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Master's Thesis of Textiles, Merchandising and
Fashion Design

What is K-Fashion from Foreign Perspectives?

외국인의 관점에서 본 K-패션에 대한 고찰

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Abstract

This research aims to examine how foreigners perceive K-Fashion nowadays, of which a worldwide surge of popularity of Korean culture is currently present. Although there have been previous studies conducted related to K-Fashion, the scopes of the research were limited to examining policies and strategies for the development of K-Fashion and the formative characteristics of Korean fashion design. Although there was an attempt to explore K-Fashion from foreigners' perspectives, it was insufficient as it focused on reviewing foreign literature related to K-Fashion. In this sense, this study is designed to investigate the foreigners' perception of K-Fashion by conducting focus group interviews with the foreign participants, who are the actual consumers of K-Fashion. The research questions were set as follows. First, what K-Fashion is from foreign perspectives? Second, what kinds of distinct characteristics that K-Fashion has? To answer the research questions, the words and adjectives used to describe the understanding of K-Fashion, and the traits of K-Fashion that differentiate it from other fashion styles were thoroughly scrutinized.

To conduct the research, semi-structured group interviews with 46 foreigners were conducted. The participants were grouped into 13 groups, considering demographic information including their nationality and ethnicity. All interviews were conducted via Zoom application due to the pandemic situation and the interviews were

video-recorded for a further breakdown of the collected data. During the interview, ten pre-set questions on their K-Fashion-related experience.

In this study, the phenomenological research method was used, which is a type of qualitative research method used for exploring one's lived experiences on certain phenomena. Since the study focused on the perception that foreigners have formed and maintained through their experience with K-Fashion, the method was considered to be proper to use. All recorded interviews were transcribed for analyzing the data, then, the researcher followed the steps of bracketing meaning units, grouping and categorizing units, and presenting superordinate and subordinate themes.

As a result, the findings from this research are as follows.

For openers, the foreigners' perception of K-Fashion was categorized into two: dynamic and diverse, and double-sided and ambiguous. The 'dynamic and diverse' nature of K-Fashion was explained based on the superordinate themes consisting of the extrinsic environmental characteristics and intrinsic characteristics of the style. According to the foreign participants, K-Fashion was recognized through the media including K-Pop, K-Drama, and social media. Also, the advanced textiles and apparel industry of Korea affected the formation of their perception of Korean fashion. Over and above, K-Fashion was regarded to have different colors and styles, which makes it universal.

The other category was for the 'double-sided and ambiguous' nature of K-Fashion, which reflected how foreign audiences perceive K-Fashion to be not definitely definable and hard to explain because of its uncertain traits. This was because, in K-Fashion, not a single piece of clothing in a certain style but the 'whole-look' makes K-Fashion complete. Also, the conservative and courteous characteristics and the tendency for being collectivist and conform as a group exist within Korean society, which is demonstrated in the way people dress as well in Korea. Furthermore, due to globalization, the national identity has been lost in K-Fashion; the borderline between the domestic and foreign brands in K-Fashion has become narrower in terms of how foreigners perceive K-Fashion, and K-Fashion brands are becoming more and more globalized. The idea of K-Fashion was also recognized to be non-fixed and changeable at any time and in any setting for foreigners. There have been not only the changes in the social atmosphere in Korea to be more acceptable for new forms of styles coming from other cultures, and the younger generations becoming more individualistic than collectivistic. Further, the influence of one's cultural background and personal experience were revealed to be the contributor to the formation of perception regarding K-Fashion.

In addition to the findings previously mentioned, there was a lack of shopping options for foreigners when purchasing K-Fashion products. The difficulties that foreigners face in purchasing K-

Fashion items were also claimed. The mismatch of supply and demands in K-Fashion is something that the producers and providers of K-Fashion should consider, to make Korean fashion more global.

Also, according to the findings from the interviews, K-Fashion was no longer confined to being introduced by Koreans. Instead, K-Fashion is now spreading from foreign introducers to other foreigners. Moreover, products labeled as K-Fashion are sold and purchased by foreigners, as it is an easier option for overseas consumers to access K-Fashion products.

Overall, this research aimed to contribute to the extensive and enhanced understanding of K-Fashion from foreigners' perspectives. As the popularity of Korean culture in the world has been rising, there has been elevated importance to investigate the perception of K-Fashion, which may suggest paths for the K-Fashion industry to go global.

The limitation of this research lies in the lack of diversity in the recruited interview participants. Thus, it is suggested for future researchers to recruit more diverse groups of people from different countries and different backgrounds and to conduct demographical analysis. Also, it is crucial to acknowledge the fact that this study is not about defining the term K-Fashion, but it focuses on investigating the perception of K-Fashion from foreigners' viewpoints with an open mind.

Keyword : K-Fashion, Korean fashion, Hallyu, Korean wave, foreign perception

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I. Introduction

1. Background

It has been approximately 20 years since the discussion of the cultural phenomenon, Hallyu or Korean wave, has started (Hong, 2013) and 'K-Fashion', which is the subject of this research, cannot be examined without reviewing what Hallyu is. Nowadays Hallyu, which was confined mostly around the Asian pacific, has evolved into a sensation that is loved by the whole world. Especially the rapid development of technology, which has led to the evolution of the media form, has enabled Korean culture to spread throughout the globe swifter than ever. With the story that any part of the world can relate to, the movie Parasite (2019) has not only attracted film lovers worldwide but also made history by winning the Academy Award, proving the strength of the Korean film industry to the world. Also, there is BTS of course, the biggest boyband in the world, that impacted the world with the first-ever speech as K-Pop singers to the United Nations as well as having a world-record of being the first group in Billboard history to keep its ranking as number one on the Billboard Artist 100 chart for five weeks in a row. Besides, the media shift has allowed many sectors of Korean culture to work in partnership with giant global media industries; the most recent case

is the Squid Game (2021), which enjoyed significant success, making a record as the most-watched show on Netflix, an Over the Top (OTT) service globally streamed by the viewers in over 190 countries (Spangler, 2021). All these achievements are in fact, closely related to the globalization and localization that have been taken place in every corner of the globe. Thanks to this phenomenon, often referred to as 'glocalization', there have been improved comprehension of each other's cultures and enhancements in cultural acceptance, with the transnational network connections caused by the surge of network accessibility (Korea Creative Content Agency, 2019). By the same token, the number of overseas Korean Wave fans around the world has increased simultaneously, from about 89 million to about 99 million, an increase of about 10 million (The Korea Foundation, 2019).

Amid the rise of Korean pop culture, the world has started paying more attention to K-Fashion in particular, as Korea has come to be recognized as trendy and fashionable (Kim, 2012a; Kim, 2017a). According to Ahn & Geum's (2016) research, the term K-Fashion stems from the combination of the word 'K' for Korea and 'Fashion' for its lexical meaning of 'style and trend for clothing and hairstyles that are popular at the time'. The term 'K-Fashion' was first analyzed in an article in the Korean Economic Daily on December 28, 2000, in the phrase "Asia Amuse, a wired and wireless Internet content company, plans to provide professional content such as K-Music, K-Visual, K-Gurume, and K-Fashion to Japanese wireless

Internet service EZweb to introduce Korean music, movies, cooking, and fashion brands and celebrities"(Kim, 2017a; Lee, 2000). The term's first usage was to describe fashion content related to Korea, and while there was no appearance of the term between 2001 to 2008, it reappeared in 2009 at the 'FEEL KOREA, K-POP Night & K-Fashion Show' in Shanghai, China(Kim, 2017a; Yoon, 2009). After that, the term did not make an appearance until 2012. Then, K-Pop's popularity skyrocketed and became worldwide, making K-Fashion a hot topic. Since then, just like how 'Hallyu' or 'Korean wave' started to be used by the governmental organizations to effectively promote and distribute Korean mainstream music contents outside of the country, the South Korean Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism has started to use 'K-Fashion' more vigorously with an attempt to name each cultural sectors in the category of 'K-Culture' to vitalize Hallyu 3.0. The usage of the term K-Fashion was not only for the more effective promotion of the Korean fashion industry in the world (Ahn & Geum, 2016) but also to highlight that what K-Fashion means is not about the Korean style of fashion design, rather, it signifies the globalization of Korean fashion.

However, what is worth noticing is that, against the backdrop of these socio-cultural phenomenon prominent around the globe, the term K-Fashion has been used imprudently without a fixed definition; it would be a difficult question even for a Korean person to provide a clear definition of what K-Fashion really is. The interview with a South Korean fashion student answered the question of what is K-

Fashion as “I don’t know what the word means. [...] I think that K-Fashion is part of the marketing strategy [for reaching] Southeast Asia and China, but the term itself may not necessarily mean anything” (Tai, 2016). This shows how uncertain the meaning of the term K-fashion remained.

Before moving right away on to the next section in this paper, it is necessary to acknowledge the differences between the terms ‘K-Fashion’ and ‘Korean fashion’. According to the comparative study on ‘Korean fashion’ and ‘K-Fashion’ by Kim et al. (2017), the term ‘K-Fashion’ was started to be in used in place of ‘Korean fashion’ by the Korean government and the media since 2000s with the spread of Hallyu. However, the term K-Fashion is different from Korean fashion as it involves a cultural phenomenon, and like this, although those two expressions undoubtedly have different connotations, they often have been used interchangeably, without having a clear definition. In an article written by Nam (2018), K-Fashion is not defined as a particular style of clothing, but as the whole practice of how the fashion industry operates and how things are created by culture. Also, South Korean designer spoke about the difficulties to describe K-Fashion in words, considering that it is not a single form of style but “a mixture of so many different styles” (Tai, 2016). Another comment given in the same context by the head of K-Style Lab (KSL) based in Hong Kong; once he is told that Korean fashion is trendy and popular among people from their countries including Hong Kong, he would ask them if there is any Korean designer or brand,

and the answer would be ‘none’ because they do not know any (Oh, 2019).

As depicted, K-Fashion should not be defined only as one particular fashion style, but it should be understood from a broader perspective of cultural framework. K-Fashion, which is one of the K-Culture glossaries, is going to be defined in this research as a type of fashion that is considered as Korean fashion style by foreigners, as a part of the cultural phenomenon of Korean wave. It is true that it is hard to judge what is a ‘Korean-thing’ objectively, since it is a characteristic of Hallyu that the globality and locality coexist as a hybridism(Hyun, 2012). Nonetheless, there is a clear distinction between fashion products that has truly been made by Korean designers and Korean domestic brands, and fashion style that is considered as Korean fashion and is worn and followed by Korean people including the famous Korean celebrities; the former indicates what Korean fashion is while the latter depicts what K-Fashion is. Here, in this paper, what is going to be discussed is K-Fashion rather than Korean fashion made by domestic Korean designers and brands; the type of fashion that is considered as Korean fashion style by foreign people and worn by actual Koreans.

Accordingly, this brings up an important question of what K-Fashion is. Is K-Fashion a concept with substance, or is it an insubstantial idea with nothing actually tangible? K-Fashion, as mentioned previously, is a fashion style of Korean people; then, is it

possible to define K-Fashion as something in particular? For overseas fans, K-Fashion is generally displayed through Korean celebrities and their way of dress through media; thus, it can be said that for them, K-Fashion is not a fixed or definite style but a style that is worn by Korean stars, which projects the contemporary trends. In essence, K-Fashion for foreigners are recognized as a kind of clothes that Hallyu stars are wearing (Oh, 2019). Although there has been academic research on the chronicles of the development of Korean fashion and scholarly attempts on investigating strategies for advancement of Korean fashion, there has not been an empirical study that tried to examine what K-Fashion is, clearly distinguishing it from the concept of Korean fashion. Thus, this study aims to uncover what K-Fashion actually is, especially by hearing voices of foreigners. In what ways do foreigners, the target audience of K-Fashion in a sense of Hallyu, describe K-Fashion.

To fully understand what K-Fashion is and to invigorate K-Fashion industry to successfully enter the global market, it is essential to listen to the actual voices of foreigners, to ask about their experience with K-Fashion, and the idea they have about K-Fashion. Although there have been previous attempts from the researchers of Korean culture and Korean fashion, to investigate on the Korean style fashion design (Kim, 2015; O&Lee, 2010; Bae & Oh, 2009; Choi & Lee, 2014; Han & Choi, 2019), studies on implementation plans and strategies to vitalize K-Fashion (Kim et al., 2017a; Kim, 2017a; Ahn & Kim, 2018; Seoul Women's University,

2007), and studies on how K-Fashion has been evolved (Kim et al., 2017b; Ahn & Geum, 2016; Suh, 2008), there has been no thorough and precise in-depth interview conducted to understand the phenomenon of K-Fashion from the foreign points of views. Beyond that, it will be a meaningful re-examination of how K-Fashion is described these days, as it has been approximately 20 years since the term Hallyu was coined. Consequently, it would be crucial to provide academical groundwork for future researchers and business in the related fields to comprehensively understand what foreigners' perception of K-Fashion are, as the information is lacking, yet, crucial for the development of K-Fashion in the global market in the future.

2. Purpose of Research & Research Questions

The research proposes a necessity to identify what K-Fashion is and tries to find the substance of the concept empirically. Although Hallyu has become recognized as an important scholarly subject, the previous research on the topic mostly focused on the economic and business-related aspects (Kang, 2017) and this also applies to the research field of fashion, which has its limitation in that there is a lack of examination in how K-Fashion is perceived by people from overseas countries.

To overcome this limitation, the concept of K-Fashion that is going to be dealt with in this paper does not refer to the Korean

fashion created and produced by Korean domestic brands and designers; it is approached from the perspective of viewing it from the cultural aspect, rather than the economic aspect. Here, K-Fashion refers to the fashion style that is displayed through many themes of K-Culture and observed by foreign audiences. Fashion is considered as a part of cultural products rather than traditional product in Hallyu (Kang, 2017), hence shares the distinctive characteristics that cultural products have; in lieu of having a practical purpose, cultural products are consumed to satisfy one's emotions, aesthetics, and personal taste (Hirsch, 1972; Jones and Thornton, 2005; Kang, 2017), and it is valued according to the interpretation of the text within the cultural product, based on the social customs, norms, and regulations (Lawrence & Philips, 2002; Kang, 2017).

Thus, while the main focus of this research is not solely on looking for economic values or particular fashion styles of Korean fashion, the study is going to investigate the substantial identity of K-Fashion with open-mindedness, by conducting interviews with foreigners to listen to their experience which can be an empirical explanation of what K-Fashion is, and to find out if there really is K-Fashion particularly perceived as it is. It is different from other research in that the research tries to capture the context in foreigners' understanding of K-Fashion coming from their emotions, esthetic appreciation, and the surrounding environment.

The research questions of this paper are as follows.

- Identify what K-Fashion is from foreign perspectives.
- Identify the distinct characteristics of K-Fashion perceived by foreigners.

To answer the research questions, the words and adjectives used to describe K-Fashion were explored, and the characteristics of K-Fashion that differentiate it from other fashion styles were scrutinized.

Ultimately, the research tries to pave a way for Korean Fashion designers to enter a global market. Another expectation this research has is to provide meaningful data for K-Fashion industry to strengthen its competitiveness in the global market by reviewing what K-Fashion is currently missing and lacking when reaching global consumers, and by coming up with any improvements that is necessary. In addition, since it has been about 20 years after the term Hallyu has first appeared, it would be worthwhile to examine and review how K-Fashion, as one of the many cultural themes of Hallyu, is perceived by foreigners through this study. Overall, this study is expected to contribute not only to the businesses engaged with K-Fashion industry, but also to the scholars and researchers of K-Culture and K-Fashion by laying an academical foundation of K-Fashion.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Formation and globalization of fashion culture

There are seven conceptual characteristics in culture, and by understanding them, one may better understand the concept of 'fashion culture'. The seven traits of culture are as follows; (1) culture is a creation of mankind, (2) culture is learned through enculturation, (3) there exist cultural norms and standards, (4) culture is a collective phenomenon, (5) homogeneity and diversity coexist in culture, (6) culture adapts and changes continuously and slowly, and (7) culture is value-oriented (Lee et al., 2001). It can be inferred from the listed characteristics that culture has been created and existed in the history of a mankind for a long time. On the premise of these cultural characteristics, in fashion culture, there are 'universality' in dress, which illustrate the presence of common attributes regardless of the different types of socio-cultural system, and 'diversity' in dress, which is created from the process of developing a new kind of clothes or style from the accepted and embraced trend, to be distinctive and deviated from other cultures (Lee et al., 2001). In this sense, fashion culture, society and culture are closely related to each other, and it is unimaginable to think of them separately.

Fashion not only has its means of functionality and body protection; it is closely related to the everyday human lives. Fashion

is “the reflection of our mode of living and thinking, of our manners and morals, of the changing kaleidoscope of events in our time” (Morton, 1943/1964). Thus, fashion, which is crucial for human survival, can be considered as a part of culture and one may conclude fashion as something that only humans have developed while other animals have not (Hamilton, 1987). Historically, fashion has always come along with humans, which apparently supports that fashion reflects the socio-cultural changes (Choudhary, 2016). Just like how Morton (1943/1964) described, “fashions of today are molded by the social forces of our time”, and it is distinctive that in fashion, changes are valued and accepted (Anspach, 1967) which is opposite to the concept of preservation.

