KOREAN WAVE

Hallyu Tourism?





KOREAN WAVE



Korean pop culture

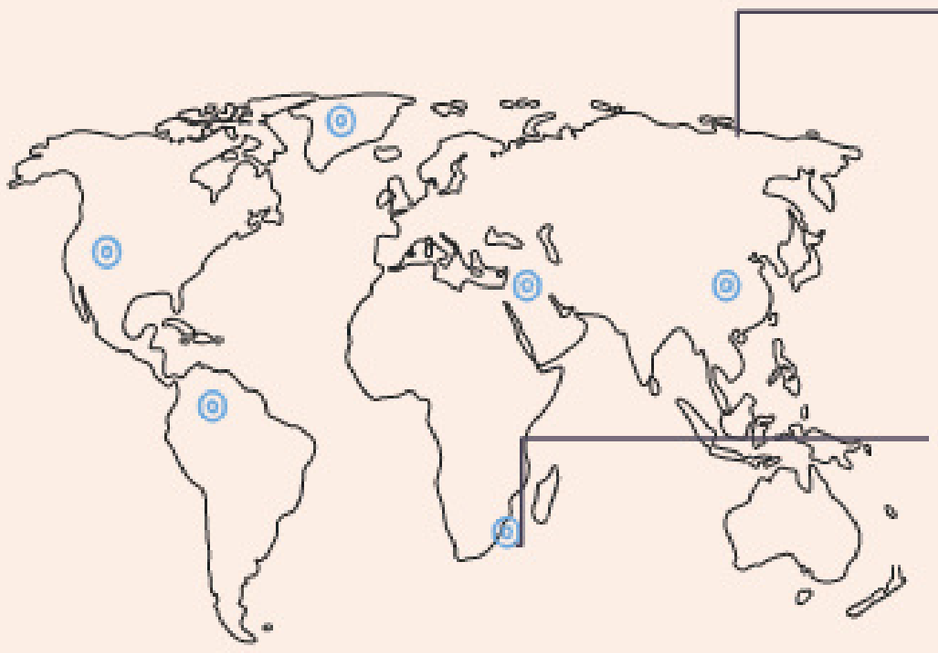
The wave brought Hallyu stars, which include Korean actors, pop-stars and athletes, to a world platform, and their popularity became an effective and profitable method to attract tourists.

Korean films

As part of the Korean wave phenomenon, 'film induced tourism' has also contributed to the rise in Korea's tourism.

KOREAN WAVE

Korean pop culture

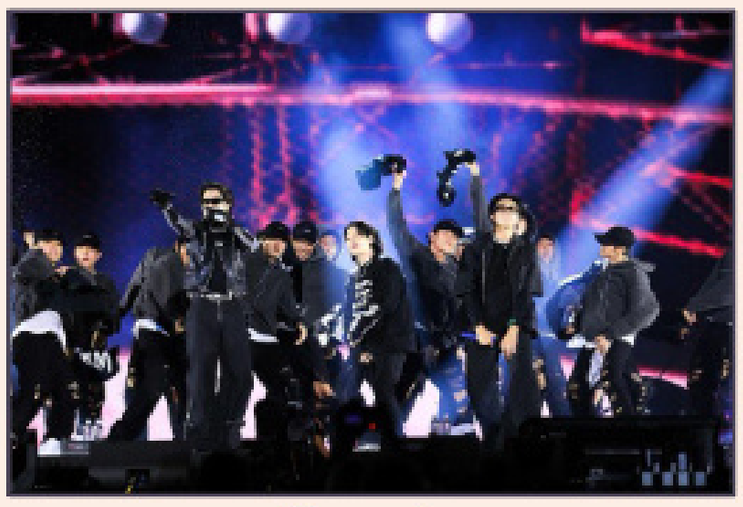


Before the birth of Hallyu, foreigners either from neighboring countries in Asia or Western countries, reportedly had a negative impression on South Korea due to Korean War and political instability, or were unaware of South Korea at all

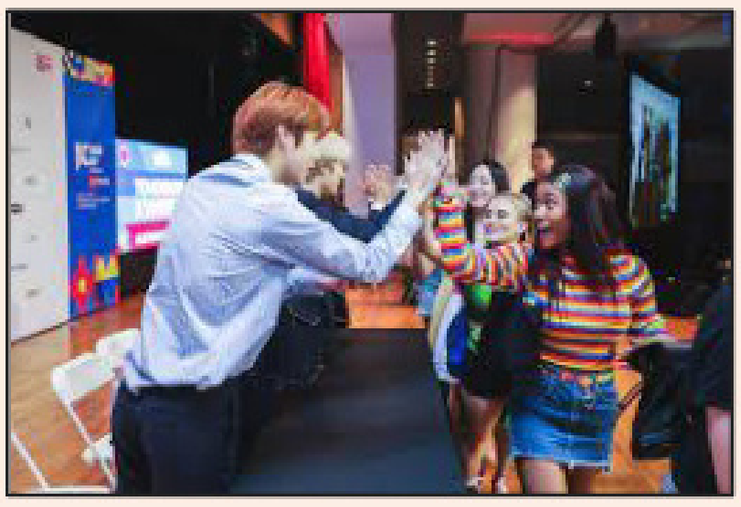
In 2019, BTS's concert in Saudi Arabia temporarily lifted the Islamic law for women, allowing them to attend the concert without a male guardian

KOREAN WAVE

Korean pop culture



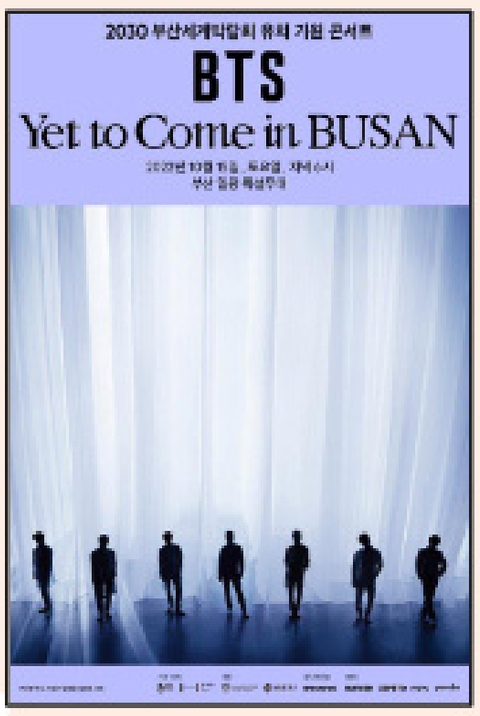
Concert



Meet & Greet

KOREAN WAVE

Korean pop culture



Hotels and other accommodation options in Busan have come under fire for canceling previous reservations and overcharging for rooms by as much as 10 times or more coinciding with a BTS concert that will be held in October to support the port city's bid for World Expo 2030.

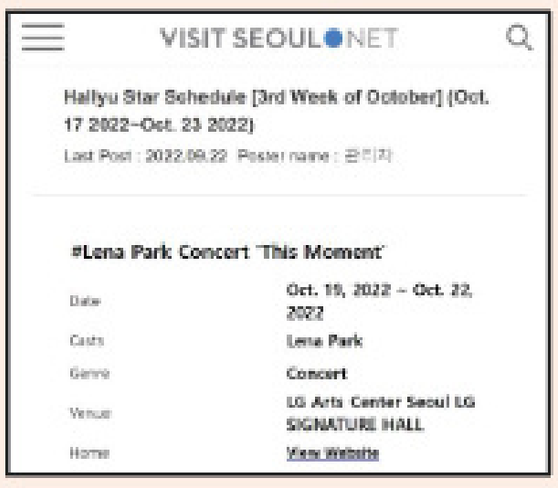
~Korea Times, 28 Aug 2022

KOREAN WAVE

Korean pop culture

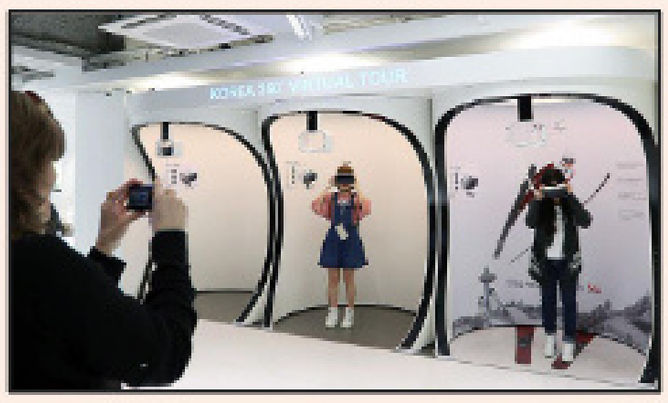


Hallyu Experience Program



"Hallyu Star Schedule"





K-Style Hub - VR Experience Zone

KOREAN WAVE

Korean films



Storyline & site are closely Interrelated



Character
Fantasy



Romance



Relaxation



Vicarious
experience

KOREAN WAVE

Korean films

> 270,000

Tourists visited Nami Island after broadcast of show
(Han, H. J. et al., 2008)



Winter Sonata featuring
Nami Island

> 47%

travelled to Korea because of the influence of Korean dramas *(Bae et al., 2017)*

KOREAN WAVE

Korean films



Jumunjin Breakwater featured in
Goblin

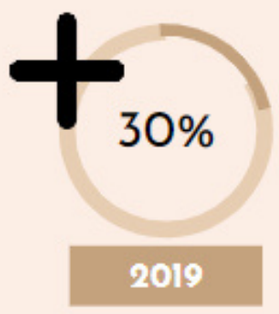


Dae Jang Geum Park





Ssangmun-dong, Seoul | 쌍문동; Squid Games

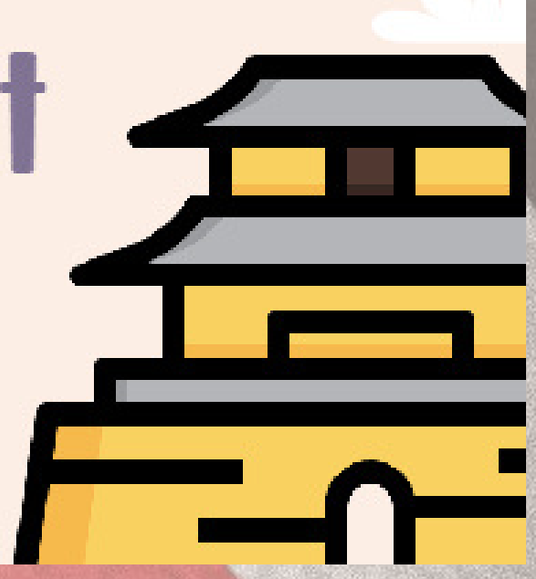


30% increased in tourist as in
2019 as compared to 2017

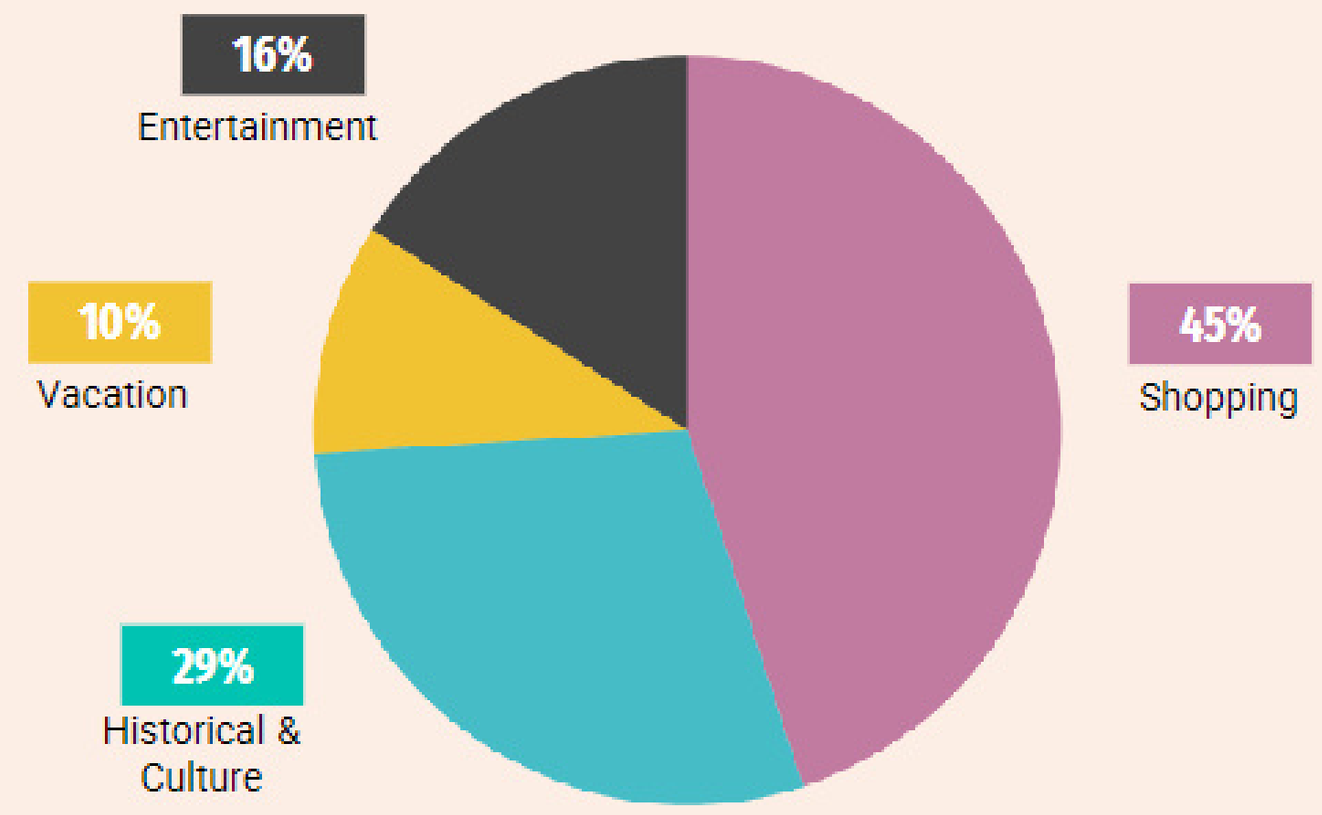


POPULAR ATTRACTIONS

Why do these attractions attract tourism?



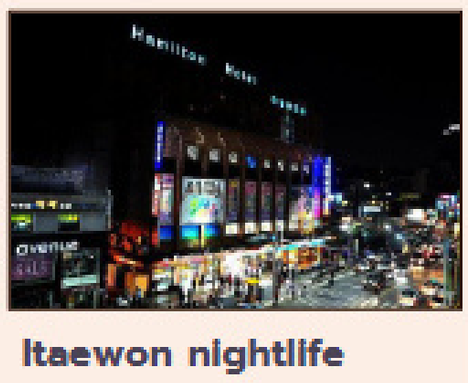
PURPOSE OF TRAVEL



Statistics.com, 2021

PURPOSE OF TRAVEL

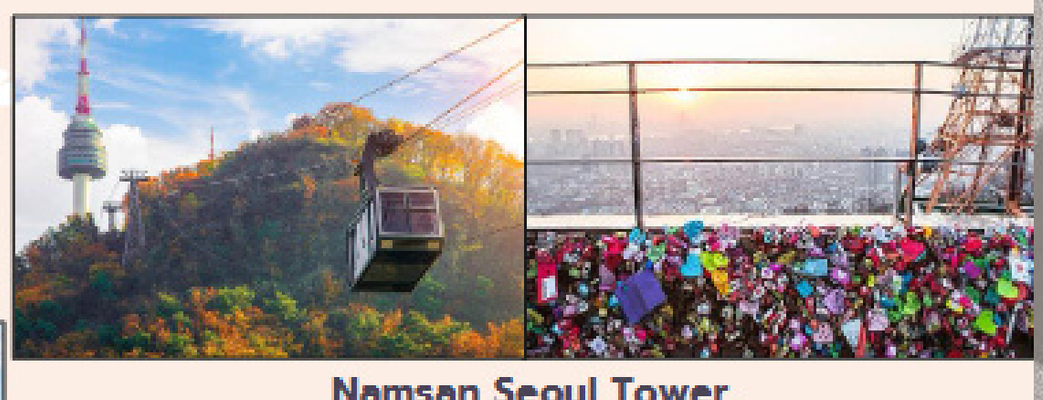
Entertainment



Itaewon nightlife district



Lotte World, Seoul Theme Park



Namsan Seoul Tower

Seoul landmark attractions;The tower draws in visitors year-round, and is most famous for its nightscape view of the city & love locks.
Tower is a must-visit attraction for hallyu fans, having been featured in dramas like "My Love From the Star (2013)" and "Legend of the Blue Sea (2016)."

PURPOSE OF TRAVEL

Shopping







12th

World best shopping destination

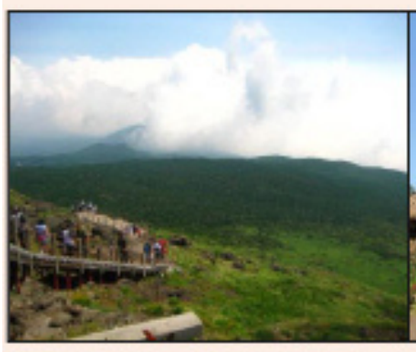
Myeong-dong Shopping District

Gangnam Coex Luxury mall

Itaewon Market

PURPOSE OF TRAVEL

Vacation







Jeju Island is the top island destination, known for its untapped beaches, waterfalls & cuisine

Left: Mount Hallasan- Highest mountain & dormant volcano, *Middle:Jeju Folk village Right: Jeju Waterworld*



Haeundae Beach, Busan

Haeundae Beach is the most famous beach in Korea, loved by people of all ages & during Busan International Film festival

PURPOSE OF TRAVEL

Historical & Culture



Bukchon Hanok Village

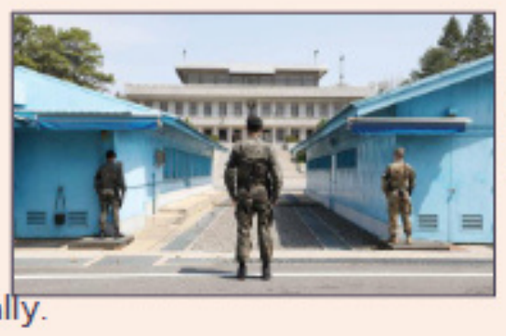




Gyeongbokgung Palace



Gamcheon Culture Village



Panmunjom, Demilitarised Zone

Heritage tourism, rapidly developing as one of the major growing segments of the tourism industry (*Hollinshead, 1996).*Demilitarized Zone attracting 1.2 million visitors annually.

K-BEAUTY



K-Fashion



Plastic Surgery



Cosmetics

K-BEAUTY

WHAT IS K-FASHION?



K-Fashion

It is a sort of relaxed street fashion or Korean street wear, mixing together the aesthetics of rock and hip hop into street fashion pieces. Especially the top part is often oversized or baggy, though men also like relaxed fit pants and shorts to go with it.

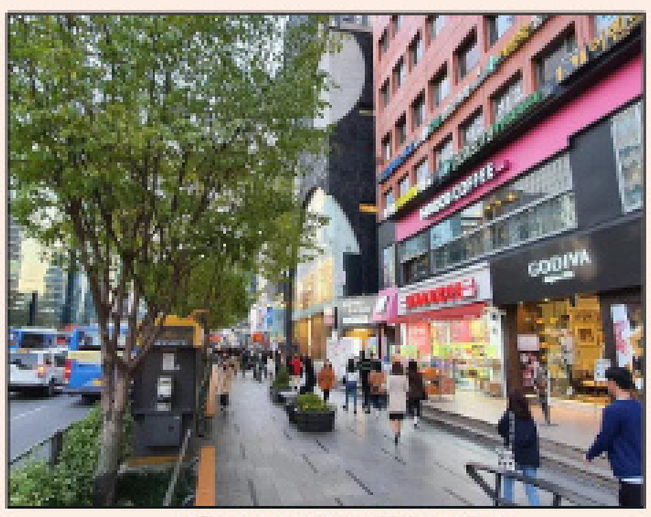




K-Fashion



Next Level. Next Revolution. Next Fashion 2022

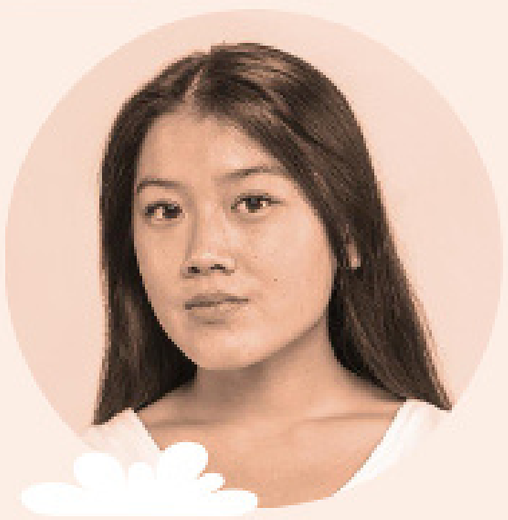


Gangnam District



Dongdaemun-gu Shopping Complex

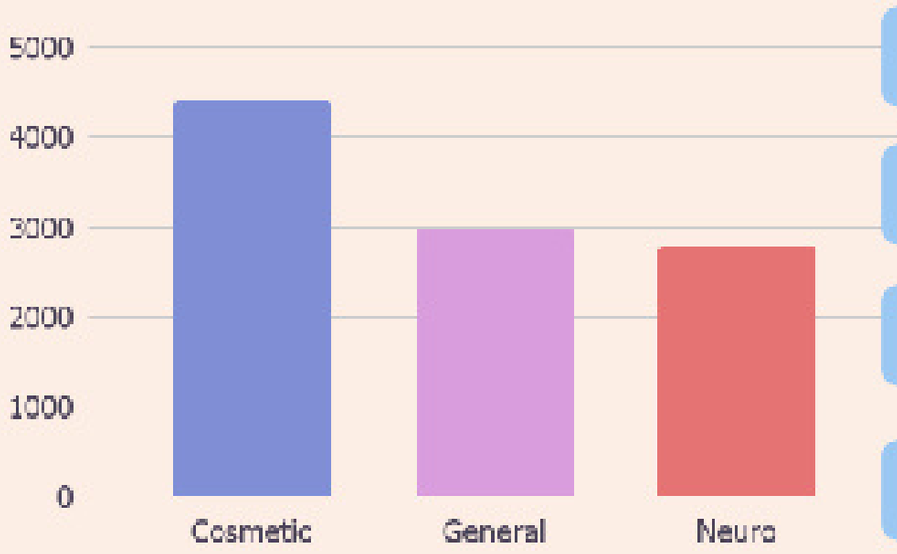
K-BEAUTY



Plastic Surgery

50,000 Tourists

Spending $215 billion won ($188.3 million)



- Influence of K-Wave
- Affordable cost
- Advanced medical infrastructure
- High healthcare quality
- Wide range of procedures/treatments

K-BEAUTY

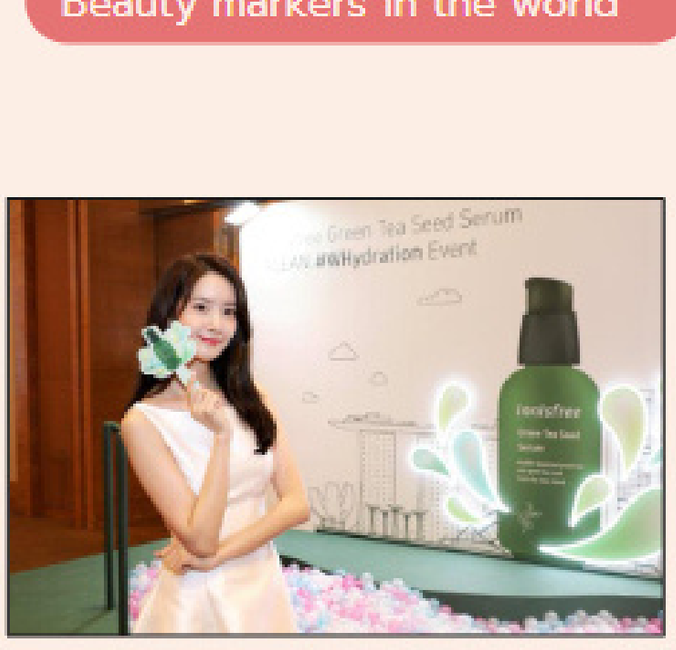
TOP 10

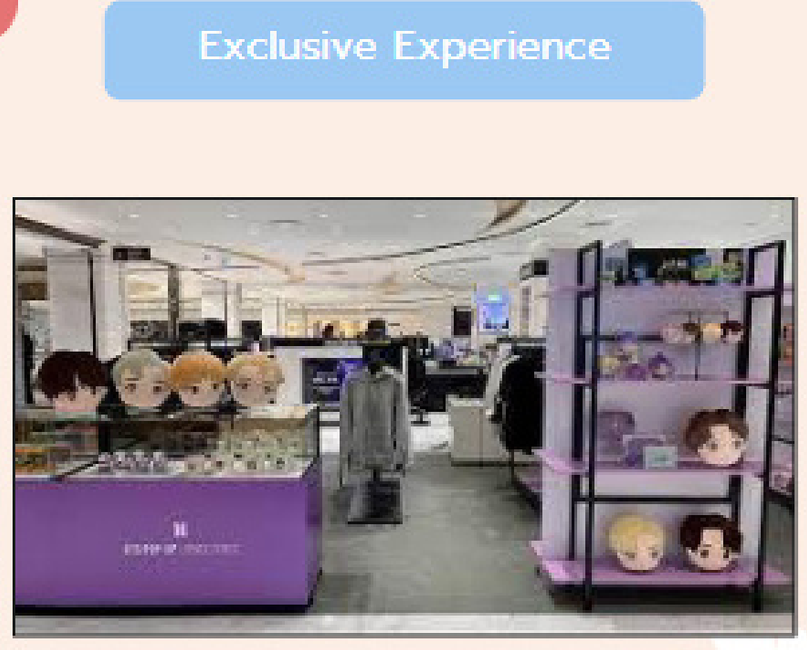
Beauty markers in the world

- Relatively cheaper
- Prevent Legitimacy issues
- Exclusive Experience



Cosmetics





Marketing campaigns to attract tourist to purchase korea cosmetics in Korea

CULTURAL AND ARTS

What does Korea have to offer?