The biggest socio-culture change that has occurred and impacted the human life since the industrial revolution would be the great advancement of technology. Although it is difficult to point out the exact time period of the initial beginning of the digital age, it can be said that admittedly, the 21st century we are living in, is the age of digital era (Joo & Ha, 2016). In today’s society, the digital media influence the world and brings about revolutionary changes in many aspects of human life, among these aspects, fashion is included. Nicholas Negroponte has defined digital culture as the four concepts of decentralizing, globalizing, harmonizing, and empowering (Kim, 2002). The decentralization and globalization as a result of the progress in technology, have enabled stronger connections of the world, and the diversified means of communications through various

networks channels have facilitated the two-way communication as well (Kim, 2005). Also, from the traditional 'videosphere' centering around television channels have shifted toward the cultural sphere of 'hypershere' that revolves around the internet and digital media(Hong, 2013).

The changes in fashion are directly related to the industrial revolution (Morton, 1943/1964). Before the industrial revolution, the system of fashion industry revolved around the royal and aristocrats, and the production and distribution of clothes were also strictly limited, making the poor and the lower class marginalized from the fashion system (Joo & Ha, 2016). After the first industrial revolution, the very first department store, Bon Marche, was opened in Paris, yet, fashion was still limited to the elites, which is a cultural characteristic also applied in the case of England: the monarchy system and the division based on social class that encouraged restrained tailoring, establishing the 'British Classic' (Joo & Ha, 2016; Song, 2008). Then, the second industrial revolution has initiated the mass production of prêt-à-porter targeting the middle class, as opposed to the haute couture for the social elites, and the enlarged production of clothes and the diversified distribution channels have begun to highlight the importance of marketing and exposure of products through mass media such as television and films (Joo & Ha, 2016). This could be easily observed in the American fashion, as Hollywood movie stars used to be the most influential people in fashion, leading the trend of fashion with

American fashion style worldwide (Song, 2008). It can be said that the development of technology has made the fashion system more complicated with the broaden spectrum of consumers it reaches and the wider distribution environment to the retail markets.

As Morton (1943/1964) mentioned, the vast interest in adorning and the arts of presentation of oneself through the way one dresses are closely related to the socio-economic aspects of human life. Nowadays in the digital era, the means of information gathering and sharing, and the ways of consumption of the fashion culture and system, have changed from their past forms, accordingly.

First, there has been a systematic change in the fashion industry (Joo & Ha, 2016): the birth of fast-fashion and SPA brands, and the leap in sales through online shopping malls (Jung, 2012). In addition, with the distribution rate of 87% in the first quarter of 2012, the mobile users were estimated to be about 4.2 billions worldwide, which demonstrates the wide and rapid distribution of internet and escalated accessibility to the vast amount of contents and smoothened cultural communications anywhere in the globe (Hong, 2013). The exponential growth of smartphone users has resulted in the expansion of mobile market (Jang, 2008), and the interactive relationships built among the producers and consumers of fashion.

Second, the gap between the producers and consumers of fashion has been diminished thanks to the internet, and even led consumers to become the main agent in the process of production (Joo & Ha,

2016). Today, the fashion system is led by the newly emerged types of fashion consumers, and the internet is allowing the fast dissemination and exchange of information among the web users (Kim, 2008). The new consumers include 'reviewsumer', who uploads reviews of products, 'twinsumer', who makes purchase of products after going through reviews by others, 'metasumer' who creates products in one's own by upgrading the product that has been purchased, 'prosumer' who are both the consumer and creator of the product by involving in the product development to the making process, and lastly, 'cresumer' who is the creative consumer that actively participates from the product creation stage (Joo & Ha, 2016). The social network service (SNS) is also making it easier for the distributors and recipients in the fashion market to communicate with each other.

Third, according to Baek and Bae's (2021) study on the expansion of digital fashion communication, fashion brands are communicating through digital media by making digital runways, fashion games, fashion films, and fashion metaverse. To broaden the communication channels online, the fashion industry has been actively using various digital technologies such as virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR), and work in collaboration with e-commerces (Baek & Bae, 2021). Especially with the global pandemic since the year 2020, the online and digital media has been used more aggressively for marketing and communication.

Lastly, the leaders within the fashion system has been, and still are constantly changing with the shifts in media. Compared to the past, in which the media was mainly led by the television and movie industries, the contemporary fashion leaders have shifted from limited influencers to various types of people who are closely related to media. According to Joo and Ha (2016), the new fashion leaders emerged in the digital era included friends and colleagues, broadcasters, internet shopping mall models, fashion bloggers, SNS users, and street fashion magazines, beyond the traditional leaders of fashion such as singers and movie stars. By providing an adequate environment to expand social networks and relationships, the SNS notably has allowed the ordinary citizens to become the 'cultural capitalist' who can influence the general public (McQuarrie et al., 2013; Kim, 2019), thus giving birth to the non-star influencers who are not the influencers traditionally existed as movie stars, pop stars, or celebrities. Among the various SNS channels, Instagram is identified as a social network platform in which the users are shown to have strong desires to express themselves (Sheldon & Bryant, 2016; Kim, 2019) and there are various types of influencers on Instagram in particular: the mega-influencers with 1 million to 5 million followers, macro-influencers with more than 500,000 and less than 1 million followers, and micro-influencers with more than 10,000 to 50,000 followers (MediaKix, n.d.). Bringing changes to the traditional definition of fashion leaders and influential individuals for

fashion, the digital media is causing the upheaval in the overall fashion culture.

2. Hallyu and K-Culture

Hallyu, also known as Korean wave, is the term related to the cultural phenomenon of enthusiasm towards Korean pop music and drama. In this section, the terminology of Hallyu is going to be explained and how it has been evolved over the last few decades, accompanied by the media that has been slowly shifted, is going to be examined. Also, the current state of various sectors of K-Culture excluding K-Fashion are going to be discussed.

2.1 Media shift and the evolution stages of Hallyu

The concept of Hallyu, which has appeared at the end of the 1990s, was started with the unexpected popularity enjoyed by Korean TV dramas and pop music (Kim, 2021a), and its notion has been continuously changing with the expansion of its boundaries in genre and geography (Korean Foundation for International Cultural Exchange[KOFICE], 2019). Although there are many different arguments about the outset of the usage of the glossary 'Hallyu', it is generally known to be started with the rush of Korean culture in the East Asian regions. In 1997, as the TV drama *'What is Love'* aired on CCTV in China and gained tremendous popularity, the term Hallyu

has appeared on the *Beijing Youth Daily*, announcing the Korean trends are coming in (Kim, 2021a). Here, what is worth noticing is the fact that Hallyu is not something that the South Korean government has purposely proposed, rather, it is a naturally derived concept from outside regions (Chae, 2020). The evolution stages of Hallyu is proposed in the below table 1.

As stated in the previous section, the development of technology has led to the active utilization of the digital media, affecting the evolutionary stages of Hallyu as well. Generally, the developmental stages of Hallyu has been divided into three; ‘Hallyu 1.0’, ‘Hallyu 2.0’, and ‘Hallyu 3.0’ according to the time period proposed in 「Hallyu Bonsaek」, 2012 (Kim, 2021a). Subsequently, the last stage is named ‘New Hallyu’ or ‘K-Culture’, which is the stage that has been designated most recently under the New Hallyu Promotion Policy in 2020 by the South Korean Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism. Although the exact period or the year of the each stages slightly vary from scholars to scholars, most of them are closely related to the advancement of the media technology and the communication environment, since the quality and quantity of the transmissible data or information highly depend on the two factors (KOFICE, 2021). Also, the core genre when it comes to Hallyu transposed from dramas to K-Pop, and to the further amplified interest in the broad spectrum of Korean culture (Hwang & Epstein, 2016).

<Table 1> Evolution stages and Characteristics of Hallyu

Stage	Hallyu 1.0	Hallyu 2.0	Hallyu 3.0	New Hallyu
-------	------------	------------	------------	------------

				(K-Culture)
Period	1997 – Mid-early 2000s	Mid-early 2000s – Early 2010s	Early 2010s – 2019	Early 2020s – present
Core genre	K-Drama	K-Pop	Popular culture	K-Culture
Administration	Kim, Young- sam (1993-1998) Kim, Dae- jung (1998- 2003)	Roh, Moo- hyun (2003- 2008) Lee, Myung- bak (2008-2013)	Lee, Myung- bak (2008-2013) Park, Geun- hye (2013-2017) Moon, Jae-in (2017- present)	Moon, Jae-in (2017- present)
Countries	Southeast Asia	Central Asia, Middle East, Latin America, Parts of America, Parts of Europe	Worldwide	Worldwide
Target consumer	Few manias and fans, mainly in the 40s-50s	Mainly Teens & 20s	Global citizens of all ages	Global citizens of all ages
Media distribution	<u>One-way</u> – Cable TV – Satellite TV – Internet	<u>Bothways</u> – Internet (Web 2.0) – 3G – YouTube/ SNS	<u>Bothways</u> – Internet – 4G – IT Development	<u>Bothways</u> – Internet – 5G
Contents platforms	– Broadcasts – CD/DVD	Downloads	OTT(Streami ng)	OTT(Cloud- based)
Main service provider	– MTV – Warner – BMG	– iTunes – Napster	– YouTube – Netflix – Spotify – Line Webtoons	– Netflix (with Amazon web service) – Spotify (with Google

				Cloud Platform)
Major works/artists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - K-Drama: <i>What is Love</i> (1997) - K-Pop: <i>H.O.T., CLON</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - K-Drama: <i>Winter Sonata</i> (2002), <i>Dae Jang Geum</i> (2003) - K-Pop: <i>Boa, TVXQ, SNSD, Bigbang, Kara</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - K-Pop: <i>Psy, Gangnam Style</i> (2012) - K-Drama: <i>My Love from the Star</i> (2013) - K-Book: <i>The Vegetarian</i>, by Han Kang (2016) - TV Show: <i>Running man</i> (2014) - K-Game: <i>Faker</i> (Professional League of Legends player) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - K-Pop: <i>BTS, Blackpink</i> - K-Movie: <i>Parasite</i> (2019) - K-Drama: <i>The Kingdom</i> (2021), <i>Squid Game</i> (2021)

Adapted from KOFICE. (2021). p. 210. ; Kim (2021)a. p. 11; Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism. (2021). p. 2; The Editorial Department. (2020). p. 11; Ahn & Geum. (2016). p. 354. ; Hwang & Epstein. (2016). p. 9.

‘Hallyu 1.0’ is the first stage in which the term Hallyu first emerged in 1997 and lasted until 2005(Ahn & Geum, 2016). KOFICE(2020) on the other hands, states that the first stage of Hallyu depicts the period from 1990 to 2002, the era of the second-generation cellular network(2G). Although the exact years vary, it can be said that the period lasted from 1990s to the early 2000s. The first stage of Hallyu was the era of ‘one-way communication’, which

means that Television broadcasts and DVDs dominated the market under the great influence of the large broadcasting companies, producers, and distributors such as MTV, Warner, and BMG. The main genre of 'Hallyu 1.0' was TV dramas, which mainly targeted the consumers in their forties and fifties in South-east Asia. As *What is Love*, the first Korean Television soap opera that was broadcasted on the Chinese national television channel, CCTV1, succeeded in 1997 among Chinese viewers, Korean wave emerged and has begun to spread to all over the Chinese speaking regions(Liu et al., 2014). Not only that K-Dramas became popular in China, Taiwan and Vietnam, K-Pop became a hit in those regions as well, centering on dance music pop stars such as *CLON*, a musical duo, and *H.O.T.*, a popular boyband(KOFICE, 2021).

The second stage of the Korean wave is 'Hallyu 2.0', which depicts the period from 2006 to 2011. During this stage, thanks to the wide distribution of internet and 3G network, the means of contents consumption shifted from receiving signals and using device such as CDs to downloading contents (KOFICE, 2021), making downloading and sharing contents among people a lot easier and faster. Also, due to the advent of the web 2.0, sharing of information became a lot easier among people from a country to another. As the medium of the media transmission shifted from the cable or satellite television to the web 2.0, YouTube, and SNS, the age group of the target audience became much younger. K-Pop and K-Drama have become popular among teenagers and people in their 20s in Central

Asia, some parts of Europe, Mid-East, Central and South America, and parts of the United States.

Hallyu 3.0 is the third stage of Hallyu in which the main genre of Hallyu expanded from K-Pop and K-Dramas into the K-culture consisting of various cultural content and arts(Ahn & Geum, 2016). The third stage represent the years from early 2010s to early 2020s and during this period, 'Gangnam Style' by PSY made an worldwide hit in 2012, and K-Pop groups such as BTS and Blackpink has risen as the world-class popstars leaving a mark on the history of Hallyu. The Along the advance of 4G(LTE) network and OTT(Over the Top), a broad access to multimedia streaming in a rapid speed via smartphones and mobile devices was achieved(KOFICE, 2021), thus making wide range of cultural content based on new media through YouTube, SNS, online games to lead Hallyu 3.0(Ahn & Geum, 2016). In this stage, K-culture including K-Fashion, K-Art, K-Film, K-Food, and K-Movies have become mainstream, embraced by all ages of global citizens.

The New Hallyu or K-Culture is on the basis of 5G network service which can be come down to Enhanced Mobile Broadband, Ultra-Reliable and Low Latency, and Massive Machine Type Communication(KOFICE, 2021). Not only that the transmission speed has become a lot faster, the new age of transmedia content has arrived(Li, 2019). The advent to 5G network means that targeting consumer and recommendation algorithm can become more precise and personalized(KOFICE, 2021), which may also affect the sales of

fashion items; the rapid adaptation to this communication environment may lead to the increase of sales and attracting customers from all over the world. The impact of the emergence of new technology such as VR, AR, and Artificial Intelligence (AI) is great as well. According to 「2020 Hallyu Baekseo」, the new business model in the fashion industry has evolved; using AI, personalized service is offered to consumers by the clothing companies, consumers then try out the recommended products in their virtual fitting room using AR and purchase the product at the VR shopping malls.

<Table 2> Governmental policies to promote Hallyu

Administration	Time Period	Governmental policy / aim
Kim, Young-sam	1993 - 1998	- New five-year plan for promoting cultural development (1993) - The master plan for cultural welfare (1996) - The cultural vision 2000 (1997)
Kim, Dae-jung	1998 - 2003	- Distribution of album <韓流-Song from Korea> (1999) - Establishment of Korea Game Industry Agency (KOGIA, 1999) - Establishment of Korea Culture & Content Agency (KCCA, 2011) - The five-year plan for the development of cultural industries (1999) - The vision 21 for cultural industries (2000) - The vision 21 for cultural industries in a digital society (2001)
Roh, Moo-hyun	1998 - 2003	- Hallyu as a policy agenda under the cultural industry policy vision for realizing the five major cultural industries (2003) - Declaration of the regions of the early Hallyu (Japan, China, Hong Kong...) as 'intensive areas' / Declaration of

		the regions where Hallyu begun to expand (Malaysia, Indonesia...) as 'diffusion areas' / Declaration of the regions where Hallyu has started to magnify (Central and South America, Middle East, Russia...) as 'potential areas'
Lee, Myung-bak	2008 - 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Widened the range of Hallyu to the daily culture such as culinary culture - Determined stages of Hallyu into three stages: Hallyu 1.0, Hallyu 2.0, Hallyu 3.0 - Selection of contents industry as one of the major government projects - Organized the Content Industry Promotion Committee (2011) - Broadened the genre spectrums in Hallyu to K-Culture through Hallyu 3.0 - Set the global citizens as the target audience with utilization of various channels and platforms
Park, Geun-hye	2013 - 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Announced the Creative Economy Policy Enforcement project to turn the popular culture industry into the core driver - Set up the Hallyu planning team
Moon, Jae-in	2017 - pres ent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Divided Hallyu into four stages under the New Hallyu Promotion Policy (2020) & announced the fourth stage as 'New Hallyu (K-Culture)' - Aims to increase the impact of Hallyu by diversifying the Hallyu contents - Supports for accompanied growth of Hallyu and the related industries - Creates foundation for the sustainable diffusion of Hallyu

The Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, 2021; Kim, 2021a; Yim, 2002

The <table 2> shows the governmental policies from each administration for promotion of Hallyu. The discussion of Hallyu on the governmental level started under the former president Kim Young-sam (1993-1998); yet, during this period, it remained as the

awareness stage of the cultural values and roles (Kim, 2021a). It was during the Kim Dae-jung administration (1998–2003) that Hallyu has actually become a hot topic, starting from the distribution of the album <韓流-Song from Korea>, mentioning Hallyu for the first time (Chae, 2020). Also, the core organizations of Hallyu, including KOGIA and KCCA were established during this period, and the five-year plan for the development of cultural industries were set as well (Yim, 2002).

During the stage of Hallyu 2.0, the discussion of Hallyu has become even more active under the Roh Moo-hyun (1998–2003) and Lee Myung-bak (2008–2013) administrations. The former president Roh has attempted to set Hallyu as a policy agenda and designated regions according to the degree of penetration of Hallyu. Then, the former president Lee has aggressively executed Hallyu related policies; the evolution stages of Hallyu was divided during this time, and the spectrums of genre in Hallyu was broadened to the everyday cultural sectors (Kim, 2021a).

The stage of Hallyu 3.0 was led by Lee Myung-bak (2008–2013), Park Geun-hye (2013–2017) and Moon, Jae-in (2017–present). It was one of the core policies of Park to enforce Creative Economy Policy, and the popular culture was delegated as the main driver of the cultural industry. The succeeding stage of ‘New Hallyu’ was designated by the Moon’s government in 2020, with pursuits to create more sustainable environment for Hallyu to spread throughout

the world with more diverse contents and development of the related industries (Kim, 2021a).

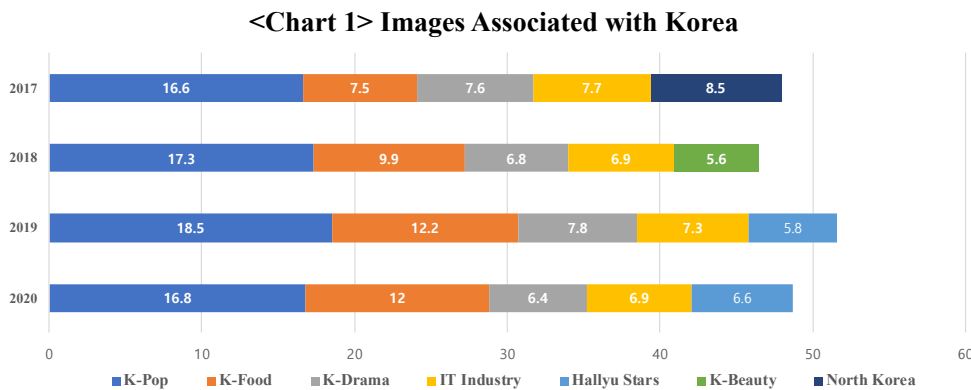
2.2 K-Culture

“These days, everything seems to be getting prefixed with a K- as South Korea’s popular culture continues to rise in international popularity. [...] Korean style is now seen as the epitome of cool” (Salazar, 2021). In the recognition of the ever-growing interest in Korean culture is receiving from the world, numerous words related to Korea have been newly added to the Oxford Dictionary in 2021. According to the dictionary, ‘K-’ is defined as a combination form that is used to “form nouns relating to South Korean and its (popular) culture (OED Online,2021).” As inferred from the definition given, ‘K-culture’ refers to the culture of Korea.

In this section, the literature review on the other sectors of K-Culture except for K-Fashion are going to be specified. Among the various K-Cultures, K-Pop, K-Drama, and K-Food are going to be explained, as they were revealed to be the images that the overseas consumers of Hallyu associated with Korea the most, among various cultural themes (KOFICE, 2020; KOFICE, 2021).

According to the report of global Hallyu trend by KOFICE (2021), the images most commonly associated with Korea were K-Pop (16.8%), followed by K-Food (12.0%), IT industry (6.9%), Hallyu stars (6.6%) and K-Drama (6.4%), as displayed on the <Chart 1>

below. The result from the investigation on the same matter in 2020 showed the similar result with slight difference: K-Pop (18.5%), K-Food (12.2%), K-Drama (7.8%), IT industry (7.3%), and Hallyu stars (5.8%).



Adapted from KOFICE. (2021). p.3

As shown in the chart above, K-Pop has always been the image that people relate the most with Korea. How BTS is ruling the world of Pop music and leading trends in the world, clearly are the evidence of that. Also, in the case of K-Food, the popularity has been growing significantly. The escalation in the sales of K-Food products is a supporting evidence. The sales of Bibigo frozen dumplings have achieved the sales of 1.03 trillion won, which equivalent to \$930 million in 2020, and amazingly, 65 percent of that revenue came from the overseas sales (Jo, 2020), and in 2020, the U.S. has become the country with the most import of Korean food (Kim, 2021b). K-Drama, of course, has accomplished a great success in 2021 as well, not only in the Asian region but all over the world.

On Netflix, over 30 languages are used for dubbing and subtitling K-Dramas (Kim, 2021b) and thanks to the great achievement the *Squid Game* (2021) had as the most watched series on Netflix, the company has decided to invest about 550 billion won in Korea in 2021 (Ahn, 2021), which shows the huge expectations that Korean media industry is receiving. Especially the hit by the global pandemic of Covid-19 has caused the amount of time people spend at their home has increased significantly, which ironically has made K-culture to thrive more (Kim, 2021b).

As previously mentioned in the earlier chapter, the aspect of Hallyu that is going to be the core in this study, is the ‘culture’, and the cultural products under the theme of Hallyu include music, film, drama, fashion, books, games, and food. Thus, in this research, the top three images associated with Korea excluding the IT industry, which is considered as the business aspect of Hallyu, are going to be discussed, which include K-Pop, K-Food, and K-Drama.

2.2.1. K-Pop

1) Definition and Generations of K-Pop and K-Pop idols

As the combination of the letter ‘K’ for ‘Korea’ and the word ‘Pop’ for ‘popular music’, ‘K-Pop’ shares its etymological context with J-Pop, which refers to Japanese popular music, and Canto-Pop, which indicates the popular music from Hong Kong (Park, 2012). K-Pop is a

Korean popular music genre that includes pop, dance, electropop, hip-hop, rock, R&B, and electronic music (Kim, 2012). Starting with the S.M. Entertainment established in 1995, YG Entertainment, and JYP Entertainment were also founded, leading the Korean popular music industry as the part of the biggest entertainment companies. Nowadays, music and fashion style of K-Pop singers are rapidly spreading through the internet; sometimes, they reflect the popular trend and culture of the same period, and sometimes, they set the trend and lead.

The generations of K-Pop idols can be divided, just like how Hallyu was divided into four evolution stages. Starting from *Seo Taiji and Boys* that was the very first idol group, the debut of other groups including *S.E.S.*, *Fin.K.L.*, *H.O.T.*, *G.O.D.*, *Sinhwa*, *Baby VOX*, and *N.R.G.* marked the beginning of the K-Pop idols (Lim, 2012). These groups are classified as first-generation idols that are not as professionally and systematically planned as today's idols, and they formed the Korean Wave mainly in China and Taiwan from the mid-1990s to 2000. In the 1990s, Korea achieved rapid economic growth and the computers and the Internet has begun to spread throughout the nation, enabling easier data collection through the mass media (Hong & Kim, 2012).

From 2001 to 2008, K-Pop began to spread throughout Japan and Asia. Also, it was a time when Korean Wave, centered around the popular music, has become popular among some countries from Southeast Asia, such as Japan, China, Taiwan, Thailand, and

Vietnam(Lim, 2012). Representative idol singers who succeeded in entering the Southeast Asian market included BoA, TVXQ, Seven, Rain, Jang Nara, SG Wannabe, Fly to the Sky, and SS501. In particular, BoA was the first Korean singer to release a single album in Japan and officially debuted, and in 2002, she topped the Oricon album chart, allowing K-Pop and Hallyu to expand its scope to the Japanese and Chinese markets.

Hallyu, which mainly centered around Asia, has grown to become the "K-pop enjoyed by the people around the world" from 2009 to 2011 (Kim Yoon, 2012). Idols that appeared during this period are the third-generation idols (KOFICE, 2019), which include Wonder Girls, Super Junior, SNSD, Big Bang, 2PM, 2NE1, Kara, and 4Minute. Their music and entertainment contents were able to be spread rapidly to the world via SNS such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, which began to be used actively since 2009 (Lim, 2010). In early 2009, BoA and Seven, who continued their overseas activities, made their debut in the U.S., and later that year, Wonder Girls released their single "Nobody" in the U.S., marking their first entry as Korean singers on the U.S. Billboard single chart. In addition, in the Southeast Asian countries such as Japan, the Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam, K-Pop singers continued to make inroads and occupied the top ranks in the major music charts and sales. In 2011, singers from SM Entertainment held world tour concerts in European countries including France, U.K., the United States and Southeast Asia.

Consequently, on August 2011, "K-Pop Chart" was newly established on the U.S. Billboard chart (Lim, 2010).

Another generation of idols presented by the KOFICE (2019) is the idol of the post-YouTube generation, which is a turning point in the generations of K-Pop idols. The idols from the most recent generation communicate with overseas fans in real time through various SNS media such as YouTube, V-Live, and Instagram, and these idols are trained to target the North American market. The terrain of K-Pop's entry into the North American market began to change, when BTS first began distributing albums directly to the North American market, by signing a contract with the global distribution network, The Orchard Enterprises for the album, <LOVE YOURSELF> (KOFICE, 2019). According to the 2017 Statistical Survey of the 2018 Content Industry published by the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism (as of 2017), exports to North America in the music market have increased to a surprising level, which suggests that targeting the North and South American markets in a different way were successful and efficient methods entering into global market. Since then, Super M from S.M. Entertainment has joined hands with Capitol Records to hold a successful first album presentation showcase at the Hollywood and topped the Billboard album chart. In the Y.G. Entertainment's case, Blackpink has not only signed a showcase with Universal Music, but also participated in Coachella, one of the largest music festivals in North America, in 2019, and later performed in North America.

2) K-Pop's achievements in the global market

According to the Global Hallyu Trend 2020 published by KOFICE (2020), K-Pop has always been on the top ranking as the image most commonly associated with Korea by foreign consumers of Hallyu. The overseas consumers of K-Pop has selected online and mobile platform as the most frequently accessed platform for K-Pop contents (77.5%), picked 'addictive chorus and rhythm of the music' (19.6%) and 'the attractive appearance and style of the singers' (15.9%) as the elements that make K-Pop content popular, and voted for *BTS* as the most popular K-Pop singers, with the significantly high percentage of 15.2, followed by *Blackpink* (6.5%), *PSY* (5.7%), *Twice* (2.8%) and *Bigbang* (2.5%) (KOFICE, 2020).

<Table 3> Music Industry Export Values by Region

(Unit: 1,000 USD)

Classification	2015	2016	2017	2018	Rate (%)	Year-on-year rate of change (%)	Average annual rate of change (%)
China	89,761	98,362	109,931	111,962	19.8	1.8	6.7
Japan	242,370	277,292	320,599	367,335	65.1	14.6	15.1
Southeast Asia	40,557	55,876	64,737	69,386	12.3	7.2	11.4
Europe	4,976	6,247	8,552	7,038	1.3	-17.7	6.1
North America	1,085	2,105	5,468	7,151	1.2	30.8	84.3
Misc.	2,274	2,684	3,294	1,364	0.2	-58.6	-28.7
Total	381,023	442,566	512,580	564,236	100.0	10.1	12.9

Adapted from KOCCA (2019). p.133; KOCCA (2020). p. 118

Although Korea took up only about 6.2 % in the global music market as the whole, Korea ranked the sixth place in the world's highest record for revenue for music in 2018; the second highest was Japan, but if compared between the year-on-year rates of growth, Korea had a notably higher rate of expansion compared to any other music industries in Asia except for China (KOFICE, 2019 p.71). It is also noteworthy that among the regions with the largest exports of K-Pop, North American region shows the steady rise of over 100 percent per year from 2015 till 2017, which is the result that popular K-Pop groups such as *BTS*, *Blackpink*, and *Monsta X* may be credited for. The recent data shows that the increase rate is still high all over the globe especially among those in the Southeast Asian regions and the North American regions, albeit the exports to Japan and China have been decreasing slightly (KOFICE, 2020, p.99).

3) Luxury brands using K-Pop idols as a marketing tool

There are many types of goods in luxury market, yet the fashion industry takes up the biggest part in the market, taking up about 42% of sales among the entire sales of luxury goods (Fionda & Moore, 2009). Having said that, well-known global luxury fashion brands such as Louis Vuitton, Gucci, Dior, and Chanel, have been generating abounding profits in the world (Moore et al., 2010), and a celebrity

endorsement has been used by marketers as a marketing tool for a long time to make the advertisements more reliable and to raise brand awareness among their target consumers more effectively (McCracken, 1989). According to Randjbarian et al. (2010), the brand image can become more positive and consumers' willingness to purchase the product may become stronger from using celebrities for marketing. Often times, the celebrities are able to imply powerful messages to their consumers through advertisements, which is more effective than communicating through non-celebrities in appealing and grabbing attentions among consumers (Davies & Slater, 2015). Furthermore, people tend to have desires for following certain qualities and ways of lives of the celebrities they look up to (Sami 2006) and some even try to boost their self-esteem by following behaviors of their favorite celebrities, and this includes of course, the way they dress (Sami, 2006). This clearly shows using celebrities as a marketing tool is crucial for brands (Min et al., 2019), and this explains why so many renowned luxury brands are using K-Pop groups as their brand ambassadors.

One of the attractive factors for the luxury markets that made them sign contracts with so many K-Pop groups is because those Hallyu pop stars appeal to the consumers from the Asia-Pacific and the North American regions, which are the two key players in the world when it comes to the luxury market according to Avery Brooker, a chief operating officer at Content Commerce Insider (Chitrakorn, 2021). The global pandemic also had a significant impact,

since it has led the luxury brands to turn their heads to the digital marketing; the traditional means of non-digital marketing is not as approachable as the digital tactic anymore in the un-tact world.

Nowadays, *BTS* has emerged not only as one of the most influential boybands, as spotted on the top 100 most influential people in the world (Halsey, 2019), but also as one of the biggest influencers in the fashion industry. In 2019, *BTS* sported seven stage looks from the global luxury brand, Dior; the pieces were designed by Kim Jones and they were staged at Paris wearing them. It was the first time that French luxury brand has designed stage wears, not only for K-Pop bands but including all male pop stars (Suen & Guilbault, 2019). They were even paid to wear Dior on stage, which was “the K-Pop industry’s most high-profile sponsorship ever” according to the founder of Styleintelligence, Haesoon Jung (Suen & Guilbault, 2019). Recently, Louis Vuitton has announced *BTS* as its global brand ambassadors (Chitrakorn, 2021), and had a successful runway in Seoul, which made the collaboration one of the most iconic ones of the year (Time, n.d.).

Another K-Pop group that luxury brands are working hand in hand with, is the beloved girl group *Blackpink*, in which each members are appointed as brand ambassadors of some of the top luxury brands. Rosé from *Blackpink* is the face of Yves Saint Laurent since 2020 and recently became the global ambassador for Tiffany & Co., Lisa, having the largest number of followers on Instagram, proved her strong brand power, as she has been announced as a

representative of Celine since 2019 and Bvlgari as well. Another Blackpink member, Jennie is a house ambassador of Chanel since 2018 and a brand ambassador of Calvin Klein. Last but not least, Jisoo has been playing a role as a global ambassador of Dior; she is so adored by the brand, that even the CEO of Dior has joked about hiring her if the YG entertainment ever fires her (Dee, 2021).

There are more K-Pop idol groups and singers who are working as the brand ambassadors of the global luxury brands. The girl group that has debuted quite recently, Aespa, has made a contract with Givenchy already, proving their popularity and influence among overseas fans. Jackson Wang, a K-Pop star originally from China, has joined as a brand ambassador for Fendi, Hyuna, a female solo artist famous for her brave styling, is a global face of Loewe. G-Dragon from Big Bang is well-known as a muse of the luxury house Chanel, and Kai from EXO is a brand ambassador of Gucci. Recently, Ami has appointed Enhyphen as the global brand ambassador, which was the first time the brand announced the role to anyone (Jindal, 2021). As front-row seaters, brand ambassadors, models, and collaborators, K-Pop idols are exerting great influence on fashion industry worldwide with economic power.

4) Fashion styles in K-Pop

There are relatively more studies conducted on the topic of K-Pop compared to the other sectors of K-Culture, and some of them

comprise of the studies related to fashion styles of K-Pop stars. The literature review on the fashion style of K-Pop stars are briefly articulated on the <table 4>. Despite having a slightly different scope, each studies have focused on the fashion styles of K-Pop stars. The studies include the analyzation of the fashion images and styling of K-pop idols (Park, 2012; Kim, 2012; Na & Jang, 2012), fashion images of K-pop girl groups (Kim, 2010; Chung & Yoo, 2013), fashion directing of K-Pop stars (Ryu & Han, 2001), images of Korean boy groups (Hong & Kim, 2012), and aesthetic characteristics of K-Pop fashion (Song et al., 2014).