FESTIVALS

Many different types of festivals celebrated annually in South Korea that attracts both local and foreign tourist

RITUALS

Rituals and festival goes hand in hand, rituals in South Korea are centered more around locals



CULTURAL AND ARTS

FESTIVALS: YEON DEUNG HOE FESTIVAL









CULTURAL AND ARTS

FESTIVALS: BORYEONG MUD FESTIVAL



Boryeong 2022 Mud Festival Poster

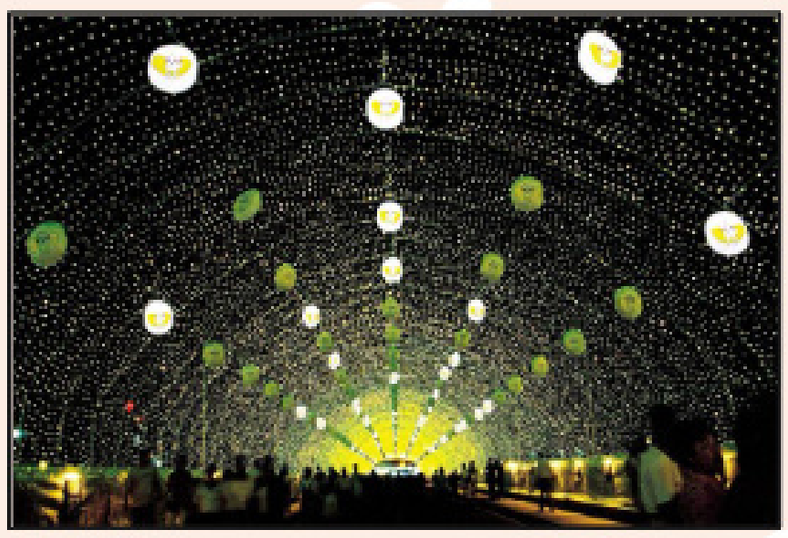




Boryeong Mud Products sold in Malaysia

CULTURAL AND ARTS

FESTIVALS: MUJU FIREFLY FESTIVAL





CULTURAL AND ARTS

RITUALS: ROYAL ANCESTRAL RITUAL



Olden Day



Modern Day

KOREAN FOOD

How does food increase tourism?



GWANGJANG MARKET



- First permanent market in South Korea
- One of the most popular tourist destination in South Korea
- Offers variety of goods and groceries
- Made popular by its local Korean street food section







Cho Yoonsun, Local chef at Gwangjang Market featured in the Netflix series: Street Food



Episode 186 of popular Korean TV show Running Man where they explored Gwangjang Market



Hotteok (Korean Pancake)



Fish Cake Soup



Mung Bean Pancake

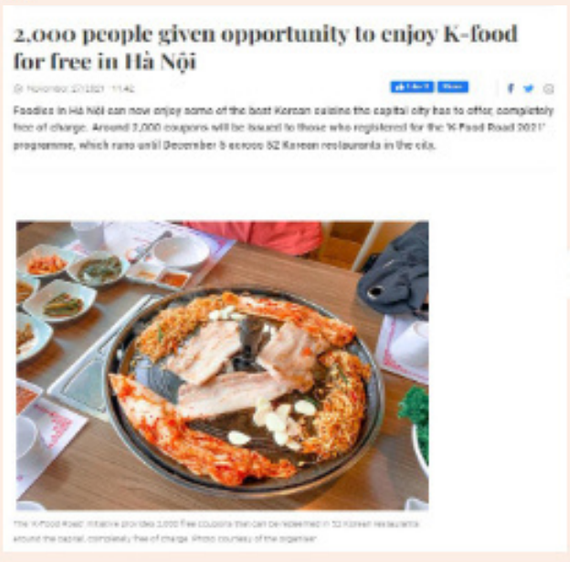


Live Octopus

GOVERNMENT EFFORTS



Tourist partaking in local food tours where they learn and make local dishes in Korea



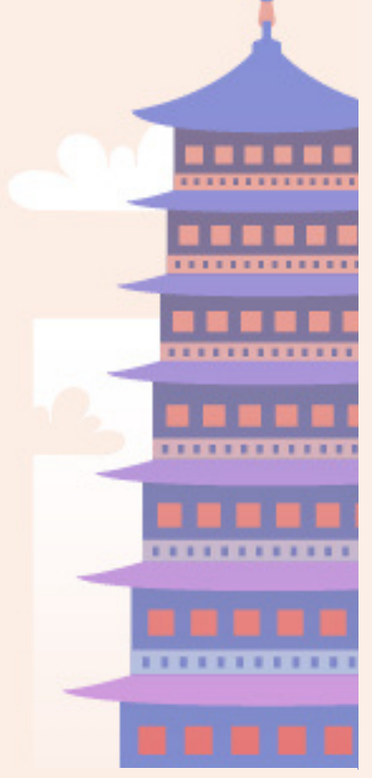
Free coupons given out to the residents of Ha Noi to try out Korean Restaurants

03 IMPACTS OF TOURISM IN SOUTH KOREA



IMPACTS OF TOURISM IN KOREA

- ECONOMIC IMPACT
- ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT
- SOCIAL IMPACT
- CULTURAL IMPACT



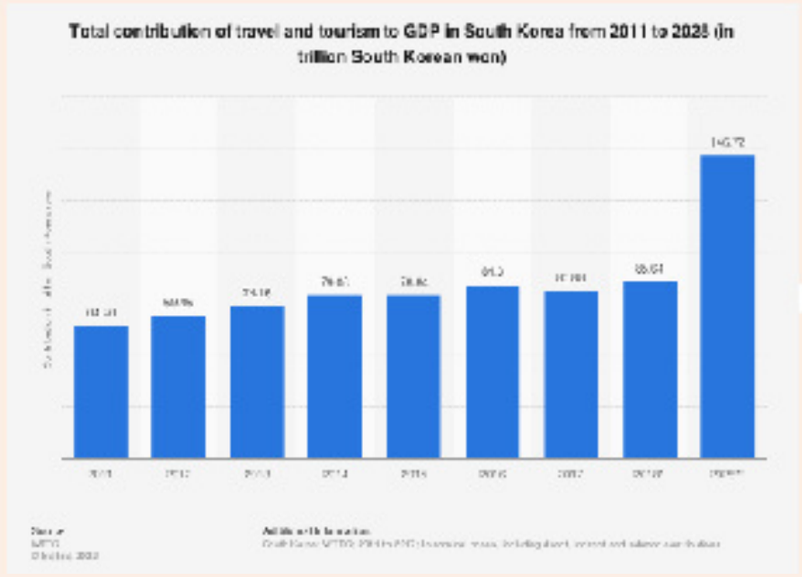
ECONOMIC IMPACT

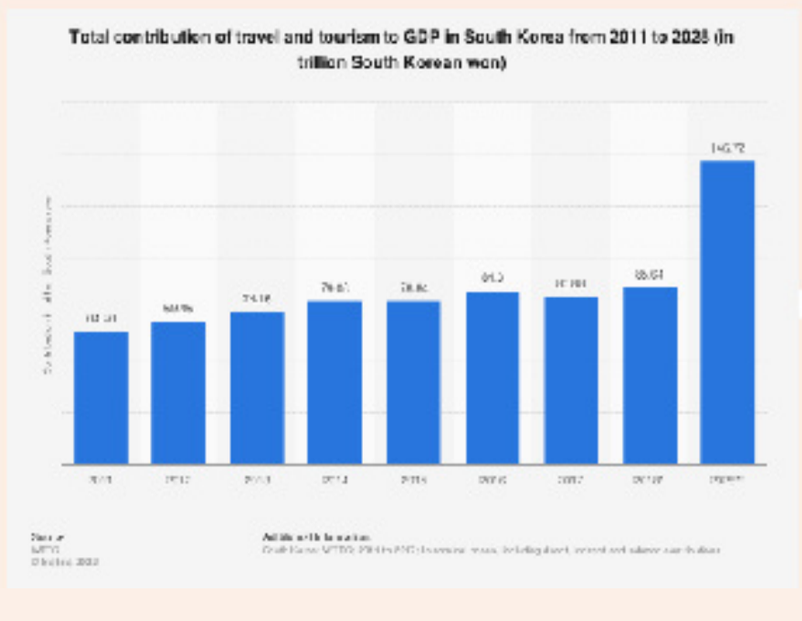
4.7% OF GDP
Expected to double by 2028

14.6% INCREASED EXPENDITURE
Increase in total international visitor expenditure

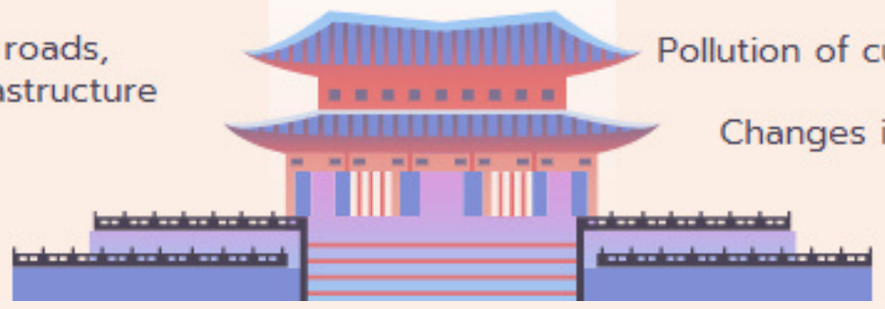
4.6% OF TOTAL ECONOMY
Estimated 116.9 trillion KRW

1.8M JOBS CREATED BY 2032
Half a million jobs created annually for next decade





ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT



POSITIVE

Preservation of historic sites

Higher quality of roads, facilities and infrastructure

NEGATIVE

Destruction of natural resources

Pollution of custom/heritage resources

Changes in community appearance



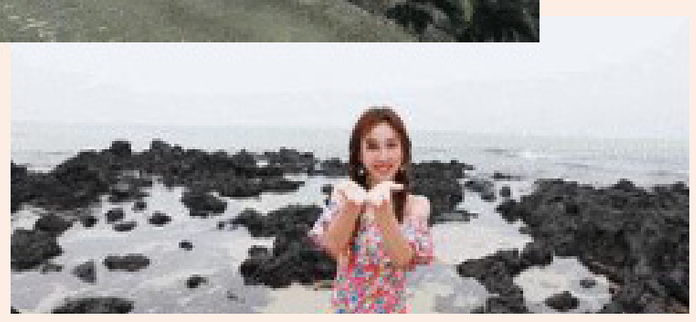
JEJU ISLAND

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

Jeju Island

- Previously a rural area
- Now a popular tourist attraction
- Local fishing village gained popularity in social media
- More wealthy people moved in
- Improved housing
- Created business opportunities







"Tourists start to penetrate deep into the people's living spaces. They do not care about what's happening there. They just take their photos and leave. The lingering impacts such as pollution, littering and environmental devastation are all left for the Jeju people."

— Youjeong Oh, 2021

Save Jeju Bada project

Encourage visitors to help clear trash on the island and preserve this attraction







Mounting litter found scattered around Jeju Island's beaches, coastlines and in the sea

Poses as dangerous threat to the entire ecosystem

Land and marine animals often mistake discarded plastics for food or get stuck in the debris

In 2018, all six sea turtles found dead in Jeju's waters and had plastic in their stomachs

Visitors are known to be majority of the cause

SOCIAL IMPACT

Increase cost of living

Residents pushed out of their own homes as property prices rise through the roof

Woljeongri Beach

As the beach cafe gained popularity on social media due to tourists, other restaurants and similar cafes began opening to attract more customers.
Residents of Woljeong were offered significantly more money for their farmland in order to replace their land with Airbnbs and locations for tourists, which consequently increased prices of housing in other economic areas

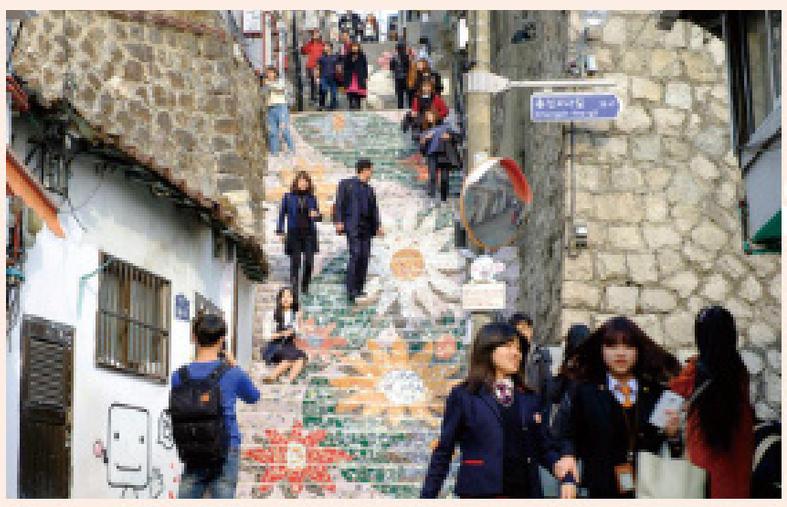


SOCIAL IMPACT

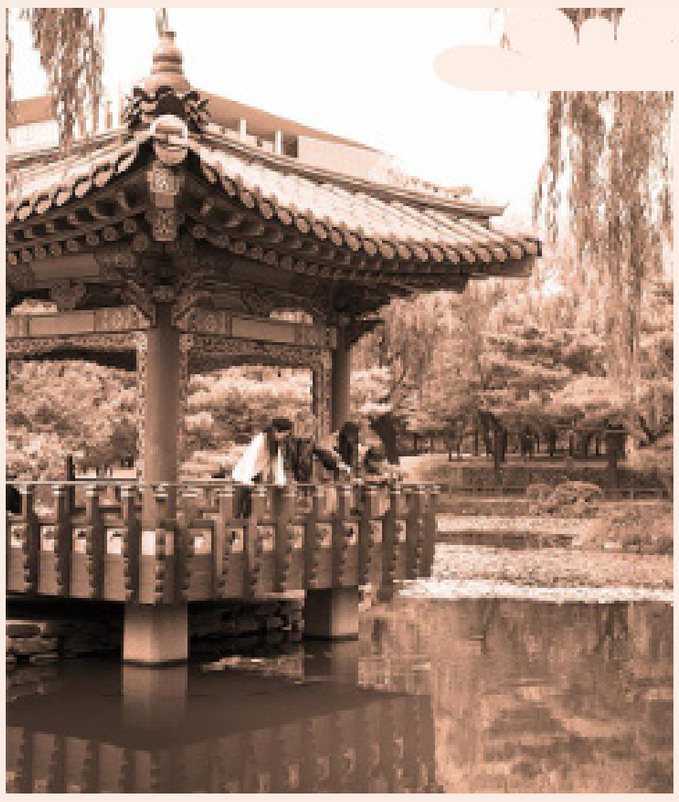
Tourist visits causing disturbance to local residents

Ihwa Mural Village

The noise caused by the tourist traffic is making the previously quiet neighbourhood now virtually unbearable to live in for many of its local residents.
Nowadays visitors will come across signs placed at nearly every turn of the head asking people to respect the residents living in the area and keep their volume to a minimum.
However, the scores of signs begging guests to keep quiet have done little to help the village residents sleep peacefully and they are still bearing the brunt of tourism.







CULTURAL DILUTION

Globalisation & Korean Wave rapidly advancing

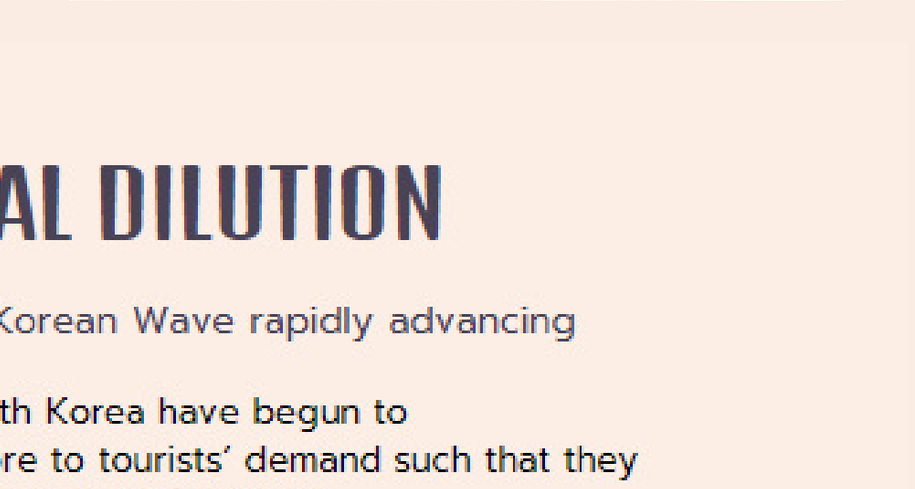
Businesses in South Korea have begun to accommodate more to tourists' demand such that they cater to their taste and preferences

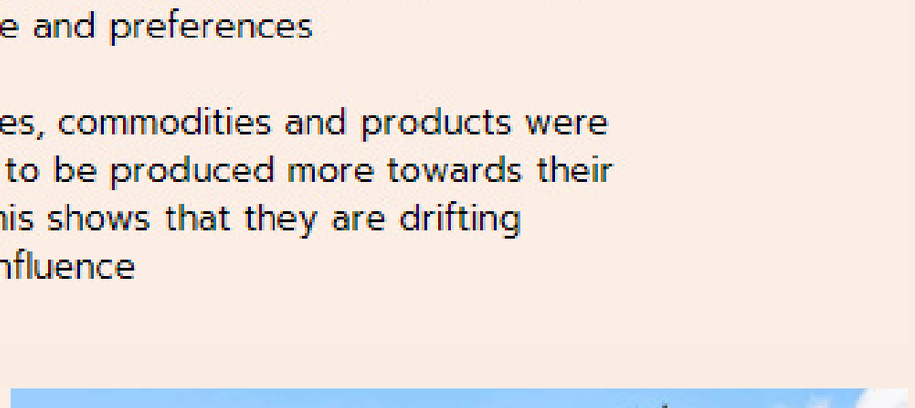
Goods and services, commodities and products were increasingly seen to be produced more towards their preference and this shows that they are drifting towards foreign influence

Gyeongbukgung Palace

Popular tourist attraction where visitors go to try on the traditional Korean costume - Hanbok

However, people are doing it just for their own touristic experience and enjoyment, not to actually learn the Korean history or culture better or appreciate the origins of those traditional costumes







04

COVID-19 IMPACT

Measures Implemented



Curfews
& Closures

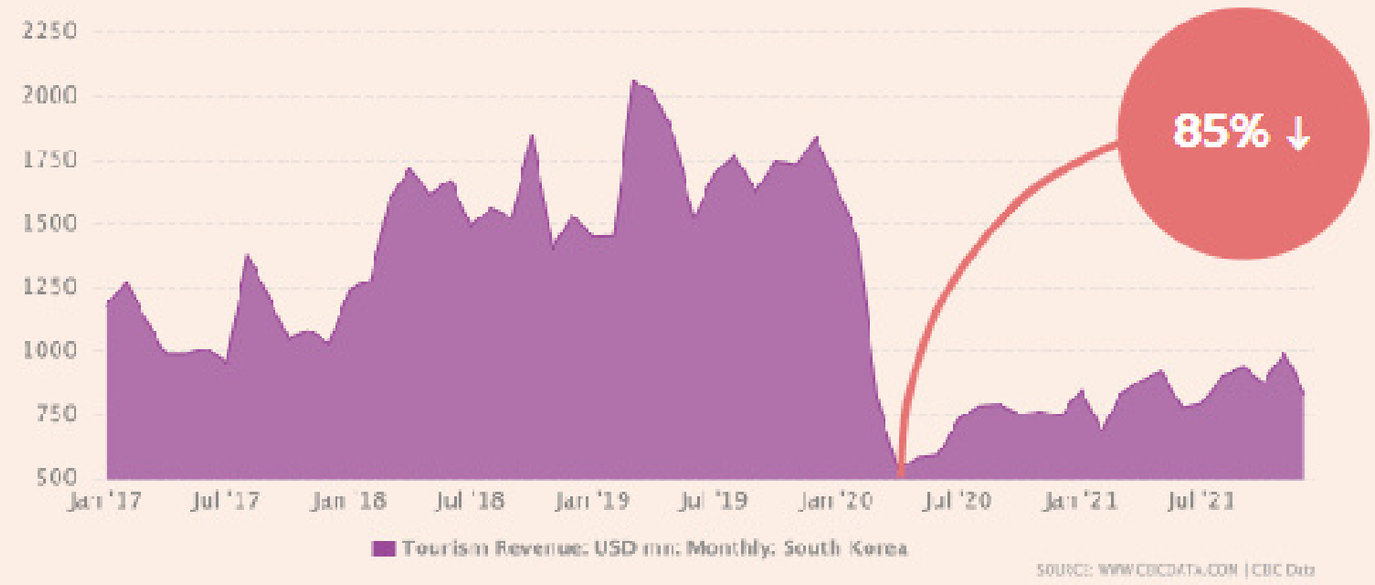


Safe Distancing
Measures



Quarantines
& Testing

COVID-19: Financial Impact



2019: ₩87.5 Trillion VS 2020: ₩54.2 Trillion

Strategies Post-COVID

"Untact" Initiative

Definition: **"Undoing Contact"**

- "Digital New Deal" of the "Korean New Deal", launched in 2020
- To prepare for surging demand for remote services and foster economic activities (including travel) without contact
- US$7.6 billion investment by SK government

What does this mean?

- Contactless everything
  - Mobile kiosks
  - Automated Check-In

5G Quarantine Bot "Keemi"



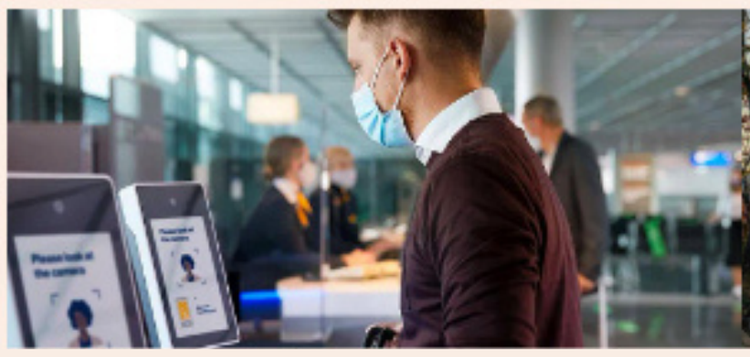
Takes temperatures

Sprays disinfectant

Enforces social distancing

"Untact" Tourism

- Combining **"untact" infrastructure with "untact" activities**
- To alleviate anxieties of travel-related transmission of COVID-19
- Natural offerings of Korea = "healing" time
  - E.g. Hiking trails, camping activities, national parks
- "Untact" in hospitality
  - Buffet room service, live chat concierge, private dining rooms





Leveraging Hallyu



2021 campaign by KTO
"Feel The Rhythm of Korea"

- Featured Korean pop-culture figures like BTS, AOMG, Lee Hyun
- Reworked *Pansori*
- Featured different cities and cultures
- Very successful (560mil views)
- 2022 version: featured BTS



District-led Campaign
"Eogiyeongcha" (Your Seoul Goes On)

- Again featuring BTS
- Featured Seoul and the different cultures/experiences
- Very successful
- 83M views
- https://youtu.be/tli25Gol8yg



05

THANK YOU!

Kahoot Time!

EXAM QUESTIONS

Q1. What are the key/ main contributing factors that make South Korea attractive to tourists? Briefly state three factors

Q2. What is the Yeon Deung Hoe Festival celebrated for?

1. Buddha's Birthday
2. Mooncake Making
3. Paying respects to ancestors
4. Prosperity and good luck

Q3. How has tourism contributed to the South Korean economy? List 3 points .

EXAM QUESTIONS (Answers)

Q1. What are the key/ main contributing factors that make South Korea attractive to tourists? Briefly state three factors

(Any stated below)
- Korean Wave
- Attractions
- Culture & Arts
- Korean Festivals
- Korean Food
- K-beauty

Q2. What is the Yeon Deung Hoe Festival celebrated for?

1. **Buddha's Birthday**
2. Mooncake Making
3. Paying respects to ancestors
4. Prosperity and good luck

EXAM QUESTIONS (Answers)

Q3. How has tourism contributed to the South Korean economy? List 3 points

- Contributed to 4.7% of South Korean GDP
- Created business and job opportunities
- Improved quality of life of the South Koreans (as seen from increase in their expenditure)

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South Korea's Tourism
CHENG SHI MAN, JOEY (U1930469C)
HAN QI RONG (U2222627D)
KUA WEI SHING (U2011381A)
SHANESE TAN HUI SHAN (U2011730H)
VANESSA GRACE NG WEN HUI (U1931031H)
GAY






GAY




14.6%


HANA... DUL... SET!
K-Pop
hello!
IDOL TRAINEE
LIM YU ZHE, JAVIER (U1930745A
KIMBERLEY TAN BOON CHING (U2011861A)
ELYSHA BINTE SHAHREN (U2140906C
ANG MUN FANG ASHLEY (U213115
NG JING TING EUNICE (U2011060A)

Categories



1 INTRODUCTION

2 HISTORY OF TRAINEE SYSTEM

3 PAST VS PRESENT STRUCTURE

4 PROS AND CONS

5 FUTURE OF TRAINEE SYSTEM

6 CROSS COUNTRY COMPARISON

7 CONCLUSION

Introduction

What is the Kpop trainee system?

K-POP Trainee System

Big Bang's G-Dragon



Longest training period:
11 Years

LOONA's Olivia Hye



Shortest training period:
1 Day

What is it?

- Boot camp like training
- Lasts several months or years
- Intense and strict
- Restricts all parts of the trainee's personal life (eg. diet, social media)
- Does not guarantee a debut

Recruitment Process



Audition

- Extremely strict and tedious
- Constant rejections
- Eg. Rain had to dance for 2 hours straight to impress his CEO
- Eg. CL sent demo tapes to YG Ent every 3 months for 4 years

Scouting

- Trainees can also be scouted off the streets purely based on their looks
- Scouting occurs anywhere, especially outside schools
- Eg. SM Ent scouted f(x)'s Krystal at age 5 but was rejected by her parents
- Eg. BTS's Jungkook was scouted by 8 different companies

In The System

Vocal & Dance lessons

- Usually 3 hours per lesson
- Monthly evaluation
- Can reach 14-15 hours a day

Image Maintenance

- Extreme dieting
- Plastic surgery
- No dating
- No social media

Language lessons

- Language lessons for both Korean and foreign trainees







Image Maintenance







WEIGHT MANAGEMENT

- Unhealthy Dieting
- Specifically for females
- Frequent weigh ins

PLASTIC SURGERY

- Common procedures: double eyelid, v-line jaw, nose filler

SOCIAL MEDIA

- Limited access to their phones and social media
- Avoid controversial or embarrassing posts

Weight Management

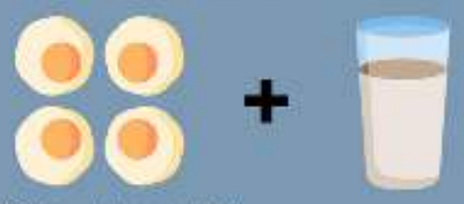
- No junk food or desserts
- Take diet pills or undergo treatments
- Frequent weigh ins
- Contract may be terminated if ideal weight is not achieved





- Eg. An ex-trainee claimed that her ex company mandated their trainees to be less than 47kg, regardless of weight or height
- Those who exceed will only be given water

Soyou's diet



(Without the yolks)

Plastic Surgery

- Plastic surgery is strongly encouraged
- Maximise their genetic potential
- Cost of surgery would be added to their debt
- The K-POP combo: Double eyelid surgery, filler in the nose bridge & v-line jaw surgery
- These procedures are often kept as a secret by companies







Competition

In the dorm

- Trainees that are intended to be in the same group often share one dorm
- Tension often arises within the group
- Some trainees are selected to promote individually
- Causes dislike and jealousy



Health Issues

Physical

- Due to the immense pressure, lack of food and sleep many trainees develop health issues
- Common occurrences of fainting and injuries
- Eg. An ex trainee revealed that during trainings, it was common for fellow trainees to faint and the rest would have to carry them back

Mental

- Mental illness was common amongst the trainees
- Strict weight management has led to trainees developing eating disorders
- Busy schedules and intense pressure resulted in depression and anxiety
- Eg. Jo Kwon, formerly from JYP ent, developed depression due to the fear of never being able to debut

2. History of Trainee System

Timeline: The Beginning

1989

- Lee Soo Man (LSM) founded what was then known as "SM Studio"
- Founded teenaged backup dancer, Hyun Jin Young, through SM Studio's first audition in 1989

1990

- The foundation of the K-pop trainee idol system was laid by LSM then
- After training under LSM for a year, Hyun Jin Young debuted with "Sad Mannequin"

1993

- Hyun Jin Young fell from stardom after being arrested for marijuana charges
- LSM's first ever artist achieved minor success

Timeline: Concept of 'creating' stars

1993

- LSM set himself a new goal to debut artists who are talented and obedient
- From 1993, LSM held auditions in Korea, USA and Japan --> to find the 'ideal' people fit to be an 'idol'
- LSM being greatly involved in the entire process, from the auditions, the casting process to the training of these young talents
- Training would include singing, dancing, facial expressions, public behaviour and even personality development
- Revolutionized the industry from self-made artists to idea of idol creation

1995

- Change from SM Studio to SM Entertainment
- Further development of the training system, supported by in-house production system

Timeline: 1st Gen K-pop Idols under SM

1996

- Debut of Highfive Of Teenagers (H.O.T)
- First-ever idol group introduced into the industry
- Under the guidance and directions of LSM himself

1997

- Debut of Sea, Eugene, Shoo (S.E.S)
- First concept of girl group, giving different feel to H.O.T

1998

- Debut of SM's 2nd boy band, Shinhwa

1999

- Debut of R&B duo, Fly to the Sky
- Opted for mid-tempo ballads, different from their predecessors

2000

- BoA's debut that shook Korea's music industry once again

Training System for H.O.T.



According to Tony An, the training system then "wasn't that organized and vocal training didn't really exist"

Training System for BoA



- Scouted by LSM in 1998
- Debuted in 2000 (2 years of training)
- Dropped out of school to focus on training --> fully dedicated to the system in SM
- Not only trained in dancing and singing, she was also “made to study Japanese intensively and even sent to Japan for long periods of time in order to achieve fluency through immersion in the language.”

Culture of Training System Today

BoA's International Fame

BoA's fame in and outside of Korea, mainly in Japan, further intensified the outlook towards the idol training system and "raised expectations for the quality of its pop star output"





Moving forward

- From 1st Generation to 4th Generation idols today, while there has been a shift towards a more global outlook, the training system still exists
- E.g. SM held its first international audition in Beijing, China in 2000, casting Chinese members, who debuted in idol group, Super Junior (2nd Gen)

3. Past VS Present

K-pop Idol Trainee System

Past

1 Live in dormitories with other trainees

- RM from BTS used to share a room with 9 other trainees



SHINee's dorm in trainee days:



1 Kpop scene was not very successful then

- Less money invested in quality of dorms

2 Rivalry was highly encouraged

- Pressured by managers & mentors to be more competitive

3 Long practice hours

- 12h during holidays
- f(x)'s Luna: '20h per day'
- 2NE1's Sandara Park: "Even if the lesson finished at 8pm, no one went home until past midnight."

""...We practised until sunrise. We'd come back to our dorm then go to our dorm then go to school after changing with blisters on our feet."

~ SHINee's Taemin

Past

4 Long contracts: Around 12 Years

- "Slave Contracts"
- Hefty fee to break the contract and leave the company

5 No salary, some prohibited to work

- Company provides trainees with mere allowance to cover basic necessities

Present



High-Up Entertainment's Trainees' dorm (2021)

- 4-6 trainees in a big room, with ample space for storage and daily activities

1

Bigger dorms, better living conditions

- Kpop scene is extremely successful
- Entertainment companies now have sufficient money to invest in better facilities & accommodation for their trainees

Survival show iLand's dorm for top12 contestants (2020):



Present

1

Bigger dorms, better living conditions

- Kpop scene is extremely successful
- Entertainment companies now have sufficient money to invest in better facilities & accommodation for their trainees



Produce 101: Yeonjung & Chanmi

- 1st clip: Yeonjung sang the high note flawlessly
- 2nd clip: Chanmi monitoring their performance (different context)
- Mnet edited these clips together to make viewers think that Chanmi was envious (manipulative competitiveness)



Produce 101: GFriend's SinB as Guest

- Trainees' performance is "Ko Ko Bop" by EXO
- SinB said, "Ko Ko Bop is a difficult song. You all must have really good skills?"
- SinB mentioned on vlive that it was heavily edited & expressed her anger

2

Use of media to dramatise rivalry

- Mnet's "evil-editing'

Present

1

Bigger dorms, better living conditions

- Kpop scene is extremely successful
- Entertainment companies now have sufficient money to invest in better facilities & accommodation for their trainees

3

Long practice hours

- 10h, but could go up to 14h
- Still difficult to balance with school, often sleep-deprived & mentally drained





2

Use of media to dramatise rivalry

- Mnet's "evil-editing'

Example of a trainee's schedule (Koreaboo, 2020)

- 10-11am: Exercise
- 11-12pm: English lesson
- 12-1pm: Lunch
- 1-3pm: Rap/Vocal lesson
- 3-5pm: Free practice
- 5-6pm: Dinner
- 6-8pm: Monitoring
- 8-10pm: Choreo lesson
- 10-11pm: Monitoring

Present

4

2017 Contract Reforms

- 2009: 3 members of TVXQ brought it to court
- 2010: South Korea's Fair Trade Commission (KFTC) made a new rule: entertainment contracts are limited to a maximum of 7 years
- 2017: KFTC enforced restrictions on entertainment contracts
  - Reduced the financial penalties for K-pop trainees who break their contracts early
  - Made it more difficult for companies to force idols to renew their contract

5

No salary still

- "...Being a Kpop trainee is around $25,000 USD per month." (Park, 2021)
- For smaller companies: trainees (& idols) have to repay their "trainee debt"
  - Cost of vocal/rap/dance lessons,
  - Living costs (accommodation, food)
- Even after they debut, it may take years before they pay off the debt & finally start get paid / earning profits
- Big 3 (SM, YG, JYP): training costs are free

4: Pros of Trainee System

Chance of Debut

2020 study: Trainees have less than 60% chance of debut in 42% of K-Pop agencies (Statista, 2022)

Paid living expenses

The Big 3 (SM ,YG, JYP) do not charge their trainees for living expenses (lodging, food, vocal/dance classes)

Professional feedback

Feedback on skills (vocals/dance/rap) from experienced coaches and professionals in the industry



Gaining life skills

Perfect public image to prevent scandals (Valean, 2017)

- Eg. JYP's 3 values of honesty, sincerity and humility

Making connections

Meet other like-minded individuals in the industry

- Even if you do not debut, you can keep these connections



4: Cons of Trainee System

Eating disorders

Maintain unreasonable physique

- Former SM trainee admits monthly checks on fat percentage (Valean, 2017)
- Infamous idol diets

Company mistreatment

- Eg. dropping basketballs on their stomach when they breathe
- Eg. making them stay underwater for 5 minutes (Valean, 2017)

Long hours

- Balance training with schoolwork
- Only 1 rest day for singers like G-dragon (Valean, 2017)



Slave contracts

Many years of training → large amount of debt collected + unfair treatment

- Upon debut: no salary until debt is paid back to the company (Padget, 2017)

Poor mental health

- Long hours
- Lack of sleep
- Obsession with image/looks
- Mistreatment and abuse,
- Hate from netizens

(Padget, 2017)



5: Future of Trainee System

Continuation of Trainee System



Training shown to be crucial factor to sustainability of K-Pop and increase tourist behaviourial intention, along with factors like casting, content, and SNS (Kim et al., 2021)

Exportation of Trainee System Overseas



Collabaration between Korean entertainment companies (e.g. HYBE) and other companies (e.g. Universal Music) to train groups using K-Pop Training Methodology (PR Newswire, 2021)

Addressing of ongoing issues with system



While S.K. government has addressed issues such as unfair slave contracts (Kim, 2014), there needs to be greater focus on other pressing issues such as long training hours and mistreatment (BBC, 2020)

6. Cross Country Comparison (Japan)

- Approximately over 10,000 teenage girls in Japan are idols, with over 3,000 groups active
- Famous groups include AKB48, Nogizaka 46, and Johnny and Associates



Similiarities

- Personal lives and image tightly controlled, often prohibited from doing things such as pursuing romantic relationships (Oi, 2016).
  - One idol, Minami Minegishi, shaved her head to show remorse over having a boyfriend

Differences

- Japanese idols often debut with little to no training, and are not expected to meet high standards of singing and performance
  - Greater emphasis on entertaining and interacting with fans (Park, 2018)



6. Cross Country Comparison (China)

- Since 2018, there has been a increase in popularity of idol groups in China
  - Largely due to trainee survival reality shows like Produce 101 China
- More and more entertainment companies in China have thus started their own trainee program



- Similar to the training system in South Korea, trainees are required to attend classes in music, dance, public relations, etiquette, makeup, rhythm, and fitness.
- Trainees have to train 12 hours a day, take monthly exams, and also go on gruelling diets.
- There is also a focus on attaining China's beauty standard of 白，瘦，美 (White, Skinny, Beautiful)
  - However, some have managed to break this mold



Naomi Wang on Produce 101 China



K-Pop Game Night

Can you answer the following questions about the Korean Training Idol System?

Question 1

Which country has adopted a training system for their idols similar to South Korea?

1. Japan
2. Taiwan
3. China
4. North Korea



China

China has adopted a training system similar to the Korean entertainment industry, with trainees taking classes in multiples areas, and training multiples hours a day.

Question 2

Which regulatory authority is in charge of regulating entertainment contracts?

Short-answer Question

공정거래위원회

Korea Fair Trade Commission

In 2017, KTFC ruled that trainee contracts can only be up to a max of 7 years, instead of 20 years.

Question 3

Which of the following are some of negative(s) of the modern K-Pop training system?

1. Strict Diets
2. Expenses not covered
3. Short Working Hours
4. Poor Mental Health



Strict Diets and Poor Mental Health

Some of the negatives of the K-Pop industry include **strict diets, poor mental health, and long working hours**, while some of the benefits include company **covering expenses and receiving professional feedback**


HANA_DUL_SETI
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hello!
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KIMBERLEY TAN BOON CHING (U2011861A)
ELYSHA BINTE SHAHREN (U2140906C
ANG MUN FANG ASHLEY (U213116
NG JING TING EUNICE (U2011060A)






SHINee's dorm in
days:


Gai
Perfect p
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si


Collabaration be
entertainment co
HYBE) and other co
Universal Music) to
using K-Po
Method

SUCCESS-OBSESSED CULTURE IN KOREA

Cheng En, Sofiah, Sonya, Azri, Jem
Team 4: Sseulsseul

주제!

What does it take to become successful in Korea?

PRESENTATION OUTLINE

01 Introduction to success-obsessed culture

02 Factors contributing to being successful in Korea

03 Results of success-obsessed culture

04 Pros and cons of this culture

05 Comparison to Singapore

01

INTRODUCTION TO SUCCESS-OBSESSED CULTURE

BEFORE WE BEGIN

What do you think of when you hear the word "success"?

Code: 3676 5987

WHEN I THINK OF SUCCESS, I THINK OF...







SUCCESS IN KOREA



SCHOOLS

In South Korea, academic success of a student is seen as a source of pride and honour for the family and society at large.



WORKPLACES

Overworking is a common thing in Korean society, especially given the highly competitive nature of the working world.

SUCCESS IN KOREA SCHOOLS



- Graduate from prestigious university = successful
- The ticket to enter a prestigious university? **Suneung**
- Many students are pushed to study hard from a young age
  - Long school hours
  - Night self study
  - Cram schools



SUNEUNG

- Also known as the College Scholastic Ability Test (CSAT)
- Culmination of 12 years of education
- Determines university admission for South Korean students
- Held on the 3rd Thursday of November
- Usually a 8-9 hour affair, from 0800 - 1800
- Special arrangements are made to ensure smooth conduct of the exam





SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS

The KRX Stock Market opens late.

Increased frequency of bus and metro services.

Planes grounded during listening tests.

Police officers escort students who are late.

Younger students and family members gather to cheer the students on.

SUCCESS IN KOREA WORKPLACES



- Workaholism is prevalent in the South Korean society
- Korea has the second longest average working hours in the OECD, however, it has the lowest productivity
- Besides the long working hours, there is also the culture of *hoesik* - after work dinners or gathering
- An individual's success is judged by how they are able to help contribute to the success of the team and the company

HOW BAD IS THE SITUATION?



- Reducing the craze for cram schools
- Implementing curfews on opening hours for study spaces, night self learning gradually removed in Greater Seoul area
- After school programmes which provide extra classes and extracurricular activities are organised in government schools to reduce the need for private tuition.



- President Moon Jae-in's administration limited working hours to 52 hours per work in 2018 under the Labour Standard Acts
- However, current President Yoon Suk-yeol criticises this policy and feels that people should be allowed to work 120 hours a week

DON'T WORRY VILLAGE



- A retreat for South Korea's stressed millennials
- "Its okay to rest. Its okay to fail."
- A place where young South Koreans come together to embrace their previous failures and experiment creating their own projects

https://www3.nhk.or.jp/nhkworld/en/ondemand/video/2022332/

02

FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO BEING SUCCESSFUL IN KOREA

How to be successful in Korea?

01 HIGH-STAKES EDUCATION SYSTEM

02 CULTURAL OBSESSION WITH WORK

03 IMPORTANCE OF PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

1. South Korea's 'Dirt spoons'





- Students isolate themselves in goshiwons
- A recent survey found that a key to a student's success is their parent's background
- Extreme importance placed on academic excellence at the expense of one's well-being and leisure time because students do not want to fall behind their peers

2. Having ‘Nunchi’

#3 Korean-Australians explain the word '눈치' (noonchi/nunchi) |



- In Korea, nunchi is a superpower. Not only is it the secret to living a happier life, but it can also help you perform better at your job, enjoy it more, keep it longer and continue getting the pay raises you deserve.
- The wonderful thing about nunchi is that you don’t have to be born with it. It can be honed by following a set of rules — such dropping your preconceptions (in order to observe your environment with discernment) and reading between the lines (because people don’t always say what they’re thinking out loud).