First, for the fashion images and styling of K-Pop stars, Park (2012) attempted to look for fashion images of K-Pop idols, and has come up with ‘Hybrid sexy’, ‘popular cute’, ‘mystic retro’, ‘systematic modern’, ‘dynamic kitsch fashion images of K-Pop idols. The fashion images were combinations of the internal and external characteristics of K-Pop and the fashion images that are displayed by the K-Pop idols; the internal characteristics included ‘hybridity’, ‘dynamics’, and ‘popularity’, and on the other hand, the external characteristics consisted of ‘collectivity’, ‘disposability’, ‘systemicity’, and ‘mysticism’. Kim(2012) has come up with five fashion styles of K-Pop stars, which include, ‘street fashion style’, which is a unique street fashion style expressed through mix and match of various items in an unbalanced yet harmonious way, ‘retro fashion style’, the retro music and outfits that are properly styled together for a fresh-feelings for teens and a nostalgic feels for fans over thirty, ‘sexy

fashion style' which is the expression of sexiness through tall and fit body lines, 'black & white style', a style emphasized on the simple, chic, and sophisticated chic style that makes the group dance looks more stand out, and lastly, 'futurism style' which is expressed through either sporty and technical mood or sexy mood. Na & Jung (2012) focused on the kitsch fashion, which is the 'fun' tool to express one's characters and to deliver joyfulness, demonstrated by K-Pop stars, and proposed the formative characteristics of 'exaggeration' conveyed using excessive details and accentuation of certain body features, 'inappropriateness' through unbalanced coordination and disharmonious colors, patterns, and 'playfulness' with some immature and childish motifs.

Next, for the fashion images of K-Pop girl groups, Kim (2010) arranged the form characteristics as the use of active-wear for dancing to express dynamism, wearing uniforms for harmonious look as a group, use of fetish items for accentuating sensuality, coordination of retrospective items to arouse nostalgia, and mix matching tactic to differentiate a group from another and to array either sensual or innocent feels. According to Chung & Yoo (2013)'analysis on the image making through fashion styles of K-Pop girl groups, the characteristics of the images displayed includes 'retro-look', which is the retrospective concept for girlish, funky, feminine, disco, and barbie-doll-like images, 'school-look' using school uniforms for active looks, 'chic-look' with concepts of rock-chic look for rebellious image and sexy look for either genderless or

bold feminine images, ‘sportive–look’, which incorporates sportswear into casual wears to allow movements , and ‘marine–look’ that uses ocean–related motifs such as a sailor suit.

Ryu and Han’s (2001) study on the characteristics of fashion presentation of stars from Korean popular music since the 1990s, and came up with the following results: (1) fashion theme that is coherent with the their music to make themselves more recognizable, (2) fashion images produced to reflect identity and subculture that have attracted the peeps, the new generation from the 1990s, (3) alteration of fashion images to pursue diverse and original images, (4) each members having different ways to style themselves to make each individual looks different while maintaining harmonious look, (5) duplicate fashion styling to guarantee supports from the same fan base.

Hong and Kim (2012) have proposed images of Korean K–Pop boy groups from each era. In the 1990s, groups used uniquely dyed hair colors and expression of individuality with hip–hop style, while in the 2000s, boy groups were spotted with metro–sexual styling that highlights the femininity by wearing skinny jeans and feminine colors. In the 2010s, they presented the uber–sexual style, which showed the ideal male figure with both masculine and feminine features.

<Table 4> Studies on fashion styles of K–Pop stars

<p>Fashion images and styling of K–Pop stars</p>	<p>‘Hybrid sexy’, ‘popular cute’, ‘mystic retro’, ‘systematic modern’, ‘dynamic kitsch’ fashion images deduced from K–Pop idols (Park, 2012); ‘Street fashion style’, ‘retro fashion style’, ‘sexy</p>
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	<p>fashion style', 'black & white style', 'futurism style' (Kim, 2012);</p> <p>Formative characteristics of K-Pop stars' kitsch fashion: exaggeration, inappropriateness, playfulness (Na & Jang, 2012)</p>
<p>fashion images of K-pop girl groups</p>	<p>(1) Form characteristics: use of active-wear for dancing, uniforms for uniformity, fetish items for sensuality, coordination of retro items, mix & match styling (2) Internal characteristics: transformation, double-sidedness, fantasy (Kim, 2010);</p> <p>Retro-look, school-look, chic-look (rock-chic look, sexy look), sportive-look, marine-look (Chung & Yoo, 2013)</p>
<p>Fashion-presentation of K-Pop stars</p>	<p>(1) Display of a fashion theme with music on stage for an effective direction of fashion style (2) Fashion image displayed with sub-cultural identity to be distinctive and to become popular among non-mainstream teenagers (3) Ability to display fresh new images by altering fashion images depending on the songs they come up with (4) Strategic fashion directing in the 1990s for each members of the group to be differentiated from each other while not looking too apart (5) Imitation of other star singers' images in the 1990s (Ryu & Han, 2001)</p>
<p>Images of Korean boy groups</p>	<p>(1) 1990s: Embrace of individuality, unconventional colors used for dying hair, hip-hop style (2) 2000s: metro-sexual style, feminine colors, skinny jeans, embrace of beauty (3) 2010s: uber-sexual style, a mixture of feminine and masculine style (Hong & Kim, 2012)</p>
<p>Aesthetic characteristics of K-Pop fashion</p>	<p>K-Pop stars' preference for grotesque, fetish, and kitsch styles, with characteristics of pursuit of sensuality, popularity, and pleasure (Song et al., 2014)</p>

2.2.2. K-Food

1) Definition and characteristics of K-Food

There have been scholarly attempts to define Korean food, but commonly, it is vaguely defined as the food that is cooked by Koreans with domestically produced ingredients, using recipes that have originated from the ancestors (Lee, 2009). Other scholars and the related institutions of Korean food have also defined Korean food as indigenous food of Korea that has been descending from the ancestors for generations, cooked using domestically produced ingredients and recipes (South Korean Ministry for Food, Agriculture, Forestry and Fishery, 2008; Korea food industry Research Institute, 2006; Yang, 2006; Kim, 2005; Lee, 2005; Kim, 2004; Lee, 2009). However, K-Food, or Hansik, needs to be understood from the stance of globalizing Korean food, with the consideration of the traditional Korean culture as well as the preference and tastes of the foreigners around the world (Bae, 2008; Korea food industry yearly statistics, 2009;), since perceiving it only based on the traditional interpretation may create obstacles in bringing K-Food into the world (Lee, 2009). Thus, K-Food should be understood from a much broader spectrum than Korean food, and it could be defined as not only the Korean food that has been cooked based on the traditional cooking methods and ingredients but also the Korean food cooked with variations in ingredients and recipes that has been applied and localized considering the local situations at the overseas countries” (Korea food industry yearly statistics, 2009; Lee, 2009).

Just like how other K-Culture related terms were coined, the terminology K-Food is the combination form of the letter 'K' standing for Korea, and the word 'food'. Food is not considered only as a means of nutrient intake; food in human society goes beyond the physiological aspect and is appreciated as a social dimension (Kang, 2017). According to Kang (2017), food becomes a specific dietary culture over generations to generation, as individuals become familiar with classification of food from the impact by close people around them, the media, and many experts throughout their lives. Meanwhile, the classification system goes through what is called a 'resocialization' process, in which the system is altered under the influence of the state, media, and expert groups (Beardsworth & Keil, 1997; Kang, 2017). As one of the cultural products, the transformation in meanings of food relies on the social context of creativity, dissemination, theorization, and reputation (Rao et al., 2003; Svejenova et al., 2007), and the price and quality of the food heavily depends on the symbolic qualities based on the texts, images, and psychology of consumers, all combined (Beckert et al., 2014; Zhao, 2009). From this stance point, K-Food, which is a part of the cultural phenomenon of Hallyu, has its characteristics as a cultural product.

2) Globalization of Korean food (K-Food, Hansik)

With the purpose of globalizing Korean food and to promote Korean food for foreigners overseas, and the effort of making them become familiar with Korean food and to enjoy Korean food (Lee, 2020), there have been many attempts at the governmental level to introduce the Korean food to the whole world, and it seems to be the most prominent during the Lee Myung-bak administration. In 2007, the Ministry of Culture & Tourism, what is now the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, has announced the ‘Comprehensive plan for fostering Han(韓) Style 2007-2011’ to habituate, industrialize, and globalize the traditional Korean culture to create employment and added values, and to boost the global image of Korea; part of that plan was the K-Food (Rieko, 2017). In the following year, 2008, was the first year of the 10-year government’s plan to make K-Food to become one of the top 5 food in the world to be initiated, and the former Ministry for Food, Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries tried to develop and distribute standardized recipes for typical Korean food, and expanded the number of Korean restaurants worldwide with an endeavor to globalize K-Food (Reiko, 2017). The related institutions and committees kept on establishing as in 2009, ‘Presidential Council on Nation Branding, Korea’, and ‘The Hansik Global Foundation’ were established, however, the various attempts to globalize K-Food were evaluated to be a failure by the South Korean National Assembly, blaming the disorganized and inefficient projects that were proceeded (KH Digital2, 2013). On the non-governmental level, Korean food companies and restaurants have been trying to enter

global market (Lee, 2007), and the Korean food companies that have expanded to the overseas market are the most active in China, as well as the United States and Japan. Notably, Korean food products can be said to be preferred by the vast number of people globally, as shown in the statistic for willingness to use Korean products and services in the future. Among the five regions, Korean food products ranked the highest in every region including Asia, the Americas, Europe, and Africa; the Middle East was an exception, nevertheless, Korean food products still marked the second place after Korean electronics (KOFICE, 2020).

Not only the physical Korean food products, but also the way of presenting one's action of eating meals in front of a camera, which is called 'Mukbang', has become an internet phenomenon and trend that represents the culture of K-Food. 'Mukbang' simply means "eating broadcast" (Jackson, 2018) in Korean, and the term has even been added to the Oxford English Dictionary (Yoon, 2021). In the dictionary, mukbang is defined as "a video, esp. one that is livestreamed, that features a person eating a large quantity of food and talking to the audience" (OED, 2021). Nowadays, there are thousands of videos on YouTube with the word 'mukbang' in their titles; it is notable that the worldwide usage of the terminology as a proper noun, which stemmed from the food culture of Korea, indicates how the cultural aspect of K-Food has become a global phenomenon that gets attention from the mass audience.

2.2.3. K-Drama

1) Definition and characteristics of K-Drama

Korean dramas have made unique progress over the last 70 years, under the various obstacles from the military regime to the present (Kim, 2020). It was since 1980s when the entertainment industry in Korea began to gain more capital and produced some of the most well-known Korean dramas such as ‘Country Diaries(1980–2002)’ and ‘Under the Same Roof(1986–1994)’, with the democratic movement that led the government to start eliminating restrictions on the TV broadcasts, and the Korean TV dramas has started growing quality and quantity wise since 1990s, with more professional staffs and well-written scenarios (Kim, 2020).

Being under the big concept of K-Culture in Hallyu, K-Drama can be defined as ‘the Korean dramas that have gained popularity among foreign viewers’, since the dramas that are considered as K-Dramas has started showing distinctive characteristics after the success of ‘Winter Sonata’ as Hallyu content, compared to the dramas that target domestic audience (Lee, 2017). Lee (2017) explained that it is because there are different expectations from the domestic and overseas audience for Korean dramas. Furthermore, drama is an effective tool to attract tourists by displaying good images and promoting the location for shooting (Connell, 2005), which implies the importance of K-Dramas in attracting foreigners to Korea as well.

K-Drama's popularity has been steady and sturdy. According to the 'Global Hallyu Trend 2020' (2020), K-Drama has always been listed among the top five images associated with Korea the most by Hallyu's overseas consumers. When the participants were asked about the willingness to pay for Hallyu content by sector, dramas ranked the second highest as 54.2%, after movies with 57.6%; this is also shown in the consumption rate of Hallyu content, as drama ranked the second highest here as well with 28.4% after movies with 46.3% (KOFICE, 2020). When asked about the favorability, foreign audience answered with 76% positive responses when it comes to dramas (KOFICE, 2020), which was the highest among ten Hallyu contents. When asked about what makes K-Dramas attractive, the answers that came up the most frequently, were the attractive appearance of the actors, provision of indirect experience of Korean culture, integration of unique Korean cultures, well-structured storyline, great acting skills, and the diverse topics and genres that K-Dramas present (KOFICE, 2020), which explain why so many overseas fans are into K-Dramas. Also, according to Lee's (2017) study on examination of Hallyu as a global genre, K-Drama were perceived to have unique characteristics of love stories that are always in the storyline, and have some typical elements of 'evil mother', 'tsendere guy', 'rich-poor relationship', 'the love triangle', 'enemies to lovers', 'falling for each other', 'the surprise kiss', 'amnesia/cancer', 'frequently encountered characters', and 'secret brother/sister/twins'. Although it could be viewed as somewhat

immature, quality-wise, compared to other popular American made or Japanese made dramas, some K-Dramas such as 'Full House', 'Coffee Prince', and 'My Lovely Sam Soon', keep on being a cult among fans, and Hong (2013) credits K-Drama's attractive and fun factors that make them more addictive and enjoyable.

2) Attempt for globalization of K-Drama

As explained previously, the whole phenomenon of Hallyu or Korean wave has started with the drama 'What is Love', as it made a big hit in China, achieving the viewing rate of 4.3 %, which was the second highest in the history of the imported video contents in the Chinese CCTV channels (Lee, 2018). This indicates that in the discussion of Hallyu, K-Drama cannot be excluded. It is undeniable that Korean dramas have been the key drivers of Hallyu, represented by the hit Hallyu dramas from the early 2000s such as 'Winter Sonata (2002)', 'Dae-Jang-Geum (2003)', and 'Stairway to Heaven (2003)' (Kim, 2020). Some K-Dramas have been remade in the Southeast Asian countries, including 'Encounter' from the Philippines, 'Let's Fight Ghost', 'Oh My Ghost', and 'Voice' in Thailand.

The K-Dramas are exported not only via TV screen but also through handheld devices and other new types of media that provide OTT service nowadays. This is making the K-Drama to become more diverse and to be more high-quality thanks to the more competitive environment that the OTT service creates. The newly emerged

global video streaming platforms such as Netflix, has allowed K-Drama to penetrate into global market more easily. In the past, it was the North American media contents that were the first to be contracted by the Southeast Asian market, but now, Korea has emerged as the priority when it comes to drama imports through OTT, and even try to cooperate with Korean media companies to produce new contents (Lee, 2021). Although K-Dramas used to be considered as lacking quality compared to other well-made dramas from the U.S. and other countries (Hong, 2013), and having elements that may allow K-Dramas to become more recognizable, yet to be typical (Lee, 2017), nowadays, the global competitiveness of K-Drama has become much higher thanks to the diversified genre and stories. The recent mega hit K-Drama, 'Squid Game (2021)', is a good example. The reason behind the sensational popularity it gained, was because of its reflection of the worldwide social problem of inequality between the rich and the poor, a topic of debate among young people around the world (BBC News, 2021); this is also shown in the world-famous film that won the Academy Awards, the 'Parasite (2019)', which demonstrates the topic of K-video contents has become more diversified compared to the typical love stories in the past, with stories that everyone in the world can relate to and even better production quality.

3. Korean fashion in the global market

3.1 Governmental measures and policies for vitalize Korean fashion industry

South Korean government has been trying to support its fashion industry through various measures. First, there of course, has been attempts to spread throughout the world about the traditional Korean custom, Hanbok, which cannot be omitted in the Korean fashion. After the mid 1990s, when the global interest in Hallyu has started increasing, the phrase ‘globalization of Hanbok’ started to be in use; in 1998, the South Korean Ministry of Culture and Tourism published ‘Globalization images of Hanbok’, which was a re-examination of Hanbok’s images from the perspective of globalization (Kim et al., 2017a). It is worth noticing that instead of taking Hanbok only as a tradition that needs to be reserved as it is, the view has shifted toward the eyes of the globe. After the mid 2000s, the globalization of Hanbok was pursued more aggressively under the ‘Han style promotion comprehensive plan (2007-2011)’ by branding, globalizing, designing, and accepting the world-view for traditional Hanbok (Cho et al., 2006; Chae, 2007; Lee, 2001; Jung, 2015).

It was also after the 2000s when the government started to plan projects systematically and aimed to vitalize K-Fashion. To encourage and support the development of fashion brands as global fashion brands, the government has organized programs including

‘Concept Korea’, ‘Seoul’s 10 Soul’, ‘K-Fashion Project’, ‘Fashion Korea Project’ (Kim, 2017a).

The project ‘Concept Korea’ has been developed and run by the Korea Creative Content Agency[KOCCA] since 2010, and it has been the groundwork for the rising young Korean designers to expand globally. In 2021, Concept Korea is planning on a digital runway for F/W 2021 to approach buyers from all over the world. Korea Creative Content Agency is also working with South Korea’s Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism[MCST] to showcase the global showroom ‘The Selects’, inviting the primary buyers via the digital platform for sales and promotion. Lee Hyun-Joo, ahead of pop culture from KOCCA explained their effort as follows; “the fashion industry is also changing its paradigm as the Covid-19 accelerates digitalization. Despite these changes, KOCCA will continue to support Korean designer brands to enter overseas markets through new attempts such as digital runways and digital showrooms”(Kim, 2021c).