3. Physical Appearance

Why Do The Koreans Get Plastic Surgery | ASIAN BOSS (2:48-3:48)





- Looks matter in korea in order to be successful
- One’s appearance is a competitive advantage
- The first thing that companies look at is photos attached to resumes
- Good looking people apparently get paid higher salary

03

RESULTS OF SUCCESS-OBSESSED CULTURE

INCREASING SUICIDE RATE

2ND

- After Japan with a suicide rate of 23.8 per 100,000
- Among 30 OECD countries

10.1%

- Of students had urges to commit suicide
- Overwhelming stress tied to academic achievement

LOWER HAPPINESS

57th out of 156 countries

In terms of happiness

Ranked 29th

In terms of GDP per capita

SUCCESS ≠ HAPPINESS

REBEL AGAINST LOOKISM

"Escape the Corset" Movement

- Rebel against strict, unrealistic beauty standards enforced by society
- Youtuber Lina Bae has become a global spokesperson for the Tal Corset ("Escape the Corset") movement

"그러나 예쁘지 않아도 괜찮습니다" - "It is fine even if I am not pretty"



CURRICULUM REFORM

- Reformed statewide curriculum to overcome exam-driven learning culture
- Shift away from knowledge delivery to competency development
- From academic success to overall happiness
- Students will be less stressed and less success driven



04

PROS AND CONS

MOST EDUCATED COUNTRY IN THE WORLD

69%

of 25-34 years old in South Korea had a tertiary qualification in 2021
vs.
47% average across OECD countries

Economic Growth

- High level of education attainment also played a part in South Korea's economic development
- Households started focusing on education leading to the tertiary gross enrollment ratio to increase by fivefold between the 1980s and mid-200s
- From one of the poorest countries in the world in the mid-20th century, South Korea now has the 10th largest economy in the world

Growth of Chaebols

- Chaebols, a form of organizing the structure of companies unique to South Korea, also played a role in the country's economic development
- The government collaboration with these companies focusing on innovation and export-oriented industrialization helped in maximizing efficiency in production.

9%

Average rate of growth in the world from the early 1960s to mid-1990s

- Today, these companies are now multinational conglomerates becoming household names in industries such as electronics and automobiles like Samsung, LG, and Hyundai

Hours Spent Chasing Success

- South Korea's students spend more time studying than children in any other OECD country.
- A typical Korean high school student attends from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., followed by extracurricular sessions that last two to three hours each at *hagwon*.

53%

of high school students did not get enough sleep because they studied at night

90%

of respondents said that they had less than two hours of spare time on weekdays

Increasing Private Household Debt

- Korean households are spending large parts of their income on education and private tutoring – dubbed the “educational arms race”
- According to a report by Korea Institute of Child Care and Education, over 83% of the 704 surveyed parents of five year old children participate in some form of private education

$17 Billion

has been spent by South Korean parents on private education annually

This spending on education and private tutoring plays a part in the soaring private household debt in South Korea, currently standing at 104% of the country’s GDP, highest among 36 major economies.

College Education Inflation

- The high rate of tertiary qualification among its population is leading to a new problem – a “college education inflation”
- Increased enrollment in tertiary education led to a huge surplus of university graduates in the Korean labor market

11.2%

The youth unemployment rate reported in 2016

05

COMPARISON TO SINGAPORE

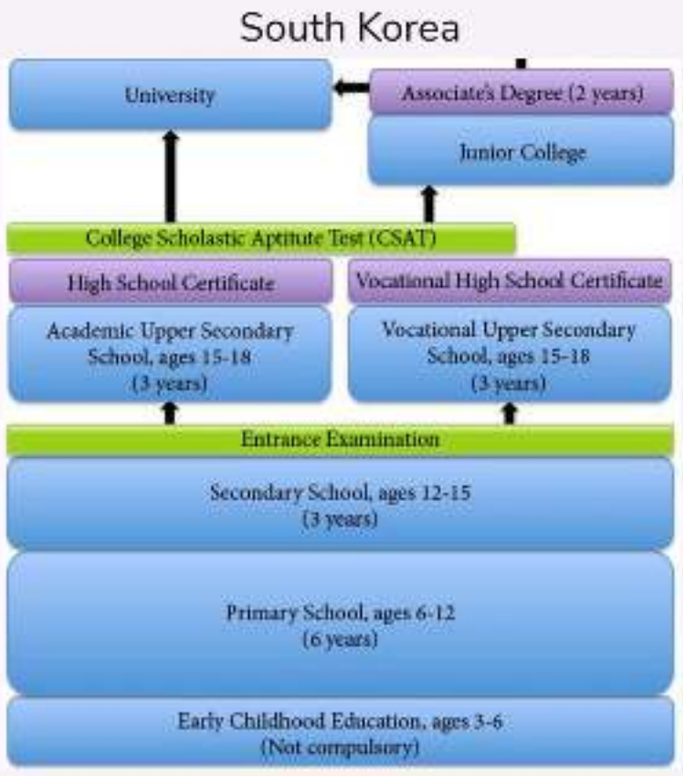
Meritocracy

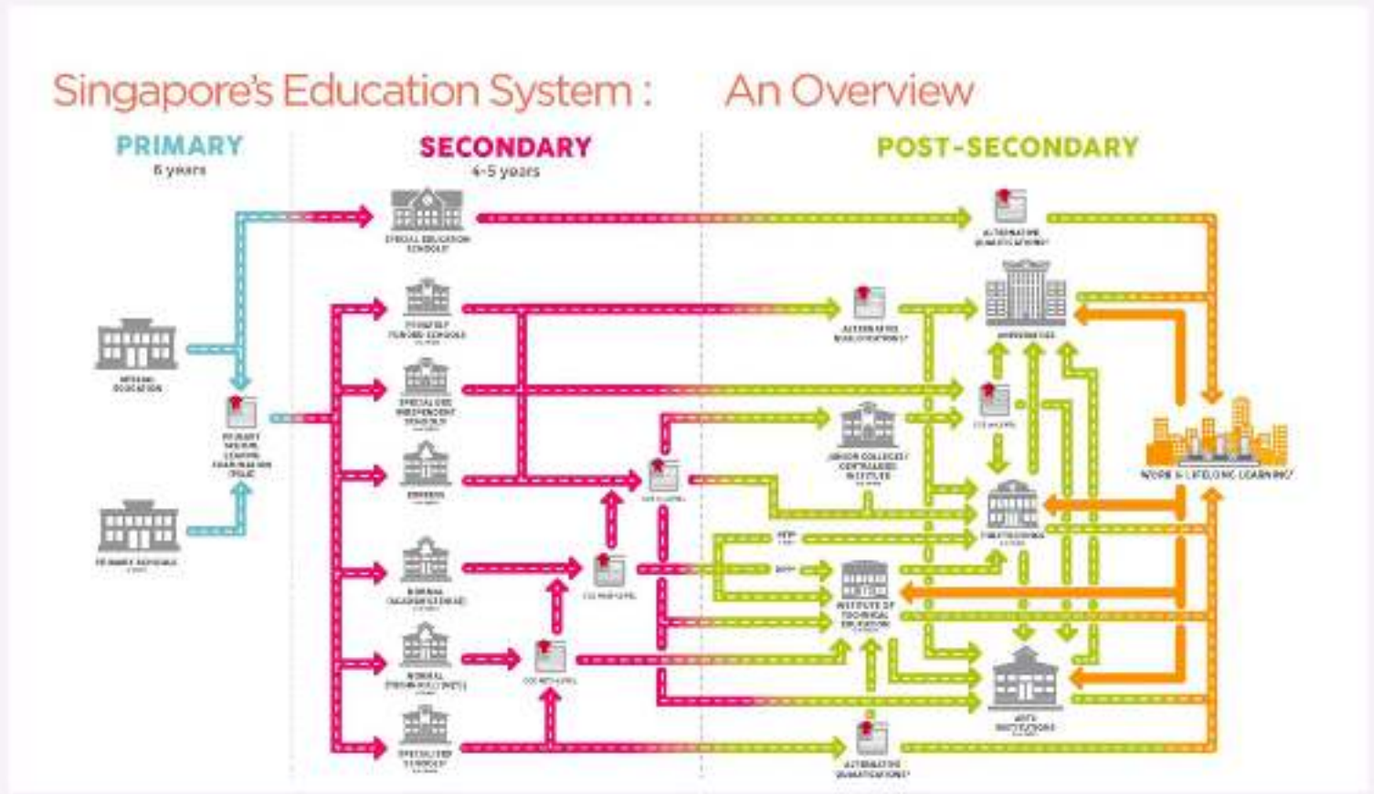
a political system in which economic goods and/or political power are vested in individual people based on talent, effort, and achievement, rather than wealth or social class.

Singaporean Education

- While meritocracy is good in theory, it inadvertently causes people to tie their academic achievements to their self-worth
- 'If you do well in school, you'll get awards and be able to go to a "good" university, then you'll get a "good" job and have a "good" life in the future'

Difference in academic structure



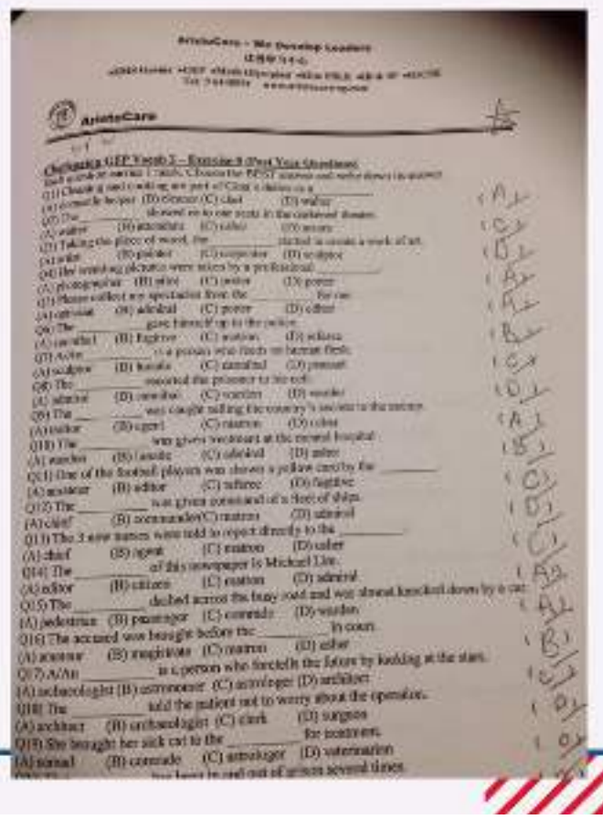


Gifted Education Programme (GEP)

- Special programme to identify the top 1% of students
- Only 9 schools currently offer GEP, and it includes special curriculum and even different textbooks, covering subjects in more breadth and depth
- 2 rounds of placement test at Primary 3 (9 years old)

(GEP)

- GEP tuition
- Run up to PSLE, first major exam at 12 years old
- Cut-off scores based off of PSLE results creates a hierarchy of different pathways from the very beginning, with a desire to always be at the top



Success in Education

- “All schools are good, but some are better than others”
- “If you do well in school, there will be more opportunities given to you”
- The existence of some schools and pathways that are seen as ‘better’ than others means the mad dash for them starts from the very beginning of education, and continues to persist for many Singaporeans’ lives
- Companies are still drawn to candidates with good grades as they are seen as a strong marker of capability
- In 2018, there was a revamp of the grading system for PSLE, shifting from hard numbers to banded grading, to drive focus in learning away from academic results to be more skill based

OT / Hustle Culture and Work-Life Balance

- A 2021 work-life balance survey revealed that Singapore had the second most overworked population — with 25.1% of full-time employees clocking in more than 48 hours in each workweek.
- Singapore's work culture emphasises values of respect and respect for authority
- The competition in the workforce creates a constant need to be doing more than others, in order to stay afloat amongst fierce competitors

06

CONCLUSION

Questions

1. What was the movement that Youtuber Lina Bae participated in?
   a. Tal Moja (Escape the Hat)
   b. Tal Yangmal (Escape the Sock)
   c. Tal Corset (Escape the Corset)
   d. Tal Mimo (Escape the Looks)

2. Which of the following about Suneung is false? Select all that applies.
   a. The examination is taken by university students in South Korea.
   b. The examination is usually held on the third Thursday in November.
   c. Planes are grounded the entire day to minimise disruption to the examination conduct.
   d. The day of Suneung is a public holiday in South Korea.

3. Which of the following is NOT an example of 'nunchi'
   a. Noticing that someone on the bus needs help
   b. Sensing that your partner is about to reveal some bad news
   c. Knowing that it's not a good time to speak to a coworker
   d. Knowing how to choose the most beautiful product at the store

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SUCCESS-OBSESSED CULTURE
IN KOREA
Cheng En, Sofiah, Sonya, Azri, Jem
Team 4: Sseulsseul

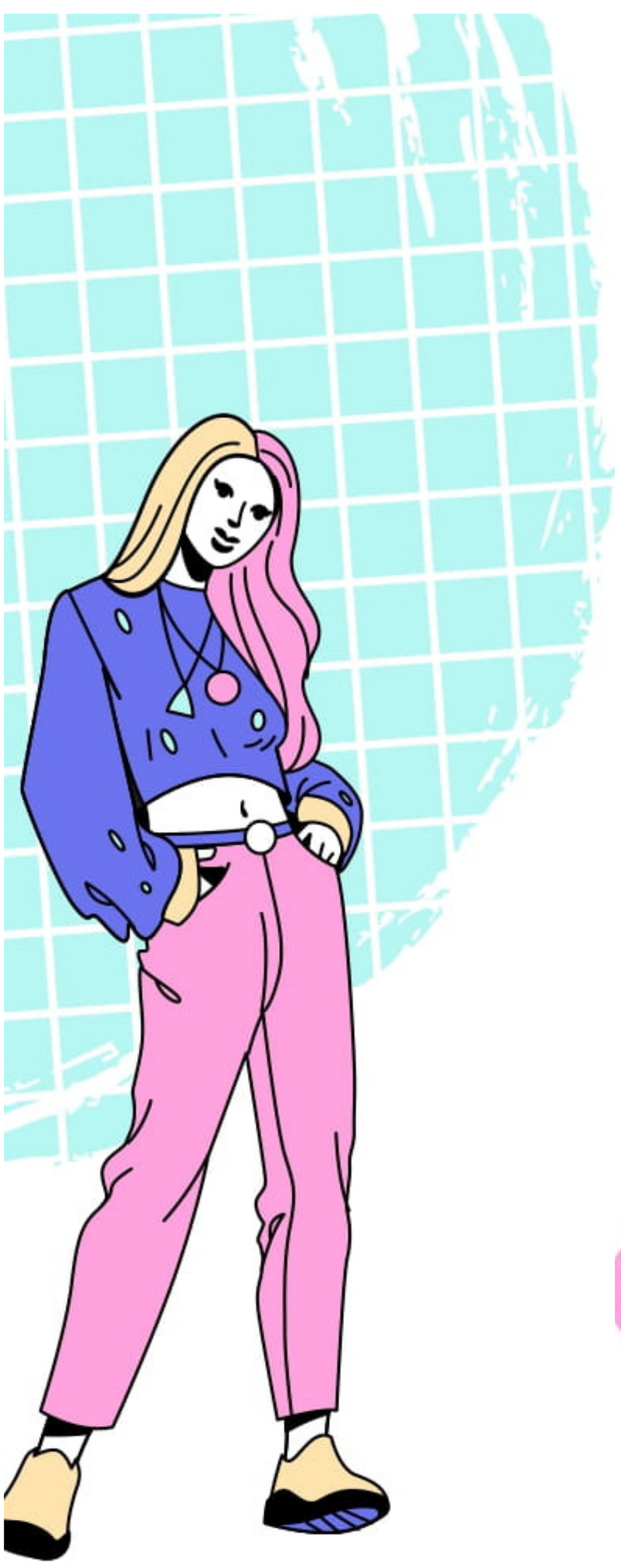

NG SUCCESSFUL




69%


SUCCESS-OBSES
IN KOR
En, Sofiah, Son
Team 4: Sseul





TO WHAT EXTENT HAS THE KOREAN WAVE IMPACTED KOREA AND ASIA?

Presented By: Oh Shu Zheng, Jovene Tan, Tan Yuan En, Cheah Mmin Le, Xavier Ang, Yong Ching Ying

INTRODUCTION



ORIGIN OF HALLYU



- Begin in East Asia around the late 1990s (Asia Financial Crisis)
- South Korea began restricting cultural imports from Japan



Strengthen local culture within Korea
+
build their own talent



Created 300 culturally based departments in Universities across Korea



- Promoted as an official policy by the Korean government.
- Studios began producing high-quality Korean films and K-dramas very cheaply.

DEVELOPMENT OF HALLYU



Hallyu 1.0: (late 1990s to 2007)

Cultural Export



Hallyu 2.0: (since the late 2007)

Greatly influenced by Social Media

KOREAN DRAMA





- Romance and innocence
- Family and marriage



- Historical and science fiction settings



KOREAN POP MUSIC

SM

YG

JYP

HYBE





- Produces and promotes idols like an all-rounded product

RISE OF HALLYU (K-Dramas)



- Exported to 91 countries around the world
- Expanded the scope of Korean Wave









RISE OF HALLYU (K-POP)



- ✓ Led to a widespread in K-POP craze around the world.
- ✓ Devoted to real-time communication with their fans from around the world.



MINISTRY OF CULTURE, SPORTS AND TOURISM



- ❑ Created to invest in and support the entertainment industry.
- ❑ Direct financial support of artists increased.
- ❑ Cultural exports increased at an annual rate of 10% as a result of these efforts.
- ❑ Established a separate department (**Hallyu Content Cooperation Division**) within the ministry to support Korean Wave.

IMPACTS OF HALLYU IN KOREA

IMPACTS OF HALLYU IN KOREA

- Seoul Olympics in 1998 & Fifa World Cup with Japan in 2002
- S. Korea became a global exporter of culture
- 2019 – estimated USD 12.3 billion boost to the Korean economy



IMPACTS OF HALLYU IN KOREA - TOURISM

- Dae Jang Geum Park & Nami Island
- 14% increase in tourists (2018) & tourism expenditure of US$28,855,400,000 was made (2019)
- "Korean culture is dominating the world and it is boosting the country's national status and diplomacy."





IMPACTS OF HALLYU IN KOREA - PRODUCTS





- Endorsement by KPop groups & product placements
- Samsung's average revenue: 35 trillion won in 2001 → 243.8 trillion won in 2018

IMPACTS OF HALLYU IN KOREA – SOFT POWER





- "Korean culture is dominating the world and it is boosting the country's national status and diplomacy."
- Representations of Asians in western media and film industry

IMPACTS OF HALLYU IN KOREA – SOFT POWER





- Perform on global stages
- BTS appointed special envoy of S. Korea at the United Nations General Assembly in 2021
- 'Spring is Coming' concert

GROWTH OF HALLYU IN ASIA

Asian Financial Crisis

Lifting of Foreign Travel Ban

ASIAN FINANCIAL CRISIS

- Global stakeholders believed that South Korea was in a bad shape
- Leading to South Korea having a serious negative image problem
- Lost foreign direct investments, lacked tourism, and faced global skepticism



IMPACT OF THE ASAIN FINANCIAL CRISIS

Restricted cultural imports from Japan and other countries

Push for information technology and popular culture

Heavy government investments in the creative industries

Production of cheap, high-quality Korean films and K-dramas



1/4

Price of Japanese Media



1/10

Price of Hong Kong Media

LIFTING OF THE FOREIGN TRAVEL BAN

- Worries about foreign currency depletion at a time when the foreign debt was rising
- Placed restrictions on foreign travel of South Koreans
- In the late 1980s, the government decided to lift the ban on foreign travel for Koreans
- By the 1990s, the government had lifted the last of their travel restrictions

IMPACT OF LIFTING THE FOREIGN TRAVEL BAN

- Korean students travelling and interacting with students in other countries
- Korean-run businesses being set up in countries outside Korea
- Tourists from Korea have travelled to countries such as China and Japan allowing for sharing of culture



GROWTH OF HALLYU IN ASIAN COUNTRIES

CHINA

THE MIDDLE EAST

SINGAPORE

GROWTH OF HALLYU IN CHINA

MEDIA THEMES



- The themes of the Korean Dramas were similar to that of the Chinese culture

DIGITALISATION



- Chinese State's liberalisation of the media, rising prosperity of the increasingly independent Chinese consumers and the rising home ownership of media devices

GROWTH OF HALLYU IN THE MIDDLE EAST

CULTURAL SIMILARITIES



- Similarities between Korean and Arabic or Muslim cultures, customs and social habits

AIRING TIMESLOTS



- Keeps in mind the importance of the Muslim prayer times, and thus would avoid airing Korean TV programs during these times

GROWTH OF HALLYU IN SINGAPORE

CHINESE HERITAGE



- Demand for Korean popular cultural products has mainly come from ethnic Chinese, which are the majority in Singapore

COMMERCIAL MARKET



- Convenient platform to penetrate the regional Southeast Asian market and Singapore market

CASE STUDY:
China



ORIGINS OF HALLYU 한류 (China)

- The Korean Wave in China has its roots back to 1997 when a Korean TV drama, What Love is All About, was broadcast on the China Central Television Station.



- Ranked the second-most viewed soap opera in the history of Chinese television.



- Korean wave became visible in the late 1990s after H.O.T concert in Beijing.
- China first used the term "Hallyu" or Korean Wave to report about the unprecedented success of a H.O.T concert in Beijing.
- Since then, this term has been widely used to describe the popularity of South Korean pop culture abroad.

INFLUENCE OF HALLYU 한류 (China)



K-POP MUSIC

KOREAN CULTURE

K-DRAMA

- Chinese audiences first became familiar with K-POP through TV drama themed songs such as Jae-wook Ahn's "Forever" and gain further success through radio programs.



- Numerous radio stations in China created programs that covered K-Pop exclusively as a strategy to increase listener ratings.









First generation idol groups



Second generation idol groups



Third generation idol groups

- Back in the days, there are in general two types of Korean Dramas being imported to China: Historical and Contemporary.







- Food culture, Korean fashion, beauty and cosmetics surgery craze inspired from Korean Dramas is very common in China.

- Furthermore, the rise in Korean waves have also inspired many Chinese to learn the Korean language in order to understand more about Korea in general.







SUCCESS OF HALLYU 한류 (China)

- One of the most significant reason to success in Hallyu in China is because it provided alternatives to Hollywood and Japanese cultures.

- Hallyu skillfully blends Western and Asian values, which is more familiar and approachable for the Chinese audience.







SENTIMENTS TOWARDS HALLYU

- Critics demanded that broadcasting of Korea drama be reduced to protect domestic drama industry.

- Chinese government limited the number of hours a day and time slots a foreign drama could be broadcast, in response to the sentiment.

- Government policy direction shifted towards protecting its domestic arts and cultural industry.



KOREAN PERFORMING ARTS ACTIVITIES BAN

- Begin in 2016, as a form of indirect sanctions on South Korea.

- South Korea agreed to the deployment of a United States missle-defense system, Thaad on its territory, which was seen as a threat by the Chinese Government .