‘Seoul’s 10 Soul’ is the project supported by Seoul to raise global fashion brands, and it is held annually since 2010 to support 10 designers, who are selected among designers participating in the Seoul Fashion Week, for enter big global markets such as Paris, London, and New York (Kim, 2017a). It is still on-going, and the most recent one held in 2021 had selected ‘Beyond Closet’, Aimons, BMUET(TTE), CAHIERS, LIE, MAXXIJ, SEOKWOONYOON, the STOLEN GARMENT, Tibaeg, and Ul:kin (“10 soul brands supported by Seoul”, 2021).

‘K-Fashion Project’ is another program run by the government under the South Korean Ministry of Trade, Industry and Energy, in collaboration with Korea Fashion Industry Association since 2012 (Kim, 2021c). The aim of the project is to select national designer brands that have potentials to become global and support them to enter global fashion market with strategic brand promotions and efficient business performance (Cho, 2010; Kim, 2017a).

‘Fashion Korea’ is a project run by KOCCA to support Korean fashion designers to go global through London Fashion Week since 2013 (Kim, 2017a). The project tries to pave ways for Korean designers to become global brands and to give opportunities for designers to showcase their fashion products at the London Fashion Week. In 2018, Seoul Metropolitan Government has made an agreement with Seoul Design Foundation and the British Fashion Council to work together for joint opportunities in fashion (Seoul Metropolitan Government, 2018).

<Table 5> Projects run by the government to support global fashion brands

Initiation year	Project	Program contents	Location	Hosts & sponsors
2010	Concept Korea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Selection of Korean fashion brands with potential to become global fashion brands - Support and promote the selected brands to enter global market 	New York, USA	The Korea Creative Content Agency; The Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism; Daegu Metropolitan Government; Korea Research Institute for Fashion Industry
2010	Seoul’s 10 Soul	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strategic plan to globalize K-Brand 	Main cities that	Seoul Metropolitan Government; Seoul

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Selection of 10 Korean designers participated in the Seoul Fashion Week - Support to target Paris, London, New York and other global markets 	where fashion weeks are held, including Paris and Singapore	Design Foundation
2012	'K-Fashion' project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Selection of more than 3 Korean brands to help promote brands strategically in the global markets including U.S., Italy, and China 	New York, USA; Milano, Italy; Shanghai, Beijing, China	Korea Fashion Industry Association; Ministry of Trade, Industry and Energy; Ministry of Knowledge Economy; Korea Research Institute for Fashion Industry
2013	'Fashion Korea' project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work together with the British Fashion Council to support young and newly emerged fashion designers - Opportunity offered for participate in the London Fashion Week - Business opportunities by help organize sales showrooms, etc. 	London, Britain	Seoul Metropolitan Government; Seoul Design Foundation; British Fashion Council

Adapted from Kim, 2017a; Seoul Metropolitan Government, 2018

3.2 Young designer brands in the global market

The recognition Korean fashion brands are getting by the global fashion retailers has been growing bigger, and there have been movements within the buyers from the famous department stores and select shops around the world to have Korean fashion brands in their stores (Oh, 2017). With the acknowledgement from overseas

countries for its sensitivity to trends and speedy production of creative designs (Park, 2017), Korean fashion brands are receiving love calls from overseas buyers, and some of the most prominent select shops and fashion malls such as Asos.com from England and i.t. from Hong-Kong are actively engaging in with signing contracts with Korean fashion brands (Oh, 2019). In 2017, there was a pop-up store 'Seoul's 10 Soul' held at the Selfridge Department store in London, with ten Korean designer brands, which was requested and solely organized by the department store itself (Kim, 2017b). Although Europe has always been a traditionally conservative regions for fashion brands from other countries to come in, 'Who's Next', the leading fashion trade show, has been showing great performance as a good steppingstone for the global expansion of domestic young designer brands (Ahn & Geum, 2016).

Brands such as 'Ader Error', 'Wooyoungmi', and 'Andersson Bell' are already on global online clothing retailers such as Farfetch, End Clothing, Matchesfashion, Net-a-porter, and Ssense. At the billboards in 2019, a member of BTS appeared wearing sneakers from Andersson Bell (Bae, 2020). Andersson Bell, a contemporary casual fashion brand, has shown its success in the European luxury fashion market, as it nearly sold out at Net-a-porter, the British online shopping platform, marking 92% of sales(Bae, 2020). The brand is also sold at Farfetch, which is also a British online shopping retailer, and Ssense, which is a Canadian fashion online retailer with a fivefold purchase amount. The brand has also made into the main

page at the website of Barney's New York (www.barneys.com) on April, 2017, which is a significant achievement knowing that Barney's New York is considered as like a pass that proves the brand that comes in as high-end ("Domestic street fashion that the world is paying attention", 2017). Romantic Crown, which is a street-casual-wear brand, has expanded its market in China as it gained its popularity thanks to the idols as well. On Single's Day, a Chinese unofficial holiday, in 2019, the brand recorded its sales of 800 million Korean won in one day. Korean brands that are recognized by foreign customers are realizing their popularity, thus, they are speeding up to be on the global online platforms.

Also, there are cases in which Korean brands try to run their websites more global-shopper-friendly to provide a better shopping experience. For example, 'Document' has started to offer global shipping at their online store, 'Ader Error' is running its online shops in Chinese and English for Chinese-speaking and English-speaking customers, and 'Amfeast' is running its online shop for English speaking consumers (Apparel News, 2020). Moreover, according to the 2019 research analysis & 2020 Market Forecasting on Korea Fashion Market Trend, published by Korea Fashion Industry Index Research, the overseas sales via online shopping have reached 5.9995 trillion won in 2019, which is an increase of 65.4% compared to 2018. The sales of fashion products among the sales overseas were 564.6 billion won, a ratio of 9.4%. Country-wise, the biggest

consumer of K-Fashion products was China(58.5%), followed by Japan(23.8%), and the U.S.(9.7%).

To walk in step with the shift in the global market to e-commerce especially since the Covid-19 break-out, K-Fashion companies that have been deploying overseas businesses are strengthening non-face-to-face online order intakes as a means of trading(Lee, 2020). For example, in 2020, brands such as ‘Liberclassy’ opened up a non-face-to-face online business meeting for Chinese buyers via China-based online platform, ‘Hazzys’ ran a live ‘Zoom’ meeting with Chinese, Taiwanese, and Southeast Asian buyers and offered an application for easier real-time purchase, and ‘Eastlogue’ held an online business meeting with the European and North American buyers by sending out e-mails with photos of the products and moving images of models wearing the products attached (Lee, 2020). Yuta Morimoto, a general manager at TSI EC Strategy has mentioned that Korean fashion has some distinctions and is less expensive compared to Japanese fashion; in addition, K-Fashion is getting more recognition as K-culture including K-Pop and K-Beauty is thriving more(“TSI Holdings dives into K-Fashion”, 2020).

There have been many Korean designer brands that run Direct-To-Consumer[DTC] online stores to communicate with costumers from foreign countries (“K-Fashion designers expand their fields through e-commerce”, 2020). MSKN2ND was launched as the second label of Munsoo Kwon and it operates a DTC online store for consumers all over the world. It provides multiple language options including

Korean, English, Chinese, and Japanese, and offers worldwide shipping. KYE has also been expanding its sales online with its DTC store in the English language. Low Classic, another designer brand that has started as an online DTC store, has contracted with a Paris and Milan-based international online showroom, '247', as the first Korean designer brand. The brand signed a 500 million won contract for the first season at '247', and the number of exports has been increasing yearly, raising its sales to about 8 billion won of wholesales in 2020(Hwang, 2021). Lee Myung Shin, the designer of Low Classic, has explained that the successful entrance into a global market was due to the brand's contract with '247' showroom that is knowledgeable about the European market, the provision of exclusive products for e-commerce platforms such as Browns, Ssense, Net-a-porter and Farfetch, and the introduction of the supply and manufacturer tracking system to appeal the European buyers as a sustainable fashion brand"(Hwang, 2021). Kindersalmon is also an example of a Korean designer brand that runs DTC store online in English and ships worldwide for foreign consumers, as it has been getting global recognition from countries such as U.S. and China via SNS countries ("K-Fashion designers expand their fields through e-commerce", 2020).

III. Methodology

1. Phenomenological Study

The research methodology used to explore how K-Fashion is perceived by foreigners is explained in this section. Since there has been no previous research conducted on the public opinions from foreign countries regarding K-Fashion, it was considered necessary to investigate the topic empirically, thus, qualitative research using a focus-group interview was conducted.

A qualitative study is a research methodology for understanding and exploring various social or humanitarian issues, and it is a proper research method for deducing the meanings from the course of experience (Padgett, 1998). A qualitative research method is more suited for approaching a new social phenomenon, as it provides daily experience-based fundamental and detailed descriptions regarding a research subject from various perspectives (Flick, 2009). Although the sample size used in qualitative research is smaller compared to the one used in quantitative research, it takes much more time and effort to carry out, since the quantitative research method focuses on drawing a general conclusion based on the frequency and distribution of the observed phenomena. Ragin (1987) has described the differences between the two research methods as the quantitative research method utilizes many cases with many variables, while the

qualitative research method uses a small number of cases with fewer variables. Qualitative research intentionally uses and collects various empirical materials, such as case study, personal experience, internal reflection, life story, interview, observation, historical, interactive, and visual texts, describing the moments and meanings of every day and problematic problems in an individual's life (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p.2). Among various types of qualitative research methods, phenomenological study (Creswell,2005), which is one of the qualitative research methods, is utilized in this study. The phenomenological study is a type of qualitative research method for exploring lived experiences of many individuals about a concept or phenomenon. In other words, it can be defined as a research approach that aims to grasp and depict the nature of a phenomenon by scrutinizing it from the perspective of the person who has an experience regarding the circumstance (Teherani et al., 2015). The research method is also used for examining one's mindset from his experience (Creswell, 2005; Polkinghorne, 1989). The phenomenological study focuses on illustrating what and how experience about a specific phenomenon has happened. Eugene Kaelin has explained phenomenology as a journey of going back to the facts of experience (Shin & Gong, 2001, as cited in Kim et al., 2021).

The first step in phenomenological data analysis is the horizontalization of the data(Moustakas, 1994; Polkinghorne, 1989). In this step, a researcher becomes “receptive to every statement of

the co-researcher's experience, granting each comment equal value (Moustakas, 1994, p.122). A researcher needs to be open-minded and has to value each statement as the horizons. During this step, a researcher must read the whole text over and over while bracketing any bias. After thorough and repetitive readings and comprehension of the meanings of the participants' descriptions of their experience regarding the phenomenon, a researcher goes through a reduction or elimination process of all repetitive statements or irrelevant contents that are unnecessary or unable to be labeled. Then, significant statements are arranged and grouped into meaningful units, which is a fundamental stage for systematically classifying the data (Krippendorff, 2009, as cited in Jung, 2021). Clusters of meanings, which is expressed in the individual's experiences, are extracted from textual description and narration of the essence of experience, or the descriptions of experiences, is presented as a result, which includes the textual description of what was experienced and the structural description or imaginative variation of how it was experienced by each participant.

2. Construction of Research

This section explains the selection of the sample, selection of interview method, the construction of the interview questions, and collection and analysis of the collected raw data.

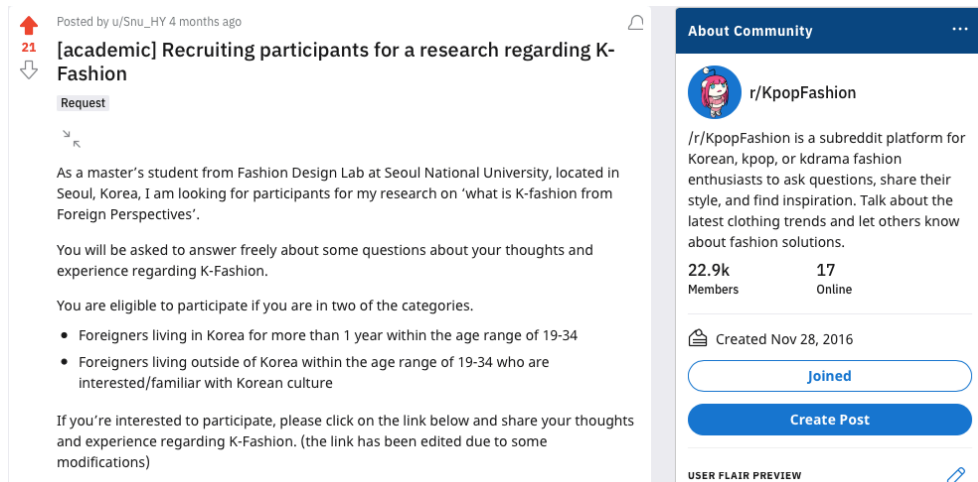
2.1 Subject of Research and Composition of Interview Participants and Questions

When conducting a qualitative study, it is necessary to have clear criteria and reasonable grounds in choosing the samples. The sampling method of a phenomenological study is much narrower than other qualitative research methods since every participant must have some experience of the research phenomenon (Creswell, 2005). Thus, the criterion sampling method is used in this research as it is suitable for selecting samples that meet certain criteria or standards and assure the quality of the research (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p.28). In a phenomenological study, in-depth interviews with usually about 10 individuals are required for data collection. Dukes (1984) has suggested that about 3 to 10 participants are appropriate, and Riemen(1986) has suggested about 10 participants are suitable for interviewing in a phenomenological study.

In this research, to collect data from as diverse backgrounds as possible to hear about the experience of foreigners from various countries. The selection of the participants for the study was limited to those who have lived in Korea for more than one year or those who are living in countries other than Korea and have an interest in Korean culture. The reason for choosing so is because those who are already living in Korea could have some sort of experience encountering Korean culture, especially by observing how Koreans dress. Also, it was because those living outside Korea should have

some degree of interest in Korea to have experience with Korean culture adequate to answer the research questions during the interview procedure. According to the 'Global Hallyu Trend 2021', the average age of the users of fashion contents in Hallyu turned out to be 30.5, and the average age of the consumers of the fashion products was 30.9 (KOFICE, 2021). Thus, the age of the participant was restricted to range from 19 to 34 in international age, based on how the age of the 'youth' would be defined according to the Korean laws. Also, the participants were asked to answer which language does he or she would like to interview with, either in English or Korean. It was noticed on the recruitment that their ability to speak English or Korean has to be fluent enough to freely explain about their thoughts and experience and to have discussion on them.

The recruitment was posted throughout the school campus and school district, such as dormitory and school buildings at Seoul National University, and facilities around the school campus including gym, which is used by many foreign students. For the online, social network services such as Reddit and Instagram were chosen for posting the recruitments. The 'thread' chosen for the posting was the 'K-PopFashion thread' (www.reddit.com/r/KpopFashion), which was considered as suitable for gathering participants for the topic of K-Fashion.



<Image 1> Recruitment posted on 'KpopFashion' Thread on Reddit

For those who are interested in participating, a link to a sign-up sheet on Google Forms (<https://docs.google.com/forms/>) was sent out. It took about two months from September to October, 2021 to collect research materials by gathering foreign participants and interviewing them.

Initially, 60 people signed up for the interview, and among them, 46 people have responded or showed up for the interview, resulting in a total of 46 interviewees from 16 different countries. The participants who signed up for the interview were then grouped into 13 different groups, according to their availability of their interview language, demographical factors including ethnicity, nationality, the period of residence in Korea for those who are living in Korea, and the preferred time schedule for interviews. Despite the effort of grouping the interviewees as diverse as possible to make the composition of each group varied, there was an obstacle when scheduling timetable for the interviews, due to the countries that

participants were living in differed from each other; because of the time difference, it was inevitable that some groups consisted of people from less diverse background.

The participants were from diverse countries from different continents, including America, Asia, Europe, Oceania, Africa, and Middle East. Among them, China and Indonesia were the countries that most of the participants came from: 15 people from China and 14 participants from Indonesia. The rest of the participants were consisting of different countries; 4 participants were from the United States, 2 were from Vietnam, and 1 each from the Philippines, Ecuador, Spain, Australia, Kazakhstan, Belgium, Russia, India, Iran, and Egypt. Among 46 participants, 29 were those currently living in Korea and 17 were those living in countries other than Korea. The demographic information and the organization of the interview groups are presented below on <table 2>.