CASE STUDY: MIDDLE EAST



DEVELOPMENTS OF MODERN DAY RELATIONS

1970s



Park Chung Hee's economical development plan

2009



South Korea's first nuclear export

TODAY



Resumption of free trade agreement negotiation with Israel.

CULTURAL COMPARISONS



RELIGION



GENDER EQUALITY



DIGITAL SAVINESS

FACTORS OF KWAVE'S SUCCESS

ASIAN VALUES



Dae Jan Geum, the drama series that introduced Middle Eastern audience to Korea. A hallmark of Korean drama due to its themes connoting love, family and peace.

NOVEL CONCEPTS



Against a backdrop of heavy governmental censorship and regulation and television broadcast, K-dramas with unique themes were like a breath of fresh air

POSITIVE IMAGE



Compared to Western artists, KPOP idols were much more conservative and portrayed positive images

KWAVE MILESTONES

- Arab fans are extremely active on Facebook, with many fan pages of K-drama actors and KPOP groups racking up followers and likes.
- In recent years, KPOP groups have also started holding concerts and festivals in countries like Saudi Arabia and Qatar.
- BTS was the first ever foreign artist to hold a concert at King Fahd Stadium in Saudi Arabia.









FEMINISM AND HALLYU





- The exposure the less conservative media has broadened the horizons of people in Middle East
- As women in Middle Eastern countries face systemic oppression, Hallyu fandom culture provides them an avenue for release
- Fandom culture has also kickstarted a movement for feminist rights around Middle East.
  - #LetWomenGoToStadium, led by female volleyball fans for the past few years, became a campaign for female soccer fans asserting their right to watch the 2018 Russian World Cup

Case Study: Singapore



Origins of Hallyu in Singapore



INFLUENCES FROM NORTHEAST ASIA

North East Asian Media Industries
- Distribution and consumption of Korean culture in Singapore





Taiwan



Hong Kong



China

INFLUENCES FROM NORTHEAST ASIA



Singapore's Ethnic Demographic

Race	Percentage (%)
Chinese	74.3
Malay	13.5
Indian	9.0
Others	3.2



LIAN HE ZAO BAO
Singapore's largest daily Chinese newspaper in Singapore



Magazines from Taiwan and Hong Kong



Korean Video Compact Discs (VCD)
Dramas were dubbed and subtitled into Chinese

INFLUENCE FROM JAPAN (COMICS & GRAPHIC NOVELS)

Japanese Manga



VS

Korean Manhwa



SINGAPORE'S WEAK MEDIA INDUSTRY

Media Industry in Singapore

- TV Dramas centered around local themes
- Commercials often sponsored by government agencies or government enterprises to dramatize industry related concerns.

SPH MediaWorks → mediacorp

Impacts of Hallyu Singapore

EMERGENCE OF KOREA TOWN





Located along Tanjong Pagar Road

Filled with family-owned Korean restaurants & shops

Korean Restaurant Count in Singapore (1977-2017)

1977 — 20+

2017 — 200+

EMERGENCE OF KOREAN FRANCHISES

ETUDE HOUSE

PAIK's BIBIM BIRIMBAP



INCREASE IN POPULARITY OF K-POP MUSIC

2013-2018

- 1.7 billion hours of K-Pop tracks have been streamed in Singapore.
- K-Pop is one of the TOP STREAMED genres
- Popular Artists includes BlackPink, BTS, Big Bang



AJOOMMA (2022)

Ajoomma (2022)

- Singapore-Korean film directed by Singapore He Shuming
- Starring both Singaporean and Korean actors



CONCLUSION





THANK YOU

QUESTIONS

1. What are the factors that contributes to Korean Wave success in conservative countries?
   - Asian viewers can resonate with the values portrayed (filial piety, youth, love etc)
   - Lack of nudity unlike Western media
   - Positive image of KPOP idols
   - Alternative content that is unique to audiences who are constantly exposed to government broadcasted content

2. What is the name of the indirect sanction that China imposed on South Korea to target South Korea's cultural exports and industries?
   - Korean Performing Arts Activities Ban

3. What is the name of the established department within the ministry to support the Korean Wave?
   - Hallyu Content Cooperation Division


To what extent has the Korean wave impacted Korea and Asia?
Presented by: Shu Zheng, Jovene Tan, Tan Yuan En, Ching Ying


Begin in East
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Lifting o
Trave


Wave in China has its roots back
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KOREA – SOFT POWER
VOGUE
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boosting th
Representa
industry


South Kore
uclear expo


NTU
SINGAPORE



CRIME IN KOREA

By: *Team Kwan Saranghaeyo*



TABLE OF CONTENTS

01
Introduction
Korean laws, crime stats and historical background

02
Domestic Violence
Statistics, reasons, case studies, issues with the current system

03
Molka
Secret cameras, case study, laws against it

04
Stalking
History, gender-based crimes, laws

05
Conclusion
Contributing factors to crime and suggestions for improvement

01 - Introduction

Korean laws, crime rates & historical background

Some notable laws enacted that can protect women

Quasi sexual misconduct
(Korean Criminal Law Article 298, Article 299)

- When one violates the integrity of another individual.
- 10 years of imprisonment or a fine of up to 15 million won.

Quasi Rape
(Korean Criminal Law Article 298, Article 299

- When non-consensual sexual intercourse is committed.
- Minimum of three years imprisonment.

Some notable laws enacted that can protect women

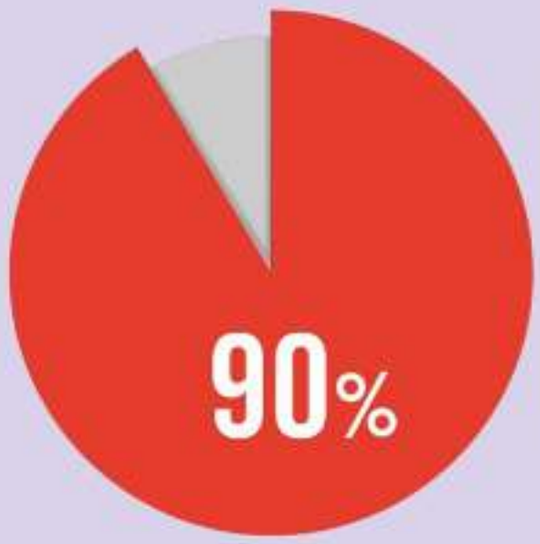
Offence of Criminal Voyeurism
(Special Act Law, Act 14 Section 1)

- When nonconsensual video of a victim's physical area taken
- Arouse feelings of sexual desire or sexual violation.
- 7 years of imprisonment or a fine of up to 50 million KRW.

The Special Act for the Punishment of Domestic Violence

- Legislates the punishments for the crimes of domestic violence.
- Note: spousal rape is **not** considered under this act.

Crime statistics



Had been either physically or emotionally abused while dating or during courtship.

[Korea Women's Hotline]

Crime statistics

Number of sex crimes against women:

2010:

~20,000
sex crimes

→

2019:

~32,000 sex crimes
= 86 sex offences/day

[Ministry of Gender Equality & Family, 2021]

Historical background

Confucianism



- Married woman are supposed to sacrifice themselves from family
- Women inherently inferior to men and incompetent (Namjon Yubi - one of many practices)

02 - Crimes

Domestic Violence in Korea

CRIMINAL JUSTICE

DEGREE FOR COLLEGE

Domestic violence is when
“a partner in an intimate relationship
abuses the other partner
verbally, emotionally, economically,
sexually or physically”

- Bahk, 2021



Domestic Violence during the pandemic

- Arrest numbers fell 10.8 percent from 2019 to 2020
- Presence of victim’s partners at home → harder to report abuse
- Online reports, however, doubled during the same period

Methods of reporting abuse changed but domestic violence remains.

Domestic Violence in Korea

PREVALENCE

79.7% of South Korean men had abused a girlfriend during the dating period

BOUNDARIES OVERSTEPPED

Females reported "being controlled by the male partner," experiencing "psychological and emotional violence, physical violence and sexual violence" (Hong et al., 2015)

NORMALISED ISSUE

Both genders "lack awareness that domestic violence is not right" (Han & Choi, 2021)

Reasons for domestic violence

01 Prejudice towards women

Males, no matter old or young, still believe they are of higher social status than women





Patriarchal attitudes 02

Especially for males who "restricted their partners' movements" (The Straits Times, 2017)

Gender inequality 03

Korea ranks 11 on the United Nations Gender Inequality Index Rank

Case study: Hwang Ye-Jin attacked by boyfriend

Hwang's mother released the video footage and started a petition that later reached 350,000 signatures



Extreme domestic violence

31%

Of cases on trial for homicide charges

Brutality of crimes an aggravating factor

29%

Of females murdered

After breaking up and refusing to get back together

Issues with the judicial system



- Reluctance in interfering with personal affairs
- Social definition of dating violence as "lovers' quarrels"
- Korea needs to move past an outdated patriarchal mindset



03 - Crimes

Molka in Korea

CRIMINAL JUSTICE

DEGREE FOR COLLEGE

"Molka means 'secret camera' and refers to illegal footage which are obtained by installing tiny cameras inside everyday items and public spaces to secretly film women."

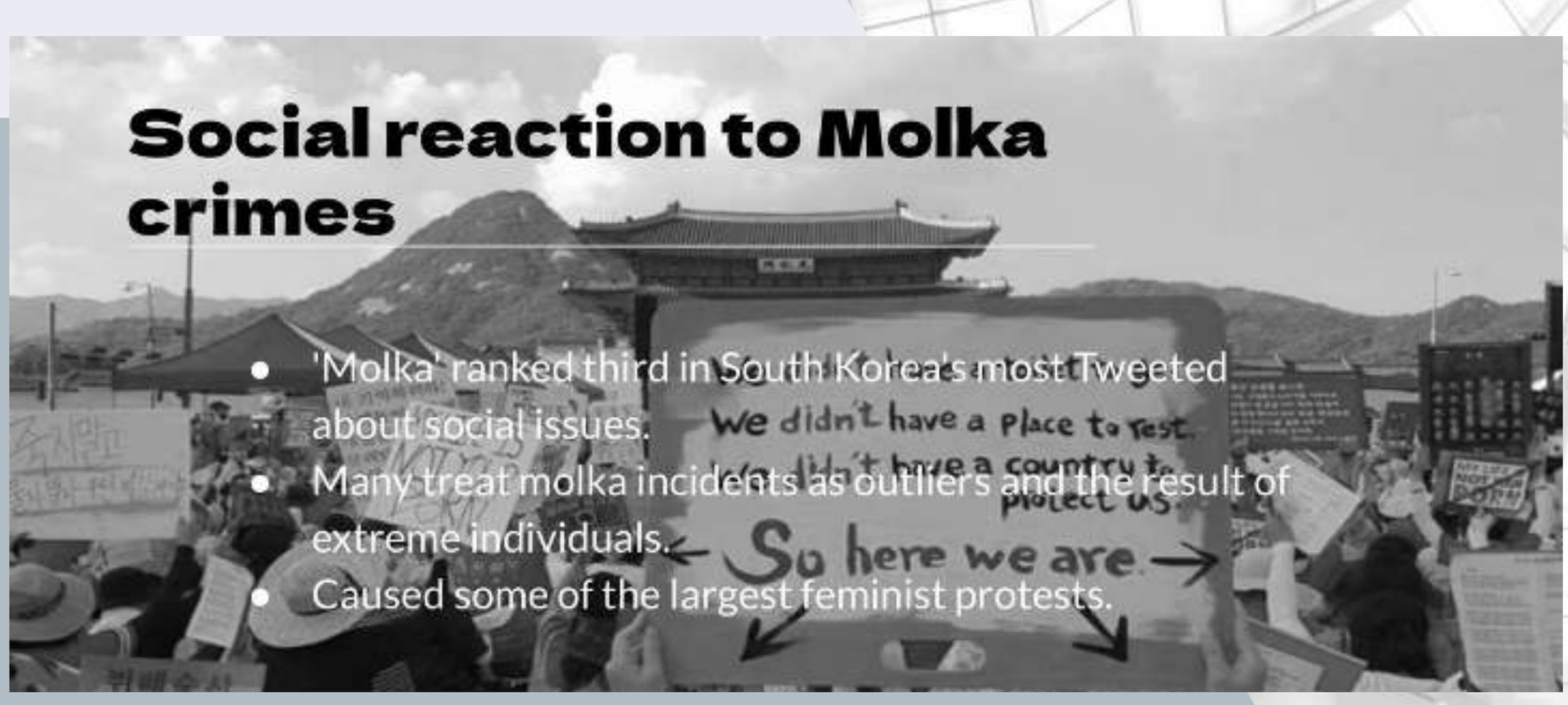
—Tabanera 2021

Prevalence of Molka





- Cell phones
- Miniature cameras - **as early as 1997**
- Advancements in technology
- **1,300** cases in 2010 to **6,800** cases in 2018



Legal repercussions against Molka

"Act on Special Cases of Sexual Crimes"

"*Technically*" a crime. Vague laws and lax enforcement.

Fines and jail time

Up to five years in prison or a fine up to 30 million won. However, about 80% were only fined 3 million won.

Trials and prosecution

Only 8.7% received jail sentence of those tried from 2012 to 2017.

Case study 1: Nth room case

Blackmail, cybersex trafficking, and the spread of sexually exploitative videos via Telegram between 2018 and 2020.

- Man nicknamed 'god god' sold illegally filmed videos on Telegram groups.
- 103 victims, **26 minors**.
- Sold to over **60,000 users**.
- First attempt to report the case was **ignored** by authorities.
- Investigated by two female university students.
- Perpetrators caught and jailed for 34 years.
- Public outcry leading to revision of policies.



Case study 2: Hyehwa Station Protest

Series of protests in 2018 against sexism, misogyny and Molka, aimed to spark reform of the judiciary system.

- Largest feminist protest in South Korea with **110,000 demonstrators.**
- Woman arrested for filming a male model.
- Activists alleged that a quick investigation and arrest was made as victim was male.
- Claims were denied by Moon Jae-In. "Female perpetrators receive much lighter punishment compared to men. This is common sense."



04 - Crimes

Stalking in Korea

Stalking is the
“abnormal or long-term pattern of
threat of harassment directed
toward a specific individual and
obsessional following”

- Sin, 2008

Reduced to society's misconstrued view as an
“expression of excessive love” *(Jae-Seong, 2022)*

History of Korea’s anti-stalking law

- **First anti-stalking law (1999):** Misdemeanours – fines of 100,000 won (~SGD$100) and below
- 22 years of demand for **harsher legal punishment**
- **Article 18 (October 2021):**
  - Imprisoned for up to three years or fined up to 30 million won (~SGD$30,000)
  - Stalking with a weapon: Up to five years or fined up to 50 million won (~SGD$50,000)



(Jae-Seong, 2022)

Korean National Police Agency report

Analysed 5,248 investigations among 5,707 reported stalking incidents as of March 2022

PREVIOUSLY KNOWN

41% of arrested stalkers had relationships with victims: **romantic partners (20.9%)**, **acquaintances (11.4%)** and **neighbours (4.1%)**

GENDER-BASED CRIME

4 in 5 victims are women

LAW LOOPHOLE

29% of 3,039 open cases are thrown out due to Article 18-3: **Stalking is unpunishable upon the victim's objection**

- Motivates stalkers to harass victims to drop charges

(Jae-Seong, 2022)

2022 Case study: 28-year-old woman murdered by long-term stalker



- Harassment started in 2019
- Relationship: colleagues
- Called victim **over 300 times** to beg her to date him, threats to **harm her** and **distribute illegally filmed footage**
- Fired and arrested → Police detention **rejected by court**
- **Never imprisoned or given a restraining order**,
- Case closed after a month of police protection
- Stabbing on Sept 14, one day prior to stalking sentence

(Mackenzie, 2022)

Public outrage across the nation



"Women Friendly Seoul"



Calls for stalking law overhaul in South Korea as woman's murder shocks nation

Stabbing triggers accusations that authorities are failing to take violence against women seriously

*"How many more **women need to die** for this **country to change?**"*
*"Is it too much to ask, to be **safe to reject people I don't like?**"*

(Mackenzie, 2022)

Gender-based hate crime discussion

- Gender Equality and Family Minister Kim Hyun-sook
  - "Not a gender-based hate crime"
  - "Misogyny was not a factor"
  - "Could be avoided if victim took preventive measures or approached ministry helpline"



- **Lack of severity** towards stalking as a crime largely **targeted at women**
- Toxic societal culture of **victim blaming**

(McCurry, 2022)

Insufficiency of current law

- Since the anti-stalking law came into play:
  - 7,152 stalking arrests have been made, but only 5% of the suspects detained
  - 1 in 3 police requests for detention was denied by the courts

"Failure by law enforcement and the court to act more proactively to prevent the murder"
– Min Go-eun, victim's lawyer

- Exposes the **gaps** in South Korea's anti-stalking law
- Inability to **protect victims** and **prevent occurrences**

(McCurry, 2022)
(Chan-kyong, 2022)

Moving forward

- South Korea's President Yoon Suk-yeol
  - Acknowledgment of law **insufficiency** + Justice Ministry to **review the law**
- The Supreme Court
  - Not in detention = **restraining orders**
- Prof Lee Soo-jung, a criminal psychologist and government advisory
  - "**Remove the clause that requires victims' agreement** for prosecution"

However, <u>people are sceptical that change is on the horizon</u> due to previous failed similar call to action

>> ***Reexamine and rebuild the investigation process and protective measures***
>> ***Return basic human rights and due dignity to women*** *in South Korea*

(McCurry, 2022)

05 - Conclusion

Gender-based crime in Korea

High prevalence of gender-based crime in Korea



Digital sex crimes increased by 7.5 times



Sexual assault rates jumped by 1.6 times

Most victims are <u>women</u> here in such crimes

(Jang, 2022)

The Problem



❌ **Men vs Women**

The Problem



❌ **Men vs Women**

✅ **Fundamental issue of gender inequality**

> Discriminatory perception formed against women, compromising their safety in society

Contributing factors

1. Legal system in Korea



Even though sexual harrassment and assault are illegal & punishable:

- Notably lenient in conviction and sentencing of such sex crimes
- Doesn't do much to deter violence against women
  - *E.g. Nth Room Case, Anti-stalking law*



Poor responses to cases of sexual violence

- **SK courts** often view such episodes as "private matters"
- **SK police officers** (majority men) mock and dismiss victims & interrogate in abusive ways (Barr, 2021)
- Encourages system of violence and re-victimization

2. Lack of civil remedies



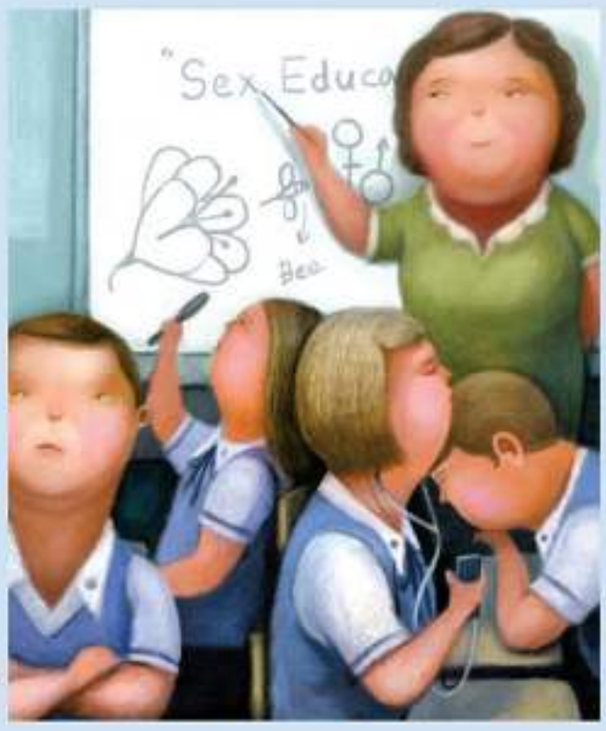
Civil remedies allow victims to get a court order against offenders to delete or stop spreading explicit images/ pay damages

- General lack of access to legal assistance in Korea
- Procedural barriers
- Risks of disclosing identities of victims



(Barr, 2021)

3. Sexuality education in Korea schools



"Korea MOE's National Level of School Sexual Education"

→ **Current curriculum:**

- Taught separately between M and F
- Focus on abstinence, shamefulness
- Perpetuates violent stereotypes, sexist attitudes

(Goh, 2020)

3. Sexuality education in Korea schools



- "Behave properly", "Don't wear anything short in front of men"
- "Mens' 'natural impulses'"

- **Sex crimes not taken seriously in schools**
  - Dismissive about student assaults
  - Victims often silenced to maintain school reputation

(Goh, 2020)

Suggestions for improvement

Maintaining support services & facilities



- Covid-19 have resulted in support services to move online for more accessibility
- Such efforts should be maintained as a priority as we move into post-pandemic era
- Prepare for future unforeseen circumstances to come

Influencing societal mindsets & attitudes



- Leaders and public figures to openly acknowledge existing obstacles
  - SK President Yoon has publicly expressed misogynistic intentions
  - Hinders real progress in addressing consequences of gender stereotypes in society

Improve sex edu in Korea



Present a more holistic view of sexuality education

- Discourage violence of all sorts
- More awareness of digital sex crimes
  - Teach consent in healthy relationships + digital citizenship
- Having a committee to ensure that sex education & sex crimes are being taken seriously

QUESTIONS

1. **What belief(s) contributed to the modern day mentality of South Koreans that put women at an inferior position?**
   - Confucianism
   - Buddhism
   - Christianity
   - All of the above

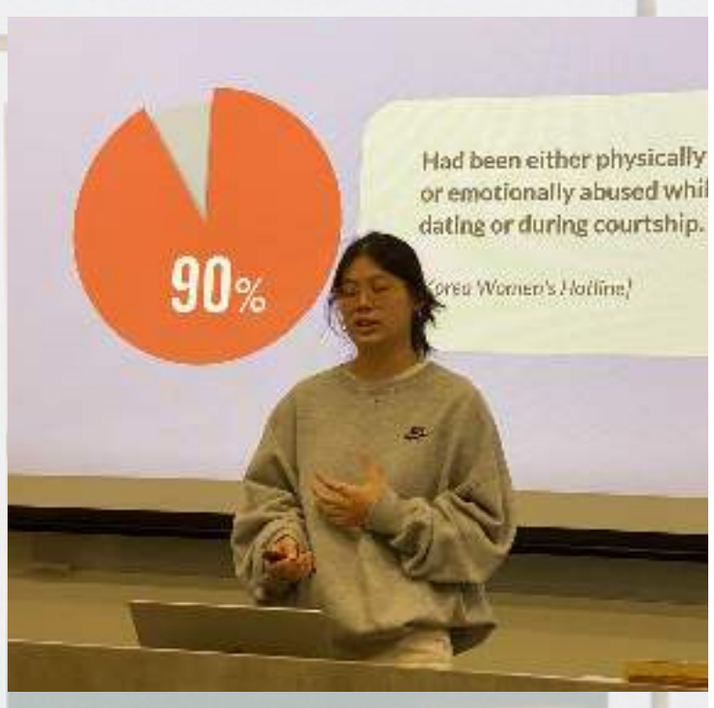
2. **What is the loophole in South Korea's anti-stalking law?**
   - Stalking is not serious enough to be punished if it is not violent
   - Stalking is unpunishable upon the victim's objection
   - Stalking is considered a private matter
   - There is no loophole in the law

3. **Which one is not a contributing factor to women-target crimes in South Korea?**
   - Incomprehensive sex education in schools
   - Inefficient legal system
   - Increasing feminism being showcased in Korea
   - Lack of efforts in tackling social attitudes


CRIME IN KOREA
By: Team Kwan Saranghaeyo


of threat of harassment direc
toward a specific individual a
obsessional followi
- Sin, 20


abuses the othe
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- Bak


90%
Had been either physically
or emotionally abused whil
dating or during courtship.