<Table 6> Demographic and group information

Birth year	Interview Language	Ethnicity	Country of Birth	Country of Residence	Period of Residence in Korea (year)	Familiarity with K-Wave (1-4)	Familiarity with K-Fashion (1-4)	Name	Team #
1989	Korean	Asian	China	Korea	8	2	2	CL	1
1993	Korean	Pacific Islander	China	Korea	7	2	1	PK	1
1994	Korean	Asian	China	Korea	4	4	4	YY	1
1991	English	Black	USA	USA	0	4	4	PA	2
1996	English	Asian	Indonesia	Korea	1.5	3	3	GH	2
1998	English	Asian	China	Korea	1	4	3	ZM	2
1991	English	Caucasian	Egypt	Korea	4	4	3	PM	2

1993	English	Asian	India	Korea	4	4	4	KS	3
1993	English	Other	Russia	Korea	1	2	2	M	3
1999	English	Other	Belgium	Belgium	1	4	3	AK	4
2002	English	Caucasian	Portugal	Portugal	0	3	3	LV	4
1998	English	Asian	China	China	0	4	4	SZ	4
1995	English	Asian	Indonesia	Korea	2	4	2	T	4
1993	English	Asian	Philippines	Philippines	0	4	4	M C	4
1997	Korean	Asian	Vietnam	Korea	2.5	3	2	HT	5
1997	Korean	Asian	China	Korea	6	3	2	SA	5
1990	Korean	Asian	China	Korea	1	4	4	LH	5
1991	Korean	Asian	China	China	10	4	4	SW	6
1997	Korean	Asian	China	Korea	2	1	1	YM	6
1991	Korean	Asian	China	Korea	5	4	4	BY	6
1994	Korean	Asian	Iran	Korea	2	2	2	HP	6
2000	English	Asian	Indonesia	Korea	2	4	3	EL	7
1996	English	Asian	Indonesia	Korea	1	2	3	RR	7
1993	English	Hispanic / Latino	Ecuador	Korea	2	4	4	MP	7
1997	English	Asian	Indonesia	Korea	2	4	4	DV	7
1989	English	Other	USA	Australia	3	3	3	NZ	8
1995	English	Asian	Kazakhstan	Korea	2	3	3	YN	8
1992	English	Caucasian	Australia	Korea	1.5	3	3	M B	8
1993	English	Asian	USA	USA	0	2	3	SY	8
1996	Korean	Asian	China	Korea	3	1	3	HY	9
1997	Korean	Asian	China	Korea	1	4	4	KL	9
1993	Korean	Asian	China	Korea	6	4	4	W W	9
1991	Korean	Asian	Vietnam	Korea	6.5	4	3	HN	1 0
1990	Korean	Asian	China	Korea	3	4	3	JY	1 0
1996	Korean	Asian	China	Korea	1.5	4	4	JW	1 0
1999	English	Asian	Indonesia	Indonesia	1	3	3	KB	1 1
1998	English	Caucasian	Spain	Korea	1	2	3	C	1

								M	1
1995	English	Asian	USA	USA	0.4	4	2	KT	1 1
2001	English	Asian	Indonesia	Indonesia	0	4	2	SA	1 2
2001	English	Asian	Indonesia	Indonesia	0	3	2	RZ	1 2
2001	English	Asian	Indonesia	Indonesia	0	2	3	RA	1 2
2001	English	Asian	Indonesia	Indonesia	0	3	3	RA A	1 2
1994	English	Asian	Indonesia	Indonesia	0	4	2	EP	1 3
1997	English	Asian	Indonesia	Indonesia	0	4	3	MS	1 3
1994	English	Asian	Indonesia	Indonesia	0	3	2	NS	1 3
1994	English	Asian	Indonesia	Korea	1.5	2	2	SS	1 3

Focus Group interview (FGI) method was used in this research since it may elicit insightful discussion by actively interacting and listening to what others have experienced, which can arouse their memories and ideas that otherwise would have been lost as a data (Jang et al., 2012). To conduct the group interviews, semi-structured interview questions and a protocol as a guidance for the progression of the interviews were prepared and used. Semi-structured interviews were conducted in order to allow interviewees to freely share and discuss about their experience with K-Fashion. Since the interviews were carried out in groups, it was expected that generation of follow-up questions on the related topics from the themes that come up from the interview would be possible. The questions were generated based on the following three primary themes: (1) verbal and visual description of representative

characteristics of K-Fashion (2) source of information regarding K-Fashion, and (3) experience with consuming K-Fashion products.

The research interviews were constructed with consideration to create an ice-breaking moment with the participants, by opening the interview with an ice-breaking question and officially starting up the interview with the question of their first encounter with K-Fashion, so that interviews are conducted in a more casual atmosphere for interviewees to freely share their experience. The interview questions aimed to focus on the three main themes, and were designed, referring to the focus group discussion questionnaires used in the study of multi-dimensional dynamics of Hallyu by Jang et al. (2012). The research went through a process of reviewing by the Seoul National University Institutional review board (SNU IRB) before carrying out the interviews, and received the approval (IRB No. 2109/002-027).

The interviews were conducted via Zoom, considering the inevitable circumstances with the COVID-19, on a scheduled date and time, each interviews lasted about an hour and a half on average. All interviews were video recorded under the consent of the participants for the data explicitation, the following step. The flow of the pre-set interview questions is presented at the following <table3>.

<Table 7> Semi-structured Interview Questions

Interview Questions	Subject of RQ / Follow-up Questions
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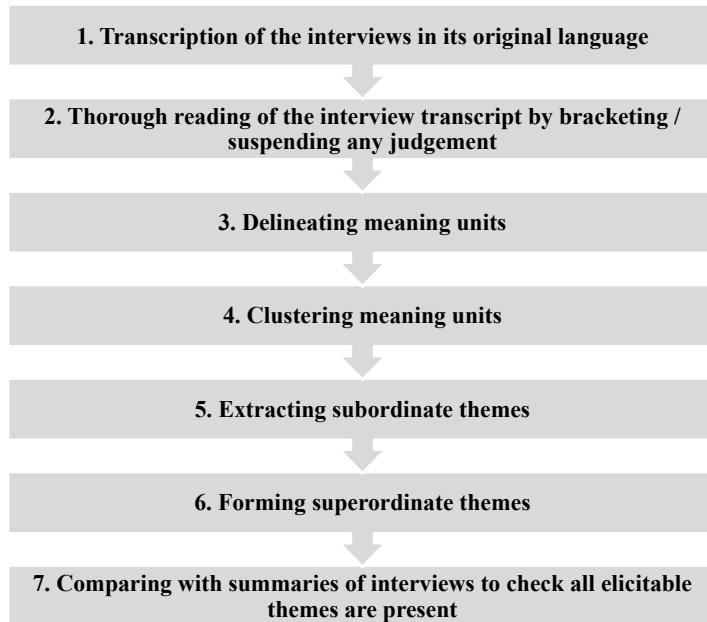
<p>Demographic questions & degree of interest in K-Fashion (Asked from the Google Forms before the actual interview)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Age, Occupation, Education, Country of residence, Nationality, Residence period in Korea, Race, English or Korean language availability ✓ Degree of interest in Korean Wave (Likert scale from 1-4) ✓ Degree of interest in K-Fashion (Likert scale from 1-4)
<p>[Source of Information regarding K-Fashion]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Ice-breaking: What made you join the interview? What made you to be interested in participating? ✓ When was the first time you heard about 'K-Fashion'? How old were you/what year was then? Who introduced it to you? ✓ Was there a specific incident that made you become aware of K-Fashion? ✓ What made you become interested in K-Fashion? ✓ From whom do you get the most information about K-Fashion? Why does that person have the most influence on you in K-Fashion? ✓ Where do you get the most information about K-Fashion? Why do you use such a source the most? (Example: At the K-Fashion fan page, I can gather various information)
<p>[Verbal and visual descriptions of representative characteristics of K-Fashion]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ What is "K-Fashion" in your opinion? Please explain with your image of your choice that you have prepared. ✓ What words or adjectives do you think best describe K-Fashion? ✓ What differentiates K-Fashion from other fashion styles or fashion style from your country? ✓ Among K-pop, K-drama, and K-movie stars, is there a "style icon" that represent K-Fashion?

	Who do you think it is?
[Consumption of K-Fashion Product]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ What brand(s) do you want to purchase the most among K-Fashion brands? Please tell me the reason why you chose that brand. ✓ What is(are) the most recent K-Fashion item(s) you purchased? What made you buy it(them)? ✓ Which offline/online shops do you usually shop for K-Fashion products? ✓ What are you satisfied with when you purchase K-Fashion products? ✓ What are you dissatisfied with when purchasing K-Fashion products?

2.2 Data Collection and Analysis

First, the video recordings of the 13 group interviews conducted through Zoom were transcribed to employ open coding for further explicitation. The transcripts were written in their original language used for conducting interview; Korean or English. In this study, the interviews were transcribed and interpreted by adopting Hycner(1999)'s method. Instead of using the word 'analyzation' of the data, the word 'explicitation' was used, as analyzing data may leads to a critical connotation in phenomenology, as it may indicate the loss of the whole phenomenon (Hycner, 1999, p. 161). The explicitation follows steps of bracketing and suspending any judgment, delineation of the meaningful units, clustering of the units, formation, and extraction of the themes, and making sure that the elicitable themes were deduced and the interpretation is validated by

summarizing each interview. A process of explicitation is explained as a figure below.



<Diagram 1> Process of explicitation

IV. Empirical study:

Foreigners' perception of K-Fashion

This chapter will show the result of the data collected from the 13 semi-structured group interviews conducted with 46 foreigners living in Korea or living in other countries to answer the research question. Although the full quotes are only written in English throughout this paper, during the actual coding process, both Korean, the original language, and English, were utilized. The reason for using the two languages for interpretation of the data was to make sure that the researcher did not misunderstand the meaning or omit some connotations in their statements. In order to avoid misinterpretation, the researcher tried not to lose the original meaning of the sentences by repeatedly listening to the recordings of the interviews. It should be noted that for the majority of the interviewees, neither English nor Korean were their mother tongue except for those using English as their first language. The researcher tried to make sure to fully understand what they are trying to articulate by asking them about ambiguous terms they use during the interview.

As explained in the previous chapter on the research methodology, after a thorough explicitation process, a total of 11 superordinate themes and 38 subordinate themes were deducted. Among them, 3

superordinate themes were categorized as ‘dynamic and diverse’ and 8 superordinate themes were categorized as ‘double-sided and ambiguous’ as a result of the data explicitation. An example of the process is presented in the table below.

<Table 8> Examples of the grouping and categorization process

Participant	Statement	Subordinate Theme	Superordinate Theme	Category
KS from India	<i>(Korean style) it's very much a fusion of the Western style and the Asian style there. [...] Korea is number one right now it's probably because of their fusion, their mix of the westernized culture.</i>	Globality and universality of K-Fashion due to the cultural diffusion	Co-existence of different colors & style	Dynamic & diverse
NZ from the U.S.	<i>And to me this picture really embodies that kind of her, like the whole look - it's not just the incredible jacket - it's the hair, it's the makeup, it's the attitude, it's the stance, so to me that's really like K-Fashion.</i>	Attitudes and personality of the wearer matter	The ‘whole-look’	Double-sided & ambiguous

(1) Dynamic & Diverse

Due to the rapid transmission of information from the highly developed technology and media system, extrinsically, K-Fashion was identified to have a dynamic environment. K-Fashion has been

spread through the beloved K-Dramas and K-Pop, the sources most frequently mentioned by the participants as the introducers of K-Fashion, and social media such as Instagram and YouTube, the widespread and popular platforms among international users. It goes without saying that the advanced industry system for textiles and apparel has been a booster for vitalization of the Korean fashion industry. Well-trained and proficient production of clothing as well as the wide range of fashion retailers available for consumers have been the contributors of the advancement. The chart below presents the superordinate and subordinate themes related to the extrinsic environmental characteristics of K-Fashion under the category of ‘dynamic and diverse’.

<Table 9> Category 1: Dynamic & Diverse

Category	Superordinate Theme	Subordinate Theme		Units
Dynamic & Diverse	K-Fashion spreading through media	K-Fashion spotted from K-Pop and K-Drama	K-Pop	idols wearing domestic Korean brands; 뮤직비디오; 음악방송; Superjunior, 소녀시대; 크리스탈; 비스트; Big Bang; G-dragon; Gangnam Style; BTS; 아이유; 태연; 현아; Blackpink; Jennie; Rosé; Redvelvet; NCT; EXO; 아이돌 공항패션; 아이돌 사복패션
			K-Drama	풀하우스; 미남이시네요; 장근석; 박신혜; 이홍기; Winter sonata; Jewel in the Palace; Sassy Girl; Chun Hyang; Boys before Flowers; Gong(공); 가을동화; 내이름은 김삼순; 미안하다 사랑한다; 천국의 계단; Kingdom; What's wrong with secretary Kim; Crash landing on you; 태양의 후예; 도깨비; 패션왕; 별에서 온 그대; 한국 드라마; drama introduces a lot of things about Korea; 여배우의 옷이 너무 예뻐서 갖고 싶어져; 드라마 여배우 코디를 따라함; clothes on K-dramas can be used in daily look; 너의 목소리가 들려 보면서 옷차림 마음에 들었음; 미안하다 사랑한다 여 주인공 니트에 빠짐; 일상복 보려면 드라마 여주인공;
		Influencers of K-Fashion on social media	한국에 살면서 K-Fashion에 대한 이해 SNS 통해 해; explore page on instagram; 인스타그램 패션 광고; 블로그나 유튜브에 최근 트렌드 서칭; Twitter; Pinterest; Tiktok; 김나영 유튜브; 마포멋쟁이; a couple of Korean-American Youtubers; Korean influencers; Meijiwoo; Habbi Onni; Korean Indonesian influencers; K-beauty influencers; 해외 카일리 제너 비롯한 패션	

			인플루언서들의 영향이 큰 것 같음; 팬 페이지; 웨이보;
Advanced textiles and apparel industry system	Skillful pattern-making and quality control		핏에 더 신경을 많이 쓴; 누가 입어도 예쁜; 좋은 핏; shape 을 더 예쁘게 잡아주는; flattering; beautifully fits; fits well; accentuating flattering figures; 겹보기에 다른 옷이랑 같아 보이지만 핏 차이; nice cuts; flattering cuts; even clothes not from big brands - (designers) put a lot of work in; 박음질 옷감이러던가 그런 것들; 퀄리티 낮은 옷이 많이 없는 것 같음; bought something since 2013 and still have it with me; quality of the stitching; quality of presentation of the packaging; quality is usually good; the most lasting, most beautiful, most flattering clothes are what I bought from Korea; hasn't been damaged after years; 디자인 퀄리티에 비해 가격이 비싸지 않음; 똑같은 돈으로 구매하면 한국 브랜드 퀄리티 더 좋음; 쉽게 퀄리티 좋은 것 구매 가능; 같은 가격대에 중국에서는 같은 퀄리티를 찾기 힘들; 퀄리티 대비 쌀 가격에도 마음에 드는 옷 고를 수 있음; 같은 가격에 비해 퀄리티 차이; 가격은 그렇게 비싸지 않고; 세일도 자주 있는 것;
	Fashion retailers with different characteristics	Efficient Dongdaemun market system and street markets	빨리 동대문 위주로 패션 트렌드 진행; 한국 예쁜 옷을 다 동대문에서 파는 것 같아; 보세옷들; places like 이대 신촌 홍대, the underground markets where you can't try things on; a lot of places that have rules that you can't try things on; trade-off for the price being cheap; affordable; don't have to be expensive to be stylish; YesStyle; Zigzag; Aply;
		(Independent) designer brands and department stores offering higher quality products	스타일 난다; 얼마씩 30; Modest Mood; Grove; 무신사; Wconcept; 임블리; 채리코코; 밀크코코; 베이비 베이비; Chu; Codi-book; 디자이너 브랜드나 백화점 브랜드 가격 너무 비쌌; price super high compared to Zara and H&M; 록복이나 웹 페이지를 잘 만들어 해외 브랜드 못지않은 감각적인; 상세 페이지도 너무 되게 자세하게 써 놔서 믿음직; 교환 반품 가능; 직원분들 너무 친절; 서비스 태도가 너무 좋아; 퀄리티랑 디자인 보세랑 차이 있는 것 같아
	Strong attention to details		detail-oriented; different little details; detailed, intentional; always intent; things are there not just to be there; detail-oriented; 디테일에 더 신경쓴; 미세하게 다른; golden details; 디테일을 살린; points; 섬세한 것;
Coexistence of different colors & styles	Use of different styling methods & unique mix and match		Korean people expressed their fashion with their expression; unique; well thought out; level-up the outfit; spice-up; mix and match; mix-match; layering; put-together; well-balanced;
	No limit to the styles	Comfortable-casual & effortless	편안한; comfortable; chill; easy; casual; sporty; allows movement; basic; not stand-out; staple; staple pieces; practical; effortless look; 꾸민듯 안꾸민; 무난한; easy; easy-to-wear; 루즈; 여유있는; 널널; 루즈핏; loose-fitting; flowy; has flow; baggy from top to bottom;
		Simple & clean	깨끗한; 간단함; 단순함; 샤프함; simple; clean; minimal; minimalism; clear; nothing crazy;
		Neat & sophisticated	단정함; smart; neat; 고급진; elegant, luxurious, classy, glamorous, fancy; sophisticated; 예술품
	Cute & feminine	귀여운; cute; sweet; youger feeling; cuteness; school uniforms; embrace youth; younger style;	
Various styles and options		can't choose only one (image that represent K-Fashion); hard to describe in one; various styles and designs; not only one specific type; various options; variety; variety of options to choose from; different people with different looks; the	

			range of options or different looks you can go for; diverse; wide and diverse Korean fashion industry are; various pieces of style; so much different variety (of style);
		Globality and universality of K-Fashion due to the cultural fusion	fusion: mix of the westernized culture; 누구나 잘 소화할 수 있는; 누구나 잘 어울리는; not super aggressive; middle-kind of fashion; suits for Indonesian girls wearing hijabs; looks suitable; looks for everyone; hijabi-friendly;

** Raw data is written in its original form (Korean/English)*

(1-1). Extrinsic environmental characteristics

K-Fashion spreading through media

Thanks to the fast speed internet that allows better and wider digital connectivity, the flow of fashion goes quicker and adoption of the new style is becoming even earlier (Suen, 2020) – in the midst of that movement, Korea is in the center, making the country as a global fashion player. South Korea’s remarkable technological advances and the high mobile penetration have formed a rapid and active mobile environment and the made the media industry flourish even more. Although the old fans of Hallyu got in touch with the Hallyu contents through television in the past, it has become easier to stay connected with the Hallyu contents because of the various platforms including YouTube and Instagram. In this sense, K-Pop has become a cultural phenomenon affecting the global youth populations, as it has become possible for Hallyu stars and fans to stay connected through social networks on their mobile phones (Owen, 2019), also making the other sectors of Korean Wave to spread faster and wider. As a part of that cultural flow, Korean fashion style has been spread through media, especially now via the Internet.