05 - Conclusion
Gender-based crime
in Ko


Prevalence of Molka
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CS5081 Mini-Conference

The Competitive Education System in South Korea



Presented by:
Liu Yanru, Lee Yi Fan, Chiam Ting Wen,
Calista Lim Qian Ru, Judith Paul

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01 Historical Overview

02 Structure of the Current System

03 Impacts on Stakeholders

04 Cross-country Comparisons

05 Conclusion

06 Learning Checkpoints Q&A

01 Historical Overview

Historical Periods for Education — Tripartite Division



1) Pre-Modern Era (4th-19th Century)



Origins of formal education traceable to the Three Kingdoms Period (57BC-668AD)

Goguryeo	Baekje	Silla
Taehak	***Paeksa***	***Hwarangdo***

1. Confucian-centric ideology & pedagogy

- Ideology: **a society should be governed by men of talent and virtue**
  - e.g., "five constant virtues" of benevolence, righteousness, propriety, etc.
- Pedagogy: **Confucian studies = the top of the curriculum hierarchy**
  - Other technical subjects e.g., agriculture, manufacturing, and maths = inferior in the curriculum

2. Education as a device to train bureaucrats

- **Served mainly the aristocrats** with the **explicit goal of selecting capable leaders**
  - Civil service examinations were conducted to recruit govt bureaucrats
- Formal education → **acquiring public positions and attaining so-called "moral perfection"**, was a **"major preoccupation"** in Korea's pre-modern era (Seth, 2004)

Early origin of competitiveness in SK's education system?
>> Obsession with **educating oneself to fulfil society's moral standards** & **attain social status** → entrenched in the nation's psyche<<

2) Modern Era (1880-1945)

1. Women's improved access to education

- Private schools catered to women were opened by foreign missionaries
  - E.g., Ewha Women's University which was founded during that era

2. Pedagogical shift

- Confucians-centric previously → **focused more on practical subjects** like maths, geography, foreign languages etc.

3. Suppressed education needs under Japanese rule

- Koreans were being discriminated → viewed as backward and inferior
  - Provided with basic education only, and limited Koreans' access to upper levels of education.
- An outcome of this was **middle-class families' frustration over their unmet needs for educational advancement.**

"a key factor in explaining **South Korea's 'education fever'** since the end of the Second World War" (Seth, 2004).

3) Current Era (1945-Present)

1. Ending of strict tracking by the Japanese

- During the Japanese rule: streamed into different tracks
  - Academic track (focused more on literary, humanities skills) OR Vocational track (focused more on practical skills e.g., agriculture)
- While this policy ended after the Japanese rule, division on different focus still exists, **both routes were not terminal and could lead to higher education**

No structural winnowing, all could & did seek higher education, which **intensified fierce competition**

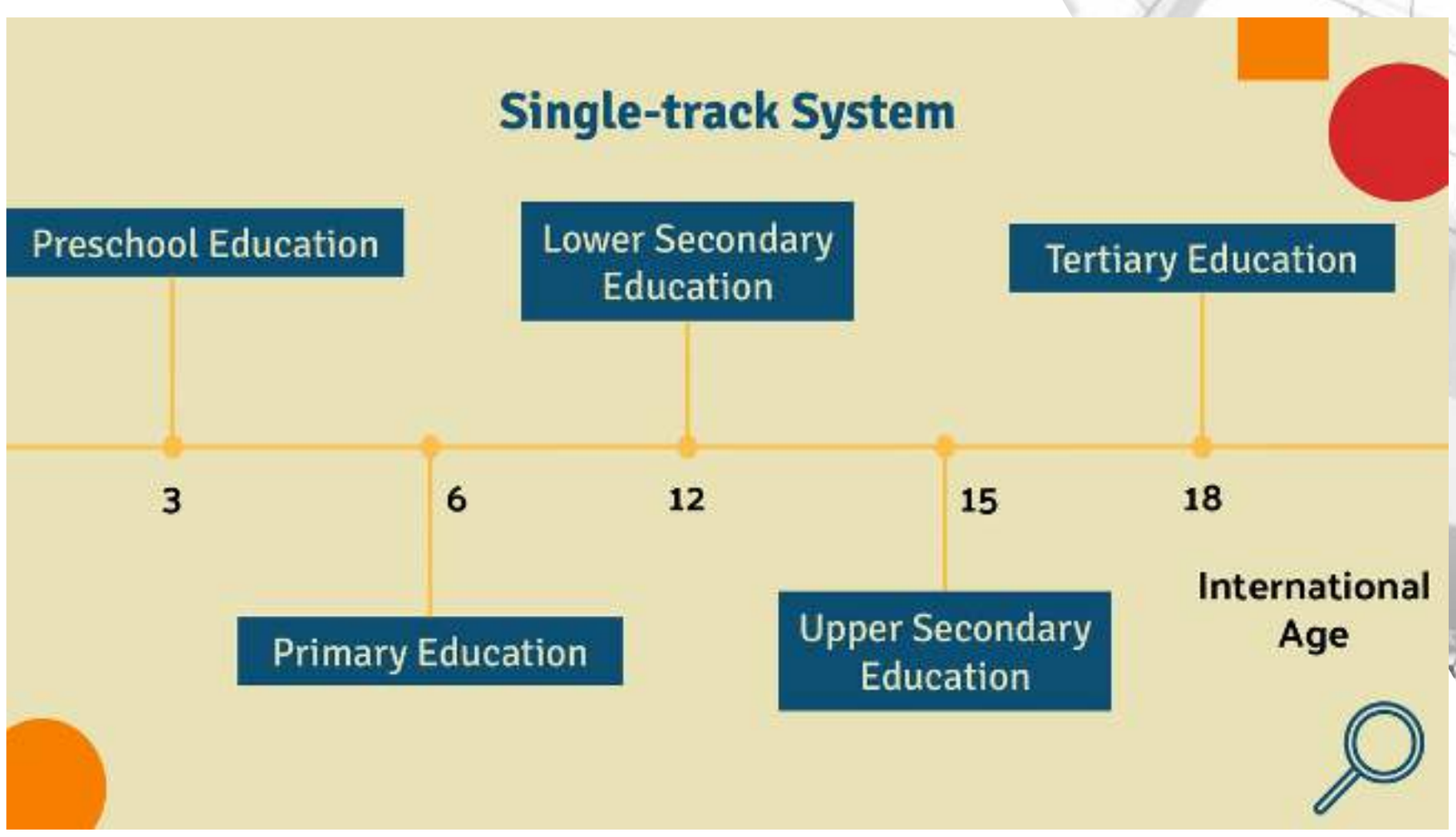
2. State's commitment to universal & uniform basic education

- Beneficial in eliminating structural & social disparity → social cohesion.
- BUT also generated **strains between overwhelming demands for higher education**
  VS.
  the state's efforts to prevent over-supply of advanced degree holders

The outcome was intensified competition for entry into higher educational tiers, and an **intensified education fever**

02

Public Education



Interesting Fact #1

Holistic approach to learning at preschool education level:

- Objective of Nuri Curriculum (i.e., preschool curriculum):
  - Helping children develop **basic capacities** and **upright character**

However...

- Findings of empirical study:
  - Kindergartens might have **focused relatively more** on preparing children for the beginning of formal studenthood

Holistic approach to learning at preschool education level:

- Latest revised version of Nuri curriculum emphasizes **child-centred** and **play-based learning**, as opposed to focusing merely on academic performance





Interesting Fact #2

"Equalization policy":

- Entrance exams (to middle schools) are **abolished**, because they are claimed to subject students to immense stress
- **Computerised lottery system** assigns primary school graduates to schools located within their districts



"Equalization policy":

- Implemented not only among middle schools, but also **high schools**

2 major differences:

- Only high schools **within "equalization zones"** (vs. all middle schools) are subject to the policy
- **General competency examination** before being admitted by lottery system



Interesting Fact #3

Importance of Suneung (수능):

- The authorities go to great lengths to ensure a conducive environment for exam sitters
- Offices start operation later; frequency of bus & subway services is increased; planes are grounded
- COVID-19 pandemic did not stop the authorities from holding the exam



Importance of Suneung (수능):

- High school graduates sit for Suneung to secure a place in their desired university
- A substantial proportion of teenagers in South Korea study **impatiently** in preparation for this **high-stakes examination**



03
Hagwon 학원

What is Hagwon 학원 ?

- Private educational institutes for students (and sometimes adults) to attend.
- Operates like a private school/ cram school/ academy.
- Teaches supplementary education in addition to the regular school curriculum.
- Prepares students to improve their test scores and take the Suneung entrance exams (수능).
- Non-academic Hagwon teaches flower arrangement, piano, driving lessons, etc



Interesting facts

75% Of students had private education

44% Of students attended Hagwon

Math Was the most popular subject taught

6.7 hours Was the weekly average time spent on private education

23 Trillion won was spent on private education alone in 2021

Why attend a Hagwon?



Peer pressure of others doing the same



To advance further than others



To receive a higher level of education than school curriculum



To keep up with school curriculum

Regulations of Hagwon



Tuition fees must be disclosed

To prevent overcharging of fees



Imposing curfew on operating hours

Operating hours of hagwon should end by 10 p.m.

04
Impacts of Hagwon Culture

The Stakeholders Involved



Students



Parents



Government



Teachers of Hagwons

Impact of Hagwon on Students

Negative Effects on Physical Health

Long Hours
Students start their day as early as **8am** and attend Hagwons **till 10pm**, or even later.

Sleep Deprivation
South Korea is one of the most sleep deprived country. Average amount of sleep for a high school student is about **5 hours and 27 minutes.**

Fun Fact:
The national exam, ***Suneung***, lasts about 8 hours. Students would need to sit for different papers ranging from Mathematics to Korean History within the same day!



Negative Effects on Mental Health

Immense Stress
Students are pressured to aim for SKY Universities for better future prospects, but **only 2%** of them can enter.

Fear of Future Prospects
Such private education starts **as early as 5 years old**. Youths are pressured to do well, as their future is **defined by** grades and source of degree.

Why is it so pressurising?
1. Youths **unemployment rate** is at its peak, worsening the competition among students.
2. **41.7%** of lower-school level citizens stated that they had not received a desirable treatment.



Impact of Hagwon on Students

Negative Effects on Mental Health

Depression & Suicides

- **OECD:** South Korea has the **highest levels** of stress among young people aged 11-15.
- **Dr Kim Tae-hyung:** "South Korean children are forced to study hard, competing with friends."
  - This leads to isolation which can cause depression and is a **major factor in suicide**.

Suicide

No. 1 cause of death for young people aged between 10 and 30.

Suicide Cases

1. Lee, a 19 year old, suicided due to low CSAT Score.
2. A female student suicided due to pessimism of CSAT scores even before release of results.



Repercussions of Hagwon on Students

Continued journey of pursuing success

This sense of '*overworked culture*' during adolescence is brought into their adulthood. According to OECD, South Korean adults work the **2nd longest** hours, while earning less than average pay when compared to other nations. Even into adulthood, **suicide rates among adults still remains high**.

Don't Worry Village - Efforts to curb the negative impacts

Repurposed from old housings, it aims to act as a place of retreat for young and stressed millennials. This allows them to have a quiet space to plan for their future!



Impact of Hagwon on Parents

The Cost of Educating Children

Financial Impact

Average Cost: 350,000 won (SGD $350) per month, roughly $55,000 for 13 years.
This is **~10%** of their salary, based on the median salary of SGD$3,900.

Economic Inequality & Vicious Poverty Cycle

Unequal playing field: Middle high income families spent 5 **times more** than low-income families.

Impact on Family Planning

Parents are **not in favour of having more than 1 child** as it is too expensive to ensure that their children can have access to all the available resources (hagwons etc.)



Impact of Hagwon on Government

Negative Impacts on the Government

World's Lowest Fertility Rates

1. Increase in elderly dependency ratio
2. Shrinking Workforce
3. Risk of secular stagnation

Socioeconomic Inequality

As much as such inequalities are bound to happen, but the prevalence of Hagwon Culture **exacerbates** the negative effects.



Government's constant battle with Hagwon

Former Presidents attempts to neutralise threat

- **Chun Doo Hwan:** Tried to outlaw Hagwon, banned private tutoring to free parents from spending 30% of salary.
  - The constitutional court overturned the ban later on
- **Lee Myung-bak:** Introduced policies to curb the rapidly bifurcating price brackets
- **Park Geun-hye:** Posed strict evening curfews to hagwons and proponents



Setting up a Fail Expo

Inspired by Sweden and Finland, Fail Expo aims to **change perception of failure** through sharing failed cases in employment and start-ups. With self-help and mental wellness themes, this aims to **neutralise the obsession with success**.

Impact of Hagwon on Teachers

Poor Regulation of Employment Conditions

Foreign Teachers

- Hagwons control & alter accommodation conditions without notice
- Firing them to avoid bonus payments
- Overtime work is not paid for
- Withholding their passports

Korean Teachers

- Teaching beyond their allocated subjects
- Far less breaks than foreign teachers, not sitting down for 8 hours straight
- Being watched closely, CCTV with audio recording



Midnight Running

In cases where their bosses are breaking the laws/rules and abusing the teachers, their last resort would be **leaving quietly without a trace**.

05
Comparing Education Systems Across the World

South Korea

Singapore

Malaysia

Hong Kong

Finland

The USA

Singaporean Education System

Criticisms Faced

- Too academically rigorous
- Too stressful
- Complaints about children sitting for a national exam at 12 years old

Government Responses

- Restructuring of PSLE and secondary school tracks
- Moving towards a more all-rounded education system

"Kiasuism"

- Fear of losing out
- A result of over-competitive nature in SG


Everything also I want: An exploratory study of Singaporean *Kiasuism* (fear of losing out)

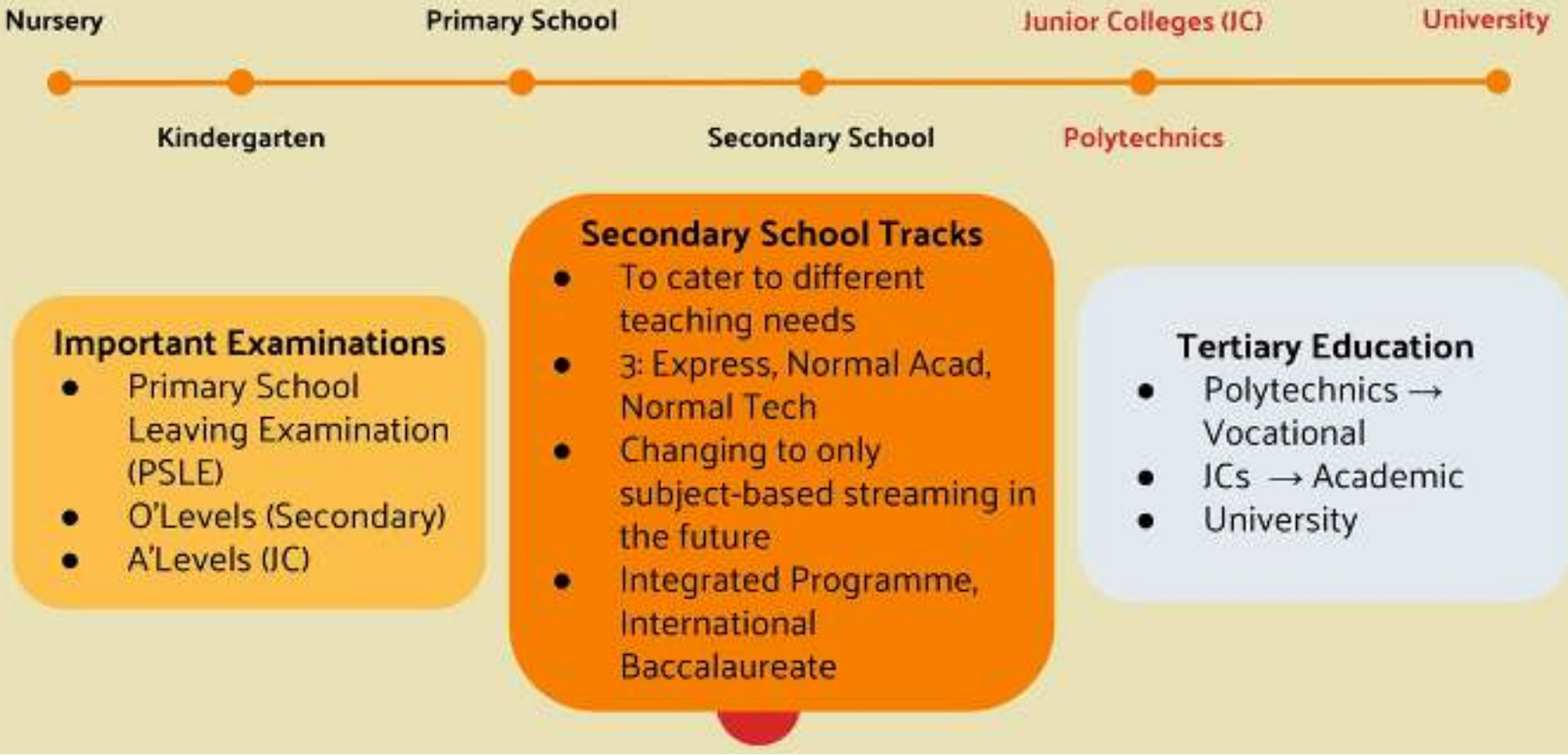
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Volume 24, Issue 4 | https://doi.org/10.1177/13540678/17093831

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Abstract

Kiasuism (fear of losing out) is a prominent cultural trait of Singapore that encompasses greed, selfishness, and inconsiderate behavior. It contributes to social problems in education and entrepreneurship. Despite its



Important Examinations

- Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE)
- O'Levels (Secondary)
- A'Levels (JC)

Secondary School Tracks

- To cater to different teaching needs
- 3: Express, Normal Acad, Normal Tech
- Changing to only subject-based streaming in the future
- Integrated Programme, International Baccalaureate

Tertiary Education

- Polytechnics → Vocational
- JCs → Academic
- University

Malaysian Education System

Nursery → Kindergarten → Primary School → Secondary School → Pre-University (Diploma Programmes) → University

Important Examinations
- Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) (Secondary)
- Sijil Tinggi Persekolahan Malaysia) (STPM) (Pre-U)
- A'Levels (Pre-U)

Secondary School Tracks
- Science
- Arts
- Common subjects like English, Math

Tertiary Education
- A' Level Programmes
- AusMat
- Diploma Programmes

Criticisms Faced - Heavy Politicisation

Link Between Politics & Education



- ✓ Politics links with HE via policies & governance, i.e. how universities are administered.
- ✓ Tight political controls condition the mind of the voter.
- ✓ Influences what kind of knowledge we access, & the depth of knowledge acquired.
- ✓ "Cherry-picking" knowledge produces a less holistic, humanistic, & inclusive human being.
- ✓ In developed countries, the HE-political link exists, but is less intrusive, less oppressive.

"HE" = Higher Education

Designed to **promote acceptance** of the Barisan Nasional-sanctioned narrative about the optimal type of social-economic-political arrangements such as Ketuanan Melayu (Malay supremacy) for Malaysia

→ **Drop in Standard of Education**

Hong Kong Education System

Nursery → Kindergarten → Primary School → Junior Secondary → Senior Secondary (Vocational Diploma Programmes) → University

Important Examinations
- Hong Kong Attainment Test
- Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE)

Secondary School Tracks
- Junior → Foundational
- Senior → Selective subjects only
- Commerce → Vocational

Heavy Influence of

Criticisms Faced
- High-pressure education system
- Highly rote → students not taught how to develop critical thinking skills
- Constant pressure from the Chinese government → locals' unhappiness



HKFP VOICES

Hong Kong's high-pressure education system has failed us all, but there's still hope

by GUEST CONTRIBUTOR



CHINA POWER | POLITICS | SOCIETY | EAST ASIA

Hong Kong Needs to Defend Its Education System

The self-autonomous city's education system is the latest battleground to resist China's influence campaign.

By Chauncey Jung

Concerns for the Government



3 minute read · October 20, 2022 8:16 AM GMT+8 · Last Updated 10 days ago

Brain drain solution is staring Hong Kong in face

By Robyn Mak

Result of **high cost of living** in HK, **lack of mobility** from one social class to another, **better opportunities overseas**

Finnish Education System

Daycare → Nursery-Kindergarten → Primary School → Middle School → Upper Secondary → Vocational Schools → University

Important Examinations
- Finnish Matriculation Exam (Secondary)

Introduction of **Phenomenon-based learning (PhBL)** to replace subject-based approach
- Encourages development of 21st century skills such as collaboration, communication, creativity, and critical thinking

Key Features
- School autonomy
- Pupil-led education
- No educational streaming

Decline in Performance of Finnish students over the past 2 decades

PISA Global Rankings (2002)
- Finland ranked **1st** in reading, and **3rd** in math and science

→

PISA Global Rankings (2015)
- Finland ranked **8th** overall

Why the drop?

Mixed-Ability Teaching
- The opposite of the great strength of Finnish education, dedicated support to the struggling pupils, is one of the biggest weaknesses.
- Lack of support for high-achieving students
  - Due to egalitarian belief and society that allows for an equitable, consistent system for everyone
- Difficulty of teachers to manage different ability levels in class

American Education System

Nursery → Kindergarten → Elementary School → Junior High School → Middle School → High School → University → Community Colleges

Education system planned by state governments, not national government →

Important Examinations
- None administered throughout the whole country
- SAT

Not much academic streaming, as compared to other countries

Extracurriculars given a lot of importance in schools

Criticisms Faced - Lack of Focus on Results

Many American critics believe that the major problem with public education today is a lack of focus on results. Students aren't expected to meet high standards, the argument goes, and the *process* of education takes precedence over analyzing education *results* in policy-making circles.

"The public education system, once designed primarily to impart skills and knowledge, took on a far more political and social role. It was to provide a common culture and a means of inculcating new Americans with democratic values."

Criticisms Faced - Lack of Support for Teachers

Teachers Spending More Out of Pocket on School Supplies Than Ever Before

National nonprofit releases 2021 teacher spending survey showing teachers spend on average $750 of their own money each year.

Give teachers more money and support.