I've known K-Fashion since like ten years ago. At then, there weren't anyone who introduced me to K-Fashion, but it was mostly by myself watching the TV. Many people used to talk about the fashion style of the (Korean) actors, actresses, and singers back then. Then I became even more interested (in K-Fashion) by watching music videos. So for me, the interest in K-Fashion has initially started from watching the TV shows, and then it grew even more through watching YouTube videos and other stuffs on the Internet.
(Participant HP from Iran)

There were also comments about how K-Fashion was introduced to them by the song Gangnam Style, which was the first K-Pop song that made a worldwide-hit; however, the real interest has started from other things in Korean culture.

I think someone had shown me Gangnam Style before that but other than, that was like the first time I really became interested and aware more of Korean culture and then lots of 'K-blas' like K-Drama, K-Fashion, K-Pop. (Participant NZ from the U.S.)

Most foreigners, especially those from the countries where there has long been a Hallyu influence, have first encountered K-Fashion from watching music broadcasts and dramas of the first stage of Hallyu. Many participants have mentioned that they got to know about K-Fashion even before the terminology existed and mentioned the first-generation K-Pop groups.

The term K-Fashion didn't even exist back then (when I first got to know about K-Fashion). So during that time, I got to know about the K-Fashion style by listening to the older generation singers, such as H.O.T. and 1TYM, and watching old dramas. (Participant EL from Indonesia)

I first moved to Korea in 2009. Before then, I think the term K-Fashion didn't exist, or it's just me who didn't know. Anyways, the term K-Pop was recognized initially, and then K-Fashion next. (Participant CL from China)

For many participants, their first encounter was through listening to the second-generation K-Pop groups such as Shinee, TVXQ, Big Bang, Girls' Generation (SNSD), and Wonder Girls, who were few of the most influential idols at around mid-late 2000s to the early 2010.

The first time I heard about K-Fashion was through K-Pop, especially through Big Bang, and then more so through G-Dragon. He has always been the most fashionable person, like from the older perspective of K-Pop. That was my first introduction probably around 2007, 8, 10-ish. (Participant PA from the U.S.)

When I was in middle school, like about 2012, I remember Super Junior and SNSD were very popular back then. Everything they wear would be a trend or style, and I think I started to know about K-Fashion from that. (Participant RR from Indonesia)

I think it was when I was like 14 or 15 - I heard about K-Fashion probably around 2010, 2011, and I was already into Korean wave. I was a very big fan of certain (K-Pop idol) group, and I thought the visuals of some bands were very interesting and started digging into it. (Participant MP from Ecuador)

For some, those older idol groups were still remaining as their impression on K-Fashion, but many have stated that the popularity of Korean fashion style has accelerated since the third generation K-Pop idols or the ones among the generation Z.

The first time I've recognized K-Fashion is about 10 years ago, around 2010 when I got to know Superjunior and TVXQ by watching music shows on TV. But I think nowadays in Vietnam, the generation Z has started following Korean fashion style even more. (Participant HT from Vietnam)

I think Jennie is the representative of the world-wide trend. Everything that Jennie wears becomes the worldwide trend. Even Jennie comes to the airport, it will be the worldwide trend. (Participant RR from Indonesia)

K-Drama was also associated with the participants' perception of K-Fashion. From K-Dramas from the earlier stages of Hallyu to the most recent ones, the interviewees have mentioned many dramas that they have watched and explained that the K-Fashion displayed in the dramas is closer to the 'real way' K-Fashion they observe from the actual Korean people on the street of Korea. Although K-Pop idols are famous for their stylish and fashionable flair, many have stated that in order to see how Koreans actually dress in real lives and what are trending at the moment, watching dramas is better than looking up to the K-Pop idols.

I first heard about K-Fashion when I was 15 from watching dramas, such as Princess Hours, Autumn in My Heart, and Stairway to Heaven. By watching K-Dramas, I was able to get to know about the new culture of Korea, and what are the dominant fashion trends nowadays. (Participant BY from China)

(What made me become interested in K-Fashion) is K-pop and K-drama but mostly from K-drama, because for K-pop, they usually use stage outfits that are not suitable for daily look. A lot of K-Drama stories show daily activity so the clothes that the characters use is a daily look that I can follow and adjust with my own style. (Participant SA from Indonesia)

Apart from Korean dramas, influencers on social media have also become important component in K-Fashion for a lot of foreigners. Influencers were also described as the main source of information for foreigners who have lived or are living in Korea, while for those who have never been to Korea, K-Drama would be the main source. Since for Chinese people, social media such as Instagram and YouTube are not freely used in their home country, from what the Chinese participants have stated, it can be inferred that they become more knowledgeable about K-Fashion through various SNS since living in Korea. Not only the celebrities and influencers themselves but also

the fan pages and accounts related to K-Fashion trends were mentioned.

For me the influencers are the representation of K-Fashion, but I see that for people who have never been to Korea, they tend to look at the K-dramas. What I somehow kind of noticed is, because they are actors, [...] they have to be well-dressed, but sometimes what is worn in K-drama is kind of too girly or too dressy. But when it comes to real Korean fashion, they are simpler and but still put together. (Participant KB from Indonesia)

I think my understanding of K-Fashion has become deeper through the SNS since I've started living in Korea. (Participant YY from China)

I would say Instagram, Twitter and also China's Weibo. Like K-Pop stars' fans, they have their own fans sites and they upload every day about their idols' outfits, whether they are on the stage or they are in daily lives. Also, I think celebrities upload their own outfit on Instagram everyday as well, such as like Redvelvet Joy and Seulki upload photos everyday and [...] we can

learn (how to dress) from that. (Participant ZM from China)

Advanced textiles and apparel industry system

South Korea's garment business district, Dongdaemun, is famous for its fast-paced fashion industry. Although the number has decreased since the break-out of the Covid-19, Dongdaemun markets used to be the hot spots for visitors from around the world, as it is considered as the fashion mecca in Korea. For an aggressive reconstruction of the country that was torn down by the wars, the South Korean government has attempted for the rapid industrialization since the mid 1960s. This was the driving force of the 'economic miracle', which has amazed the whole world, and during the economic growth in the 1960s, the industry depended on the commitment to the mobilization of the labor-force (Kim & Park, 2003), such as textiles and clothing (Harvie, 2014). In the midst of the social changes, there was Dongdaemun.

The history of Dongdaemun apparel industry has begun at around the Pyounghwa Market, located at the core of the district, which was built in 1961 (Seoul Museum of History, 2019). Around the 1960s and 1970s, there was a booming in the garment industry in Korea with the attempt for an escalated growth in economy, and Changsin-Dong, located nearby with the Dongdaemun markets, was the main players in the garment manufacturing system to make the garments the key export items (Shim, 2019). Thanks to the developed garment districts

around the Dongdaemun district, Korean-made clothes are famous for its high quality and stylish designs that are up to date with the latest trends.

(I've realized that) in Korea, various new trends, revolving around Dongdaemun, come and go so fast in many ways. (Participant JY from China)

What the foreign participants emphasized was the fact that clothes they have bought from Korea fit quite nicely – not only they are comfortable to wear, but they are flattering enough to make their figures look even better. Also, since Chinese have more experience buying clothes that are from Dongdaemun since younger age due to the closer geographical setting and travel experience to Korea, some of the participants also compared how Korean fashion products are better than ones from their country in terms of quality.

They are good with designing patterns; patterns that form a better body shape. They (patterns in Korean clothings and Chinese clothings) look similar but they are quite slightly different. [...] It does not matter who wears it when it comes to Korean clothes. In China, clothes made by some brands would look nice on you if you are as skinny as the model wearing it. (Korean

*clothes) look pretty no matter who is wearing them.
(Participant CL from China)*

Others were amazed by how designers and manufacturers of K-Fashion puts emphasis on the details of the clothes; there are always little details that make differences to make them distinct from other clothing.

Golden details and flattering cuts are king. [...] There are many like different little details that like we really like curated here. (Participant CM from Spain)

I liked this description before how he was saying, I like that it's detailed. Detail-orientated [...] I think it all comes down to the detail (in K-Fashion). (Participant MB from Australia)

In Korea, on one hand, there are street markets and online shopping malls that offer more affordable options to buy fashionable clothes that may be risk-taking in terms of the size and the quality but still very stylish. Then, there are designer brands at the department stores and big shopping malls that have clothes that may be higher in price but also have a better quality. Since there are variety of shopping options given for the consumers, it is easy to

shop according to their tastes and financial situations and to stay relevant.

In Seoul it's so easy to go shopping. Even if it's not the thing you're doing, if you're just going from one place to another, particularly if you're a young woman, there's just stuff everywhere that you can buy so you don't even need to go shopping to buy clothes so I feel like it's just easy, which I actually don't like that aspect but I feel like it's just so easy to just buy things here and there. It's not super expensive so it's easy for people to build up their wardrobes. (Participant NZ from the U.S.)

Local shops they are the best. Free sizes and very very convenient to buy. Very economical to buy, cheap. That's the best thing about the Korean fashion. I was very shock when I first came here because I thought the Korean clothes would be more expensive, but [...] if you go to the street markets, the normal local shops you would find - that clothing, a lot of times would be even cheaper than what you can buy back home. [...] its not that you cannot get these cheap clothes from other places but the quality is not the same. In Korea,

the best part about it is that you can always rely on the quality. (Participant KS from India)

Although street markets offer affordable clothes, some stated that they prefer to shop at designer brands online or at the department stores because it's more convenient to find sizes and find better quality products.

Sometimes I see things and I'm like oh that's cute, but then especially in places like E-dae (Ewha University district), Shinchon, Hongdae (Hongik University district), like the underground markets where you can't try a lot of things on [...] even though they're often inexpensive [...] I'm just not always confident that things will fit me well. (Participant NZ from the U.S.)

I think those independent brands started from the online shopping malls and designer brands you can find at the department stores, are different from the clothes manufactured in Dongdaemun in terms of quality and design. There are so many clothes that look the same on the online shopping malls. I'm kind of tired of seeing them (looking so similar to each other). I prefer the clothes from designer brands. (Participant YY from China)

It has been over three years since I've moved to Korea, but up until this point, I've never been to Dongdaemun to buy clothes. I usually go to the department stores or the outlet malls. [...] When I first moved to Korea, I've shopped at the underground markets at the subways for one or two times, but I've realized that the gap between the sizes was so huge. That's why I don't really shop there anymore, because of the size and also the quality.
(Participant JY from China)

(1-2). Intrinsic characteristics of style

Coexistence of different colors & styles

Thanks to the advanced media environment, South Korea has now become the place where dynamic network systems and a vibrant digital environment co-exist. Such a setting has led to the acceptance of new cultures coming from other countries. Although Korea has been known as a racially homogeneous nation, the nation is slowly becoming more and more globalized, with the high digital connectivity that allows people to interact with the world and accept other cultures. This also indicates that there are many ways to style oneself in Korea, which makes fashion style in K-Fashion more abundant.

Korean fashion is the spectrum – whatever your style may be, whether you're into feminine clothes, the street wear, baggy, comfortable clothes, there's a K-Fashion style which you could wear. (Participant MC from Philippines)

When I heard about the term K-Fashion, instantly it reminds me about how wide and diverse the Korean fashion industry are. Like they offer various pieces of style, so that we don't have to worry about not going to find the style that will match with ourselves, because Korean fashion markets serve everything that will suit everyone's taste. (Participant NS from Indonesia)

The co-existence of many different fashion styles often becomes a driver that makes people adopt K-Fashion because of its universality that makes it widely suitable for many people. Most of the participants associated K-Fashion with diverse styles and complimented for having variety of choices palatable for people around the world.

Amazingly Korean style is now fusion of, I think – it's very much a fusion of the Western style and the Asian style there. That is how I think it makes it different

from Japanese or Chinese trends because they also have a very a good fashion styling right? But still Korea is number one right now it's probably because of their fusion their mix of the westernized culture. (Participant KS from India)

But I think we are beginning to see a lot of people wearing that middle-kind of fashion style (between the styles that are too simple or too trendy). (Participant HP from Iran)

It's a kind of fashion style that can look good on anyone, and I think that's what's really good about K-Fashion. (Participant WW from China)

The majority of what the participants have mentioned when it comes to the styles in K-Fashion, typically there are effortless looks composed of comfortable-casual style, simple and clean looks with monochromatic and minimalistic style, neat and sophisticated looks, and cute and feminine looks. What is noticeable was the fact that foreigners highlighted on those styles are not presented separately but mix-matched well to create a put-together look.

When describing comfortable style, the participants identified it with how Koreans make track suits or loose-fitting clothes that could

have looked dull, into comfortable looks, yet still stylish enough to make one looks good and well-dressed.

When you are on the campus, it's mostly people trying to dress up very comfortably because they're at home - well they're in the dorm - so they try to walk in comfort. But that comfort is very fashionable so you would see every other person wearing the track suit, right? [...] that's a word, it's a very effortless look. (Participant KS from India)

I just feel like even though it's just like baggy and as a piece alone, kind of not stand out, but when put together, it comes so well and kind of stands out. It's not too like, aggressive[...] and if I feel like I just need to put something on to go out and get a coffee quickly, but I want to look good, and I feel like this is the type of outfit. (Participant SY from U.S.)

K-Fashion was often regarded as simplistic and minimalistic by the foreign participants. According to the interviews, there are not many unnecessary additional accessories or too many details in K-Fashion. Instead, it's more about the simple and clean way of putting things on to create a minimalistic look.

The style is completely simple and minimalist. [...] Some of them (K-Pop idols) have their own simplicity, like they don't use much accessories. They don't use a lot of unnecessary things; they just use what they are comfortable with. (Participant DV from Indonesia)

With one word, probably it will be minimalism or simplicity. [...] I see people wearing the minimum amount of pieces of clothing that are clean without any excessive like pictures or something. It's kind of minimalistic, simple, clean look. (Participant YN from Kazakhstan)

K-Fashion was also described as an integration of sophisticated and neat styling of clothes. It was often associated with a sense of elegance and luxurious moods. An interesting depiction of K-Fashion was by a participant who brought the famous artwork piece, 'the Girl with a Pearl Earring', to give a visual description of K-Fashion; that it is like a form of art.

I thought of this keyword – a work of art. When I think of K-Fashion, it feels sophisticated and a bit elegant. There is a simple arrangement of colors, and even for the accessories, a simple pair of pearl earrings were

used but yet it feels luxurious. (Participant SW from China)

*I think K-Fashion is sophisticated and neat style. [...]
The kind of style that can give you a very sophisticated
image. (Participant BY from China)*

For a lot of foreigners, K-Fashion was associated with cuteness and youthfulness. Not to mention the K-Pop idol girl groups of course, but no matter what their gender is, some kind of cuteness feelings are incorporated in the styles, as stated by some participants. An example of this was Shinee, as mentioned by a participant; even though Shinee is a male idol group, their style has always highlighted their cuteness and femininity that goes beyond the gender line, with colorful dresses and tight-fitting clothes that accentuate their skinny figures. The desire to stay young in Korean culture may be a contributing factor to this way of styling. Oftentimes, femininity is also embraced in K-Fashion with some cuteness involved on the way.