We cannot expect our grades to improve when we give teachers a handicap with poor wages and low supplies. It doesn't allow teachers to unleash their full potential for educating students. Also, our government makes teachers work with their hands tied. No wonder so many teachers are quitting their jobs for better careers. Teachers will shape the rest of their students' lives. But as of now, they can only do the bare minimum.

— Jeffery Austin, Hoggard High School

The answer to solving the American education crisis is simple. We need to put education back in the hands of the teachers. The politicians and the government needs to step back and let the people who actually know what they are doing and have spent a lifetime doing it decide how to teach. We wouldn't let a lawyer perform heart surgery or construction workers do our taxes, so why let the people who win popularity contests run our education systems?

— Anders Olsen, Hoggard High School, Wilmington NC

Comparing Education Systems

Countries/Factors	Primary Medium	Heavy Focus on	After-School Education	Criticisms
Korean	Korean	Academics	Hagwon	Stressful, over-competitive
Singaporean	English	Moving towards holistic	Tuition	Stressful, over-competitive
Malaysian	Malay	Academics	Tuition	Too politicised, reciting material
Hong Kong	Cantonese	Academics	Cram Schools, Tuition	Stressful, spoon-fed, reciting material, politicised
Finnish	English & Finnish	Holistic	Leisure Activities organised by Schools	Mixed Ability Teaching
American	English	Holistic	-	Lack of support for teachers

What kind of students do these education systems breed?

01



The Book-Smart Student

Usually from Asian education systems

- Heavy emphasis on academics → stress and over-competitiveness
- Tend to perform well globally in academics
- At the cost of mental health
  - Anxiety, depression, EDs, suicide

Programme for International Student Assessment (Pisa) Ranking 2016

Asian countries on top

Asian education systems dominate the upper reaches of the these results tables - accounting for the top seven places for maths, with Singapore followed by Hong Kong, Macao, Taiwan, Japan, China and South Korea.

02



The Confident, Independent Student

Usually from Scandinavian education systems

- Heavy emphasis on independent learning
- Students take charge of their own learning from a young age
- More outspoken, daring to try new things
- However, not pushed to their full potential





They're both good.

~~Which is better?~~

Improvements Needed to Be Made

Provide better support for students

Equip students with the resource to deal with academic stress, school environment and other academic hurdles

Implement well-being initiative

A support system for students and teachers to check up on each other, ensure overall wellbeing

Shifting mindset

Less focus on academic, shift to more holistic learning

Final Words

- Education is taken seriously in South Korea
- Better support is needed
  - Look out for the people around you
- Society can do more for the youth generation



Thank You!

감사합니다!

06
Learning Checkpoints

Question 1:

Across the history of South Korea's education, which of the following is NOT a factor that is argued to have contributed to the competitiveness of the system?

A. Education mainly served as a device to train bureaucrats during the pre-modern era (4th-19th century).

B. Shift in pedagogical focus from being Confucianism-centric to focusing on more practical subjects (e.g., maths) during the modern era (1880-1945).

C. End of strict tracking under the Japanese rule that results in no structural winnowing during the current era (1945-present).

D. State's commitment to universal and uniform basic education during the current era (1945-present).

Question 2:

Which of the following is not a reason for why entrance examinations to middle schools are abolished under the "equalisation policy"?

A. The entrance exams subjected students to immense stress

B. Intense competition over admission into prestigious middle schools

C. The entrance exams have been proven to be ineffective in selecting students for admission

D. The entrance exams created excessive demands for private tutoring and cram schools

Question 3:

Which of the following best depicts the term "Midnight Running"?

A. Running at midnight to relieve stress

B. Hagwons being open till midnight

C. Leaving without a trace, as a last resort

D. A quick shopping trip to a nearby store at midnight to relieve hunger

Question 4:

Which education systems provide a more holistic approach? (Multiple Answers)

A. The USA

B. Finland

C. Hong Kong

D. South Korea

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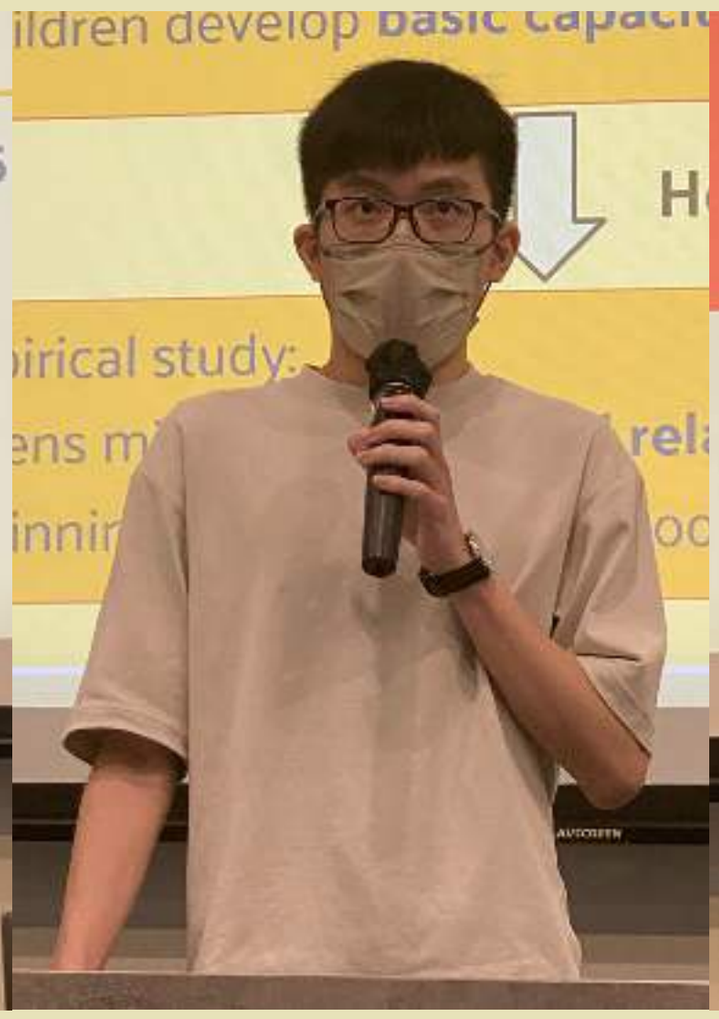
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CS5081 Mini-Conference
The Competitive Education System in South Korea
Presented by:
Liu Yanru, Lee Yi Fan, Chiam Ting Wen,
Calista Lim Qian Ru, Judith Paul






Finland





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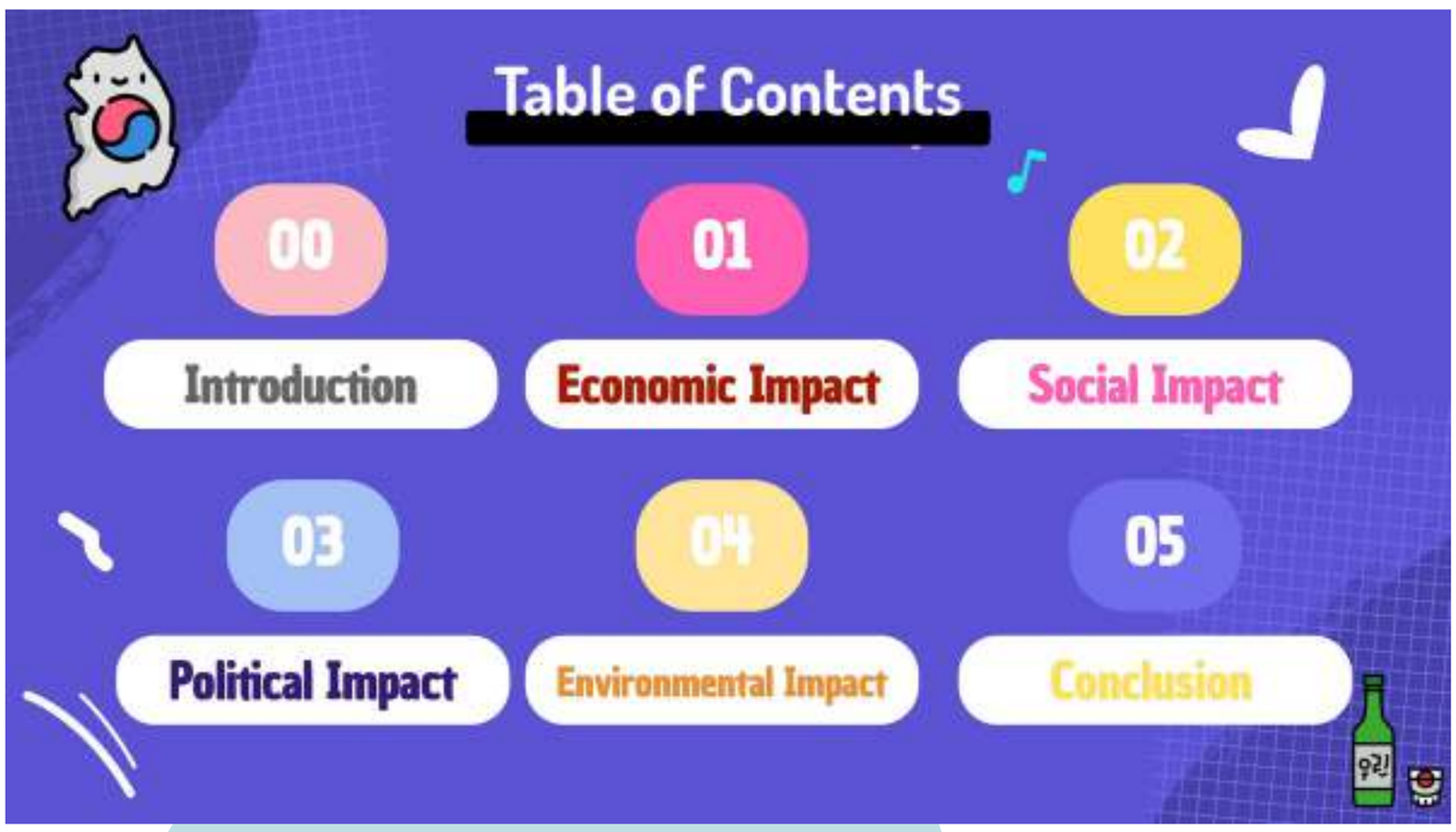


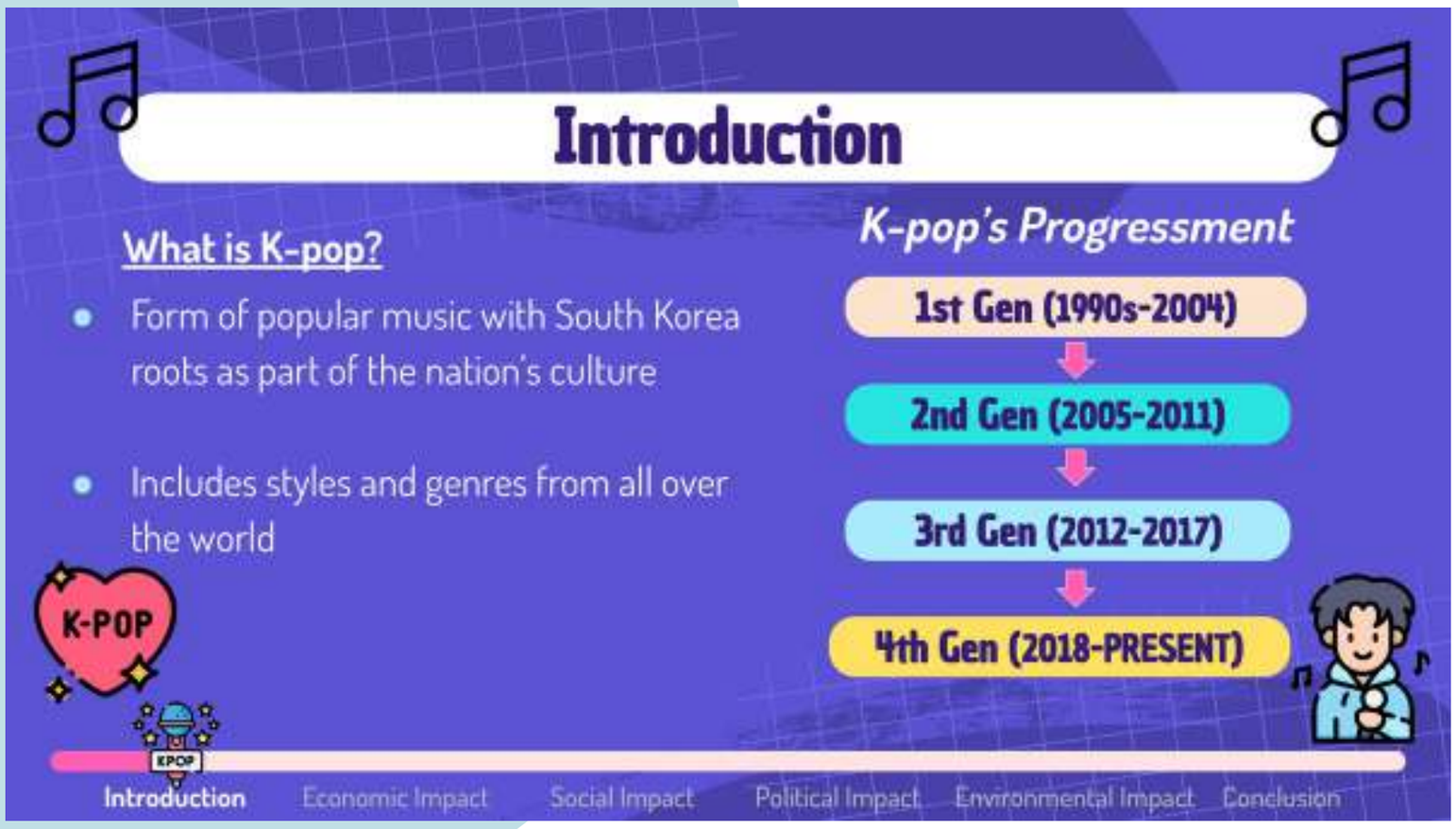
"How has kpop impacted contemporary Korea and the global community?"



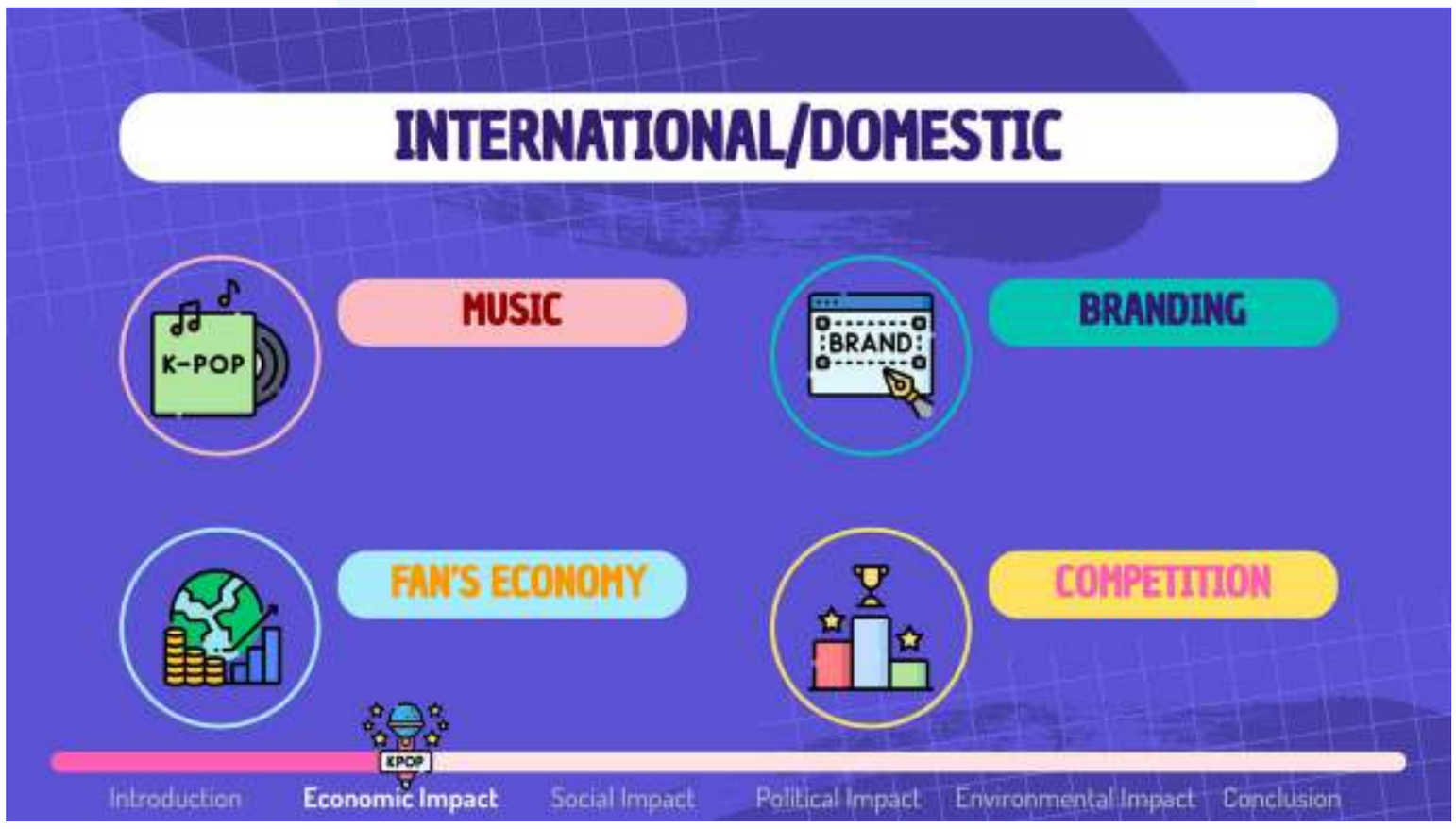


Alycia Lim, Grace Chow, Jamie Leong, Japheth Soh, Kayzer Lim


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Introduction
What is K-pop?
Form of popular music with South Korea roots as part of the nation's culture
Includes styles and genres from all over the world
K-POP
K-pop's Progressment
1st Gen (1990s-2004)
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01
Economic Impact


INTERNATIONAL/DOMESTIC
K-POP
MUSIC
BRAND
BRANDING
FAN'S ECONOMY
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Introduction
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MUSIC

PSY (Park Jae Sung)

- 2012 Gangnam Style
- Singular person to hit 2 billion views on Youtube
- Highest number of likes, enough to be placed on the Guiness Book of World Records
- $8 million on YouTube revenue alone



"BE THE NORM"
"KOREA NOT A NORM"

Introduction | **Economic Impact** | Social Impact | Political Impact | Environmental Impact | Conclusion

MUSIC

BTS "Dynamite"

- Peaked number one on the Billboard Global Chart for 18 weeks
- Generated $1.7 trillion Korean won
- Estimated to be able to provide 7928 jobs during the Covid 19 pandemic





Introduction | **Economic Impact** | Social Impact | Political Impact | Environmental Impact | Conclusion

MUSIC

BTS "BE" Album

- "BTS Effect"
- Generated $5.6 trillion Korean won
- "Life goes on" peaked number one on the Billboard Global Chart for 7 weeks





Introduction | **Economic Impact** | Social Impact | Political Impact | Environmental Impact | Conclusion

BRANDING

Brand Ambassadors

- Brand ambassadors appeal across marketing channels
- Integrate deeply with the brand
- 2020 Kai of EXO collaboration with Gucci involving capsule collection



BRANDING



BRANDING

McDonald BTS Meal

- 2020 success of McDonald's BTS meal
- Generated $8.5 million to both BTS and McDonald's earnings







FAN'S ECONOMY

Overspending

- 2021 Weibo banned a fanclub of BTS to restrain obsession and excessive spending
- Fall prey to companies' marketing tools – Photocards, Albums, Concert tours
- 2018 BTS sales: merchandise and tours estimated $5 billion to South Korea's economy





COMPETITION

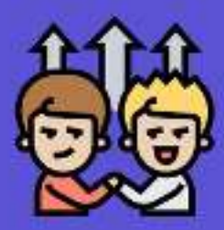
Internationally

- 2010: Popular music category: American pop music 31 million while K-pop 19 million
- 2015: One Direction more popular than EXO in terms of search interest
- 2016: K-pop leading at 100 million to 30 million



VS





COMPETITION

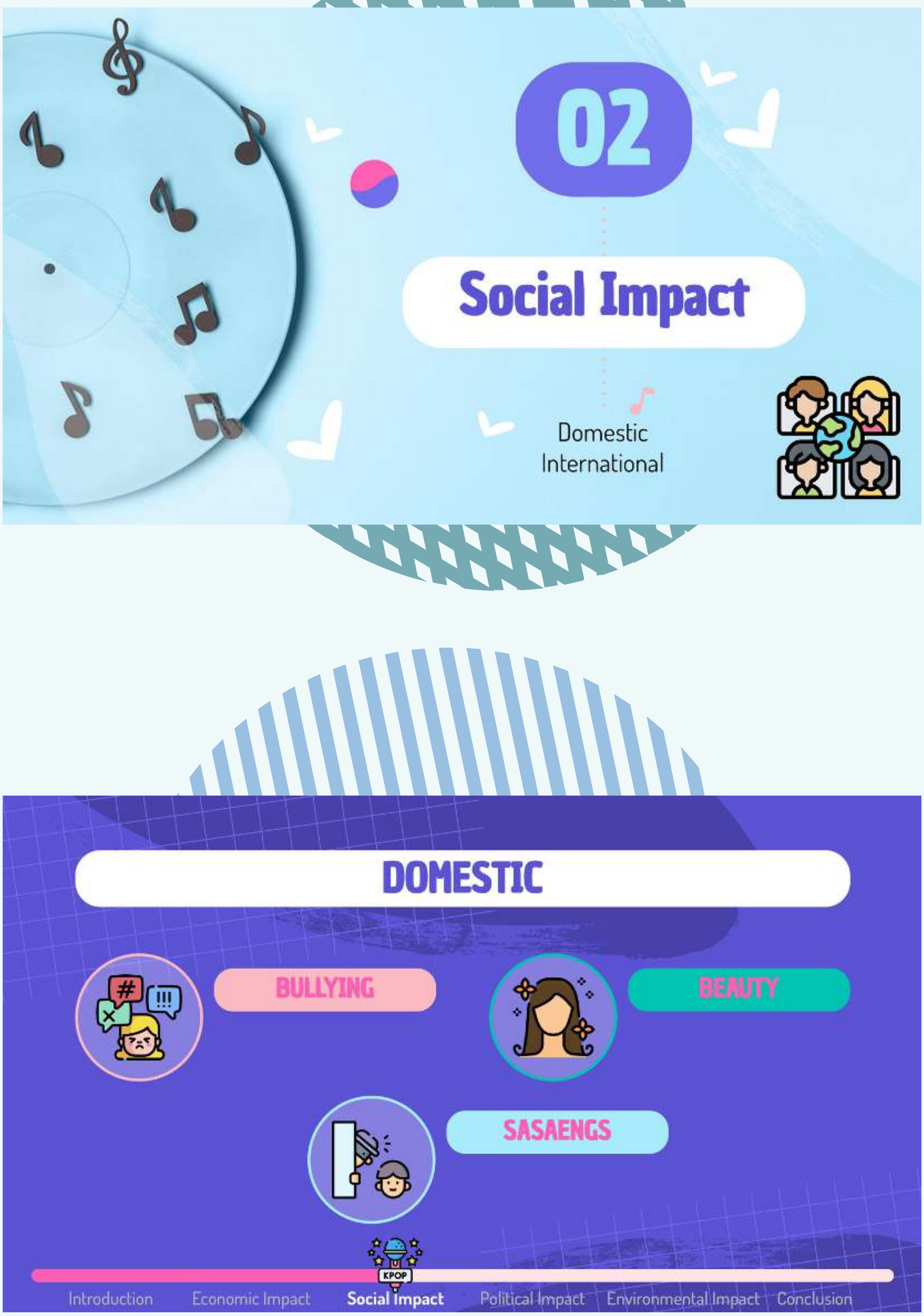
Domestically

- Monopoly: A singular firm acting as the sole seller in the market
- Competition between entertainment industries
- All entertainment companies featured are making positive profits





Business Profits (pink) and Overall Revenue (blue) Made in First Half of 2020


02
Social Impact
Domestic
International
DOMESTIC
BULLYING
BEAUTY
SASAENGS
KPOP
Introduction
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Conclusion

BULLYING

Park Hyung Sik

- an actor from the company named Star Empire
- Before joining Star Empire, Park Hyung Sik was part of another agency
- Hyung Sik had a close relationship with his manager and trusted him with his personal problems



Park Hyung Sik

- Witnessing how special their relationship was, some of the other trainees spoke ill of Hyung Sik
- Became an outcast as he was excluded during mealtimes and often ignored by the trainees
- This form of bullying → adverse effects on his mental health → causing him to suffer from depression



Kim Jong Hyun

- December 2017: Jonghyun ended his life with carbon monoxide poisoning
- Jonghyun was believed to have suffered from depression



Kim Jong Hyun

- Was attacked by feminism-centered groups
- Many furious anti-fans spammed Jonghyun with messages through social media, arguing he depreciated the female sex
- Allegations that he was gay spread through social media
- Cyber bullying has led to the suicide of Jonghyun



Sulli

- Actress and singer Sulli was also a victim to online bullying
- She was a former member of the group f(x)
- At the age of 25, she died of suicide



Sulli

- Conventionally, the K-pop industry had careful brand management and conservative social attitudes towards young women
- Sulli revealed her romantic relationship and was vocal about not wearing a bra, defying the above conventional notion → suffered waves of malicious online comments
- Did not fit into the typical image of a K-pop idol → she was often a target of online bullying
  - her death was a reflection of how dark the KPOP industry can be



BEAUTY

Unrealistic beauty standards

- The rigid Korean beauty standards and negative effect of lookism → unrealistic beauty standards
- Plastic surgery became a huge thing in Korea as idols commonly go under the knife as part of their contracts to their companies
- Many Koreans are even offered plastic surgery as a high school graduation gift!



BEAUTY

Unrealistic beauty standards

- There is constant stress to live up to Korea's beauty standards
- Discrimination of people who are considered physically unattractive
  - Judging people based on their physical appearance can lower one's self-esteem → depression and self-hatred



BEAUTY

Unrealistic beauty standards

- K-pop idols like G-Dragon and Taeyang have influenced Korean men to seek plastic surgery
- 44% of South Korean college guys considered getting plastic surgery



BEAUTY

Unhealthy dieting

- IU (Lee Jieun), became well known for her diet of 1 apple for breakfast, 2 sweet potato for lunch, and 1 protein shake for dinner
- This diet became widespread across South Korea
- Many have been influenced to try the IU diet, however this extreme diet has been proven to be bad for one's health in the long run



SASAENGS

Who are they?

- Derived from the word sasaenghwal (사생활 or "private life"): Sasaengs (사생) are extremely obsessive fans that stalk and intrude on their idols' personal lives.
- Objectify their idols and believe that idols owe them attention (Hung, 2015)
  - Nussbum's Model: 7 ways of Objectification (1995)
  - Denial of Subjectivity: *The objectifier treats the object as something whose experience and feelings (if any) need not be taken into account.*



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Who are they?



End up violating moral & social boundaries
↪ Believe that they are doing it out of love



Form of Pride
↪ Able to obtain information that no one else know



In hopes of getting recognised
↪ In reality, most idols are disgusted by them

What do they do?



Obtain Exclusive Information
↪Company or Airline Staff



Sell to others
↪Usually on social media
↪Affordable rate which makes it more accessible



Break into apartments
↪Stealing undergarments



Boarding Same Flights
↪Most 'popular' option as idols are vulnerable and cannot escape



Sasaeng Taxi
↪ Chase after idol vans
↪ Have other taxis tracking locations of vans

Impact on Idols



Trauma



Puts them in immense danger



Anxiety



Stress



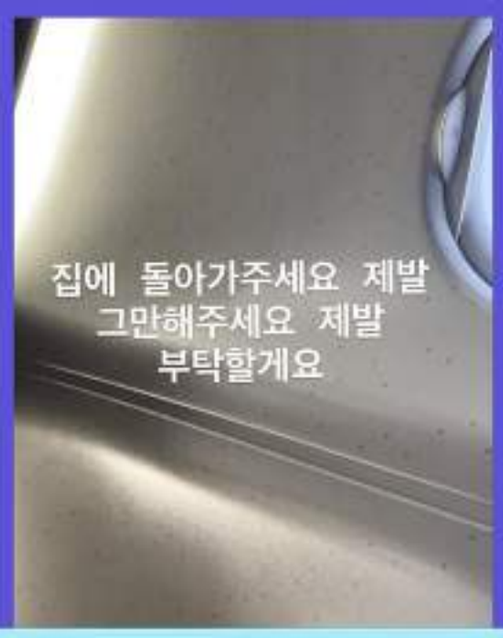
Frustration

SASAENGS

Example: Nayeon

- German stalker: Josh (@Josh1994)
- 'In love with her' and wants to pursue a romantic relationship with her
- Spent 3 million Euros (4.2 mil SGD) to pursue her
  - Flights, Private Information, Stay in Korea
  - Believes Nayeon should reimburse him
- Roughly knows which salon, cafes she visited
- Allegedly also threatened to kill her if she were to be dating someone else as it was a 'crime'

- Known as the stalker who boarded the same flight as her in 2021
  - Led to an insta story post that was believed to be posted by Nayeon
  - JYP has addressed this by enforcing police protection around Nayeon and will take highest form of legal action against him
- Currently in South Korea and claims that he will not leave until he hears a reply to her confession



Instastory (that was taken down): Please go home. Please Stop. I beg you.

Actions done by companies & government

Government

Previously	As of 21 March 2021
Fine of 100,000 won	Fine up to 30 million won
Max 29 days in jail	Up to 3 years in jail

Police can now issue restraining orders and stop potential suspects that are within 100 metres from the victim

Companies

- Blacklisting Sasaengs from official events such as fan meetings and concerts
- Share their social media IDs and wrong doings openly online.

Are Sasaengs solely at fault?

- The author argues that majority of the public still consume Sasaeng's materials
  - Photos, Private Details, Scandals, Sasaeng sharing about their own experiences online
  - Eg. Dating scandals go viral online with Sasaeng's photos
  - Merely spectators → still encourages Sasaengs → still inevitably lead to the intrusion of idols' privacy
- Idols can only have privacy if the public do not care about idols' infotainment
  - Very unlikely especially with media

INTERNATIONAL

BRINGING POSITIVITY

INCREASING CULTURAL AWARENESS

CHARITY

BRINGING POSITIVITY

Shift in type of music between generations



Fresh, Innocent Concepts + Love Songs



Girl Crush, Cool Concepts + Me Songs

New message: It's Ok to be Different, Find Your Own Personal Identity

- Highly Resonates with Western Values: Individualistic Society
  → Put more emphasis on personal choice and freedom
- Encouragement for Eastern Countries: Collectivistic Society
  → Used to putting others (family, society) above self

Which k-pop group is most well known for bringing positivity? **BTS**







Big factor contributing to their Success:

Song Lyrics → **Talks about issues they face themselves**

Bullying, Inequality, Mental Health, Stereotypes

Appeals to younger generations
↪ Provides a message of hope & they are not alone

Main Message: Love Yourself
↪ Wish for people to have self-love for themselves

Parasocial Relationship with BTS (Pasinringi, 2020)
↪ Feel that BTS & their music will 'accompany' them through life

Introduction | Economic Impact | **Social Impact** | Political Impact | Environmental Impact | Conclusion

INCREASING CULTURAL AWARENESS

Diverse K-pop Fandom: Allows People of Different Cultures to Mingle

Supportive Community: allows people to share about their culture and opinions with others comfortably

More confident in expressing themselves through their culture

Allows people to become more conscious of the things they say & do + educate each other

South Korea: Culturally Homogeneous

Many idols ignorant & unaware of certain cultural taboos

'Perfect' & Clean image of k-pop idols

Places even higher expectations & scrutiny on the idol

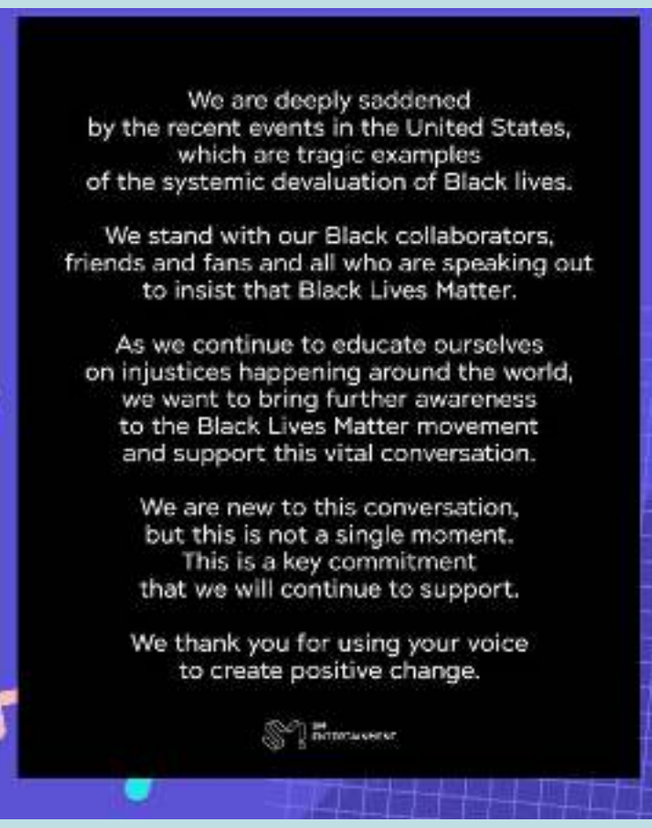
One scandal/mistake might ruin their image forever
→ Idols must be extremely careful especially when dealing with cultural sensitive issues

Case Study: Black Lives Matter Movement

- Tiffany Red, black American songwriter
  - Felt underappreciated by Ekko Music as during BLM, they did not bother to consider what she was going through and sent her an email offering a low payment for her song
  - Made her realised how much the kpop industry monetised black people influences and yet showed no care for them
    - has been adopting a lot of black influences in their songs
    - buying songs from many Black American writers
    - borrowed many ideas from the Black community such as styling in order to bring something 'unique' to the industry

Case Study: Black Lives Matter Movement

- Gilpin (NCT FAN) who had seen Red's post decided to start a hashtag called #SMBLACKOUT to bring awareness of the importance of black kpop fans and creatives.
- Gilpin, "So on top of how disrespectful it was [for SM] to not speak up for their Black employees and collaborators, I felt it was also disrespectful to their Black consumers. If Black lives don't matter to them then Black dollars, Black music and Black fashion and style shouldn't either."
- Sm released their statement:



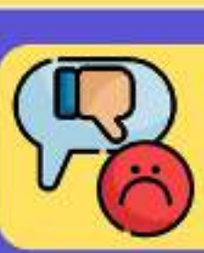
CHARITY



Fandoms cultivate Team Spirit & Competitiveness



Fandoms will try to outdo others: May be for superficial reasons but More Money = More Help



Remove any bad connotation related to their fandom



Public to view their fandom & idol positively



Way to express support for their idol instead of gifts

CHARITY

Usually comes in the form of Rice Wreaths

- Rice is seen as a staple for Koreans
- Donated during the idols' big events
  - Passed to charities after the event

Also donate monetary donations and even for their own local communities in the name of their idol

- 2021 Typhoon Rai in Philippines
  - Filipino BTS fans donated about 200,000 Philippine pesos (3,900 USD) for relief efforts



03

Political Impact

Political Impact in 3 categories

International

Part of Korea's soft power image

Domestic

Empowerment for domestic activism

Fandom

Wielding social media for BLM



International Impact - Soft Power

What is soft power?

the ability to achieve the desired results based on the attractiveness of culture, values, language and other aspects. In addition, it is a way to attract foreign audiences without being forced.

Purpose of soft power in SK

South Korea's Ministry of Foreign Affairs says, 'Korea's public diplomacy entails promoting diplomatic relations by sharing our country's history, traditions, culture, arts, values, policies, and vision...By doing so, we enhance our diplomatic relations...and increase our country's global influence."



Application to K-Pop

→ cultural diplomats of the South Korean state

→ encourage intercultural communication

→ Reduce cultural differences

→ Generate positive feelings

International Impact - Soft Power Examples



- BOA kick started relations with Japan, which paved the way for Japan's adoption of Korean culture.
  - In 2003, the Japanese Foreign Ministry officially invited BoA to attend a diplomatic dinner between former Japan Prime Minister Koizumi and South Korean President Roh Moo-hyun.



- In 2018, Red Velvet performed in Pyongyang, North Korea, a rare event in which President Kim Jong Un attended

- In 2022, the White House invited BTS to speak with U.S. President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris about anti-Asian hate crimes, Asian inclusion, and diversity.





- Thus K-pop groups leave a huge political impact, facilitating the South Korean government's position on the international relations scene as a middle power. The success of the BTS also contributes to improving bilateral relations, especially between South Korea and the United States.



Domestic Political Impact Examples

- K-pop has the ability to create conducive environments for domestic political activism.
  - For example, Girl's Generation's songs have a powerful image of self-empowerment, equality, and human rights activism. For instance, "Into the New World" became an empowerment anthem for women, political protesters, and members of the LGBTQ+ community.



The song also played candlelight vigils calling for the impeachment of former South Korean President Park Geun-hye

K-Pop Fans - Black Lives Matter



Dallas iWatch app

Fans also spammed the Dallas iWatch app with fancams of their favourite idols after the Dallas Police Department called for reports of illegal activity from the protests



Trump's Tulsa Rally

K-pop fans and teenagers bought online tickets to Trumps rally, but did not show up



#matchamillion

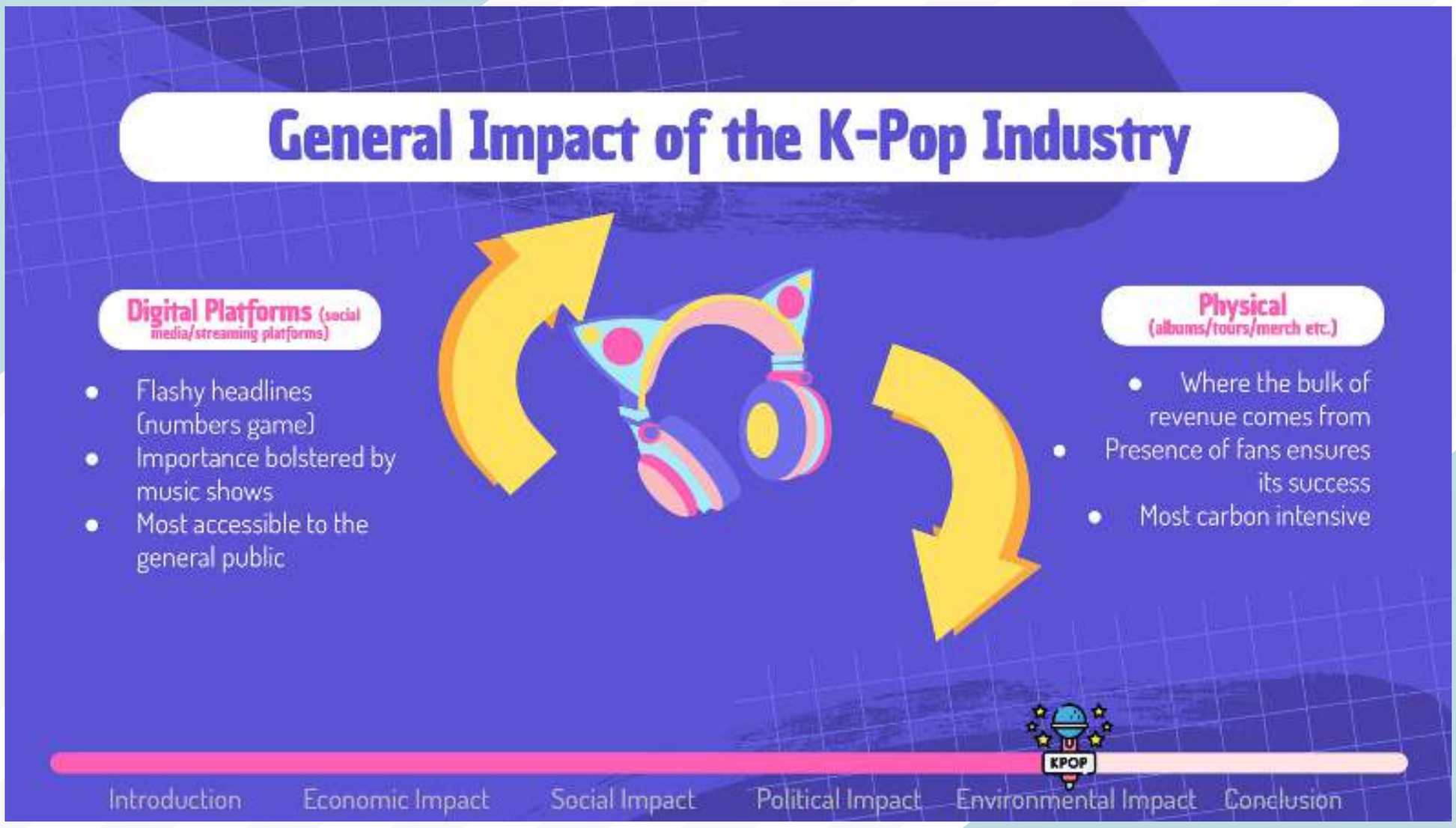
Fans matched BTS's donation of $1 mill to a variety of organisations supporting the Black Lives Matter movement in 2020

Reasons for supporting BLM



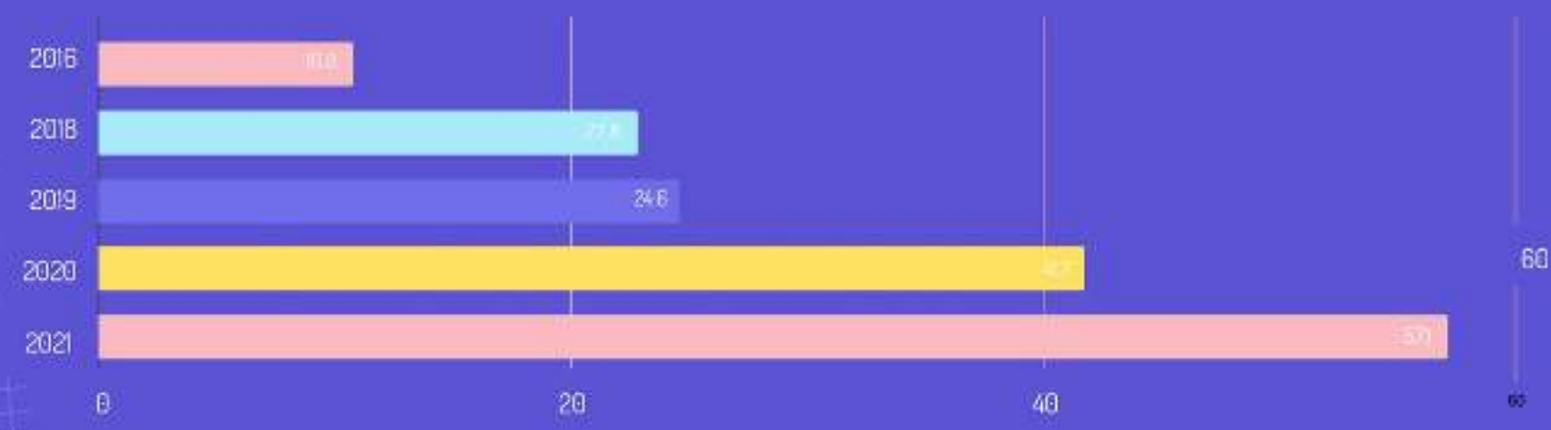
- BTS's "Love Yourself" song calls for self-empowerment which the fans identify with, and this causes them to be more expressive in other areas, such as politics.
- Some K-pop songs stem from the black culture.
- Pay tribute for the hip-hop styles and black music that the K-pop music industry has taken reference from.


04
Environmental Impact


General Impact of the K-Pop Industry
Digital Platforms (social media/streaming platforms)
Flashy headlines (numbers game)
Importance bolstered by music shows
Most accessible to the general public
Physical (albums/tours/merch etc.)
Where the bulk of revenue comes from
Presence of fans ensures its success
Most carbon intensive
KPOP
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Touring and International Gigs
2%
Aviation's Impact
>10
Trend of Kpop Music Festivals Abroad
Solo Concerts
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The Albums and Merchandise Market



Total Cumulative K-pop Album Sales between 2016-2021. (in millions)

Reasons for Overconsumption

- Covid
  - "Revenge-buying"
- Online Fan-signs
- Aggressive Marketing Strategies
  - Repackaged Albums

Current Steps to Cut Waste and Future Expansions

- Fan Initiatives
- Idol Ambassadors
- Physical Albums
  1. soybean-based ink
  2. FSC certified paper
  3. reduced plastic in packaging
- Touring



Answers

Q1) Which is NOT a political action that K-pop fans have taken to support the Black Lives Matter Movement?

1. Spammed the Dallas iWatch app
2. Bought online tickets but no turn up to Trump's Tulsa Rally
3. Donated $1million to organisations supporting the movement
4. **Forming demonstration groups and signing petitions**

Q2) Which Korean term refers to obsessive stalker fans?

1. Saesang
2. **Sasaeng**
3. Susaeng
4. Saengsu

Q3) What are some ways that K-pop companies reduce their carbon footprint?

1. **Soy Ink**
2. **FSC certified Paper**
3. Using Fair Trade Coffee Beans for their Iced Americano
4. **Reducing plastic in packaging**
5. Not testing their songs on animal

????






CS5081 GRP 8:
"How has kpop impacted contemporary Korea and the global community?"
Jamie Leong, Japheth Soh, Kayzer Lim
AVENGERS


his personal
Impact


ernational Impact - Soft Pov
soft power?
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