It (K-Fashion) always has younger feelings to it - never feels like it's trying to be to like, even teens, they never try to look older, which contrasts a lot to what we do here in Portugal. We always tried to look older. We always tried to look like we're on our

twenties, even though we're like thirteen. So in contrast with that, it really embraces both a younger style and also very feminine lines, which have been really interesting. (Participant LV from Portugal)

I think one of the keywords to define Korean fashion is always cute. [...] I have no idea about BTS or like new boybands, because I was very second generation. But then, there were a lot of cute, cuteness on the way they dressed, which is something completely different from what we do in Latin America. The clothes, even for the guys, they always looked cute back then. (Participant MP from Ecuador)

When I think of K-Fashion, I think of girl-group fashion. It's kind of like a mixture of pure, innocent, sexy, and cute style that's more of like figure-hugging, which is refreshing, pure and soft. I think the entertainers who wear this kind of style a lot are Rosé, Jennie, Sun-mi, and IU. (Participant LH from China)

The participants have also stated that the unique way of mixing and matching the clothes to make the outfits look more put-together and well-coordinated is another distinctive characteristic in K-Fashion. According to them, Korean fashion style is about the good

mix-matched colors and styles in an outfit to create a harmonious and well-balanced look.

I think the colors are mixed well (in K-Fashion) compared to other fashion styles (Participant HT from Vietnam)

I think it's very harmonious; like the bold matching of things that do not feel like they will be well-matched, but since they are arranged very well considering the whole details and everything, it doesn't feel like they are incompatible or disharmonious. (Participant LH from China)

As far as I know, K-Fashion always use basic things that we have at home, but K-Fashion has a way of how to mix and match everything to make it look better and trendy. (Participant RAA from Indonesia)

(2) Double-sided and Ambiguous

Due to the socio-cultural environment and the customs peculiar to Korea, the country has obtained the double-sided and ambiguous qualities when it comes to fashion. The ways of living and moral

standards in Korea are heavily influenced by the Korean Confucianism. Under the Confucian beliefs, Korea has a long history of highly valuing a society in which group-orientation and harmony is maintained. As mentioned previously while explaining the advanced textile industry of Korea, South Korean government related the Confucianism with the attempt for the economic development since 1960s, by promoting the collective efforts and the maintenance of the kinship among the factory workers (Kim & Park, 2003). Korea was able to build a strong economy based on the “collectivist norms and authoritarian forms of organization and management (Kim & Park, 2003, p. 38)” and those virtues are still appreciated within the society.

This cultural background has affected the way of dress for Koreans as well. There is a part of K-Fashion where conservatism and collectivism exist, and there is also a side based on the individualism among the younger generations, which form the double-sided and ambiguous nature of K-Fashion. Also, it can be said that the ambiguity comes from the fact that the perception of K-Fashion is formed through personal experience and one’s cultural backgrounds, rather than there is a fixed idea or fashion style that stays unchanged permanently in K-Fashion.

<Table 10> Category 2: Double-sided & Ambiguous

Category	Superordinate Theme	Subordinate Theme	Units
Double-sided & Ambiguous	The 'whole-look'	Addition of accessories to complete the look	accessories; to balance the simple colors they add a lot of accessories; hair accessories in Korea are top-knotch; i've never seen silk scarves being as fashionable as in Korea

	Attitudes and personality of the wearer matter	whole look; attitude; stance; personality; all kind of melted together;
Conservative & courteous	Strict social atmosphere and restrictive dress codes	(복장에 대한) 요구가 많은; 상황에 맞는 복장; 경우에 따라 다른 복장; 등산갈 때는 등산복; 인턴에게도 요구되는 복장 규율; 모든 경우에 따라 항상 복장이 달라짐; all eyes on you; 사회의 인식; weird; get a lot of eyes; stare; 연구실 나갈때 화려하게 입으면 눈치를 주는 분위기;
	More restrictive dress codes for female	여자에 비해서 남자에 대한 복장 요구가 더 프리함; 남자 옷이 더 프리한 느낌; 여자는 정장 안에 티는 안입음; 보수적인건 여성에 대한 요구;
	Avoidance of sensuality	not revealing, not sexualizing a person; 유교사상; 노출이 거의 없는; not sexualizing a person; 배꼽티 같은것 입으면 눈치; 노출에 대한 부담 없는; 신체 노출이 심하지 않은; non form-fitting;
	Use of conservative color schemes	monochrome; black; white; grey; dark blue; navy; military color; deep green; dark green; darkish colors; 어두운; 무채색; 튀지않는; 무난한; 단색; 순색; simple colors; no changing of the colors; doesn't use a lot of warm and flashy tone; no loud colors; calm colors;
	Dressed formally	relatively formal; semi-formal; semi-casual; formal wear; wear to work or night event; 직장이나 데이트갈때 입기 좋은; 정장을 입고 출근. 한국 특유의 문화; 정장식으로 차려입고 회사감; simple but almost formal
Collectivism & group conformity	Sensitive to the latest trends	드라마에서 본 옷을 다음날 길거리나 지하철에서 볼 수 있음; fashion is everything; invest in fashion; follow trends; would see trends throughout; 유행이 되면 빨리 전파; 유행을 많이 타는 스타일; 유행을 많이 타는 편;
	Uniformity in styles to stay up to date	스타일 다 똑같아요. 다 따라해서; everyone follows the same trend; the style, it's all uniform; fashion style here is quite similar; 다들 비슷비슷하게 입음; people don't care they're wearing similar clothes; all people used the same clothes; everybody wearing the same clothes; everybody wearing the same thing
Nationality of the brand losing its significance		'한국 스타일이야' 하는 것은 해외 브랜드를 가지고 한국인 감성으로 녹아내는 그런 경우가 많음; 예를 들어 Reformation, Realization Par, Maje, Zimmerman 같은 브랜드; 해외브랜드임에도 불구하고 그 옷들은 '로제 윈피츠', '아이유 치마'등으로 불림; Excelsior (해외 스니커즈 브랜드임에도 본인이 좋아하는 K-패션 브랜드라고 답함); 솔직히 K-패션 브랜드가 어떤 브랜드인지 잘 몰라; 완전한 토종 made in Korea 인지 몰라; 외국계 브랜드들도 한국화
Globalized K-Fashion brands	Up-and-coming Korean designers and	Andersson Bell; Ader Error; Thisisneverthat; The Open Product;

	brands with foreign influence & universal designs	
	Fast fashion brands (SPA Brands) with universal designs	Top10; SPAO; 8seconds; the only brand I really know is top10, like the H&M of Korea; clothes from Zara are K-Fashion friendly;
Changes in social atmosphere	Social acceptance of the new styles that go against the tradition	unisex, genderless; both gender; can be worn by both men and women; Hongdae you see a lot of people wearing differently; youngsters in Korea wearing colors that are not monochromatic; younger generation wearing more colorful clothes; various style; hongdae; gangnam; unique style; first picture - fashion week, dongdaemun; people there they are like so bright or fashionable; People with fashionable hairstyle and dressed according to the latest trends; it's a little bit unusual; it's reflect of Korean fashion - it's about a new trend; the only place where you can actually find even Koreans wearing bright colors, those kind of places would be like Itaewon or Hongdae; 힙합; 힙 스타일; street style; 쇼미더머니; 랩쇼의 영향; 힙합 대중화; 보통 사람들도 많이 입게 돼; Unpretty Rap Star; Cheetah; Coma; Hongdae area; a lot of younger people wearing them; 스트릿우먼과이더; a bit unusual (style); unusual, unique; provocative; interesting;
	Individualistic tendencies (Koreans becoming more individualistic)	Korean are more accepting of revealing clothes such as that are showing cleavage, off-shoulder, and backless dress; allows K-Fashion to widen the diversification of their style; clothing is becoming comfier and less formal;
Influence of the cultural background of the recipient	Religious background	wearing hijab; hijab-friendly; suitable for hijabis; too revealing; can't wear K-Fashion because it's not suitable for hijabis;
	Different climates	we only have two seasons; there are four seasons in Korea; season changes; too cold; too hot;
	Perceptual differences in appropriateness of certain attire	(the Westerners prefer) skinny jeans; crop tops; accentuating certain features; curves; accentuate curvyness; show off bodyline; skin-tight; the Kardashians; show off body shape; 노출이나 몸매가 드러나는; sexy; 과감하게 표현; flashy; variety of colors; bright colors; 화려한;
Subjective experience and flexible perception	Perception formed at the early stages of Hallyu	got introduced around 2000s while watching k-drama; come from the 90th generation; the beginning of K-Fashion was way different than what it is for today's generation; i was very second generation; then there was a lot of cuteness on the way they dressed;

Changes according to current interests	if you ask me in a month and i'm watching another drama i would probably have a different answer; it's more so informed by the kind of media I've taken; whatever i see; the influencers or idols or actors whatever you have
Personal appearance	키가 큰 편; 마른 편; 체구가 작아서; 저한테 잘 맞아요; 너무 큰; I'm skinny; have curves; petit and slender; fits me well; suits me more because I have baby face;
Preference for certain styles and colors	심플한 스타일 선호해서; 깔끔한 스타일 선호해서; 심플한 색깔 선호; 심플한 스타일 선호; suit my preference;
Koreans observed from surroundings	주변사람들에게서; 주변 사람들이 어떻게 옷을 입는지; 주위에 함께 공부하는 친구들; 카카오톡에서 친구들이 올린 사진들; 친구 통해; from my Korean friends; friends in Korea; Itaewon, Hongdae, Gangnam; keep seeing trends on street; sitting in cafes; from the street more than the drama; 홍대 길거리에서 유행 관찰; 홍대쪽에 많이 가고; 홍대 길거리 패션 피플 젊은 친구들; 신촌이나 홍대 젊음의 거리; how people dress on street; you just have to go out in the street; people on the subway or walking around; you just need to go out in the street; from the street from the usual people; notice people wearing certain kind of clothes
In favor of Korean culture	into K-drama; follow a lot of k-pop idols; would like to visit Korea; learn Korean language
Perception of Korea as a fashion leading country	gamechanger; different; has its aesthetic style; elevated; influencing general trend; what's fashionable is considered as standard in Korea; trend of fashion leaning towards to Korean fashion; inspiring for other fashion style; K-Fashion inspired; Koreanized styling; 'K-Fashion' labels; they(Japanese and Chinese) also have a very a good fashion styling but still Korea is number one right now
Experience related to Korean culture	history of costume class - did presentation on hanbok; Korean cultural center; did research about Korean fashion designers and Korean clothes fabric house for a class; saw a brand at the Fashion force award at jakarta fashion week; interest in how North Korean women dress; 한국어 선생님께서 한국인 옷 스타일이 다르다고 배움; 한국 기업 참가한 상하이 패션 전시회 통역 알바; 제가 디자인 학과라서 - K fashion 을 상상하면 ddp 가 저한테 더 영향을 줘;

** Raw data is written in its original form (Korean/English)*

(2-1) Something atypical but Korean-ish

The 'whole-look'

Based on how the interviewees recognized K-Fashion, every element in an outfit matters; what makes the looks complete is not only the clothes alone but also small accessories that are incorporated to spice up the outfit, the attitudes, the stance, and the personality that are all melted together in the look. This indicates that for foreign audiences, K-Fashion is not only about the fashionable items worn by the wearer. Rather, it is also the whole appearance and the person who is wearing them, and their attitudes displayed in the outfits.

I think for me K-Fashion, I don't associate myself just with clothing but also the other things, like especially the accessories. The hair accessories in Korea are the top notch, the best that you can find - be the cross hair band the cute little scrunches, beret, silk scarves - I've never seen silk scarves being as fashionable as in Korea. (Participant KS from India)

*K-Fashion is everything that we put in our body - it's like our appearance. Make-up, and our clothing. [...]
From the clothes and then make up, hairstyling ...
(Participant RR from Indonesia)*

... Like the whole look – it's not just the incredible jacket – it's the hair, it's the makeup, it's the attitude, it's the stance, so to me that's really like K-Fashion. [...] Like sometimes when I think of Italian fashion, it's like made in Italy. [...] But to me K-Fashion is not just about a single piece – it's not like here's a jacket, that is K-Fashion – it's about a whole look and a whole kind of presentation. And because K-Fashion to me is so integrated with, you know, culture and music as well. (Participant NZ from the U.S.)

Conservative & courteous

The conservative culture of South Korea has derived from the Confucian philosophy and has been heavily rooted in the society for a long time. This cultural background that highlights an importance in being accordance with the rules and etiquettes is also reflected in the way people wear clothes as well, as it is important to dress formally or to follow certain dress codes for certain occasions. Also, the conservative characteristic derived from the Confucianism has affected how Koreans tend to avoid the use of colors and style that are eye-catching, revealing, or stand out too much.

Since Korea is heavily impacted by Confucian ideas, people don't expose their bodies too much. Also they

don't really wear things tight to their bodies.

(Participant BY from China)

The restrictive dress codes that exist in Korean society is related to the formal dress culture, especially in the workplaces. Also, the dress codes are recognized to be more conservative and stricter for female often times. An interesting fact is that the participants from China, which is also an East Asian country that Confucianism is highly valued, have identified Korea to have a very selective and strict dress code compared to China.

Usually in Korea, when people go to work, they wear suits, but in China, people don't really wear suits like this to work. I think there's this distinct culture (of dressing up formally) in Korea. [...] And I think that there is a difference between men's wear and women's wear, in that for men, the dress code is freer, I guess? For women, when they wear suits, they don't wear t-shirts underneath. But in men's cases, I've seen a lot of men only wearing black t-shirt underneath even with suits, dress shirts and outer. (Participant JY from China)

I've done a lot of interviews and did some intern jobs in Korea as well, and I've noticed that they care about

what you wear to work a lot. Like about your outfit or hair style. (Participant JW from China)

The social atmosphere to strictly follow dress codes is also found in the non-professional settings as well, as there are styles that you should wear in for specific circumstances. Even when going hiking, or going to school, there are certain types of clothes one should wear.

In Korea, there are different outfits for different occasions. [...] But in here, people would go hiking only when they are perfectly equipped with everything from hiking outfit, a hat, and that scarf you wrap around your neck. I got that feeling that you need to have a proper outfit ready for a specific occasion here in Korea (Participant JY from China)

In daily lives, people tend to dress more monochromatic, and not bold or flashy. I think that's from like those, the social perceptions. [...] For example, at work or at school – when I used to work in China, people wouldn't say anything to me even if I wear a crop top or a tank top. But here in Korea, if I wear something showy, something with a lot patterns or if I wear a crop top to the lab (at school), they would

give me the eye even though I'm only a student. Also, when I'm on a subway, sure you can see a lot of those people in Hongdae area, but usually, like when you are on a subway or something, you would notice all eyes on you. (Participant LH from China)

The stares and negative attention by the public for the fashion styles that involve bold styling or flashy colors make people avoid wearing them. Based on the participants' observation, it is easy to spy people using conservative color pallets in their outfits on the streets of Korea.

*Every time I wear something which is bright, be it red-
ish colored tone or something that is bright, you could
see all eyes on you. And you don't feel very
comfortable about it because even though they might
not be looking at the way like, oh my god what is she
wearing, it would still feel like, you know you wouldn't
take it in a good sense, like why do you stare? Because
people don't wear bright colors here. (Participant KS
from India)*

Collectivism & group conformity

In the collectivist Korean culture, group conformity is highly valued. This backs up why people are so sensitive to keep up with fashion trends and put a lot of effort in dressing up in accordance to the style favored by the most people at the moment. Thus, people tend to dress the same due to the social pressure to follow the majority, and to be sensitive to the latest fads. It is a double-sided aspect of K-Fashion that there are both desires to be inconspicuous and not to stand out among public but to stay trendy and distinguishable from others at the same time. Ironically, according to the participants, foreigners perceive K-Fashion to be uniform in style and think of it as a unique aspect in K-Fashion, which contrasts to how people from their countries embrace individuality more and try to look different.

Like I said before here in Korea the color, the style, are all uniform. When you go somewhere, you can see all the people used the same style. (Participant GH from Indonesia)

Every other person on the street was wearing the shoes - these ones, that adidas shoes. Like every other person, so when it comes, it comes in bulk. (Participant KS from India)

For Koreans, if a certain item in certain color from New Balance becomes a trend, that item will become a very sensational trend, and that trend, that uniformity, is particularly highly likely throughout the whole community. When Birkenstock is a trend, you would see a lot of people wearing them on subways. (Participant YM from China)

I feel like I would see trends like throughout [...] everyone would be wearing them, and I felt like that was something that was very unique to Korea that you don't necessarily see over here. (Participant KT from U.S.)

(2-2) Loss of nationality and national identity

Nationality of the brand losing its significance

Interesting finding from the interview was that where the brand is from does not really matter to foreign consumers when it comes to K-Fashion. According to their descriptions, when they see Hallyu stars wearing certain clothes, they do not really care if they are wearing something actually made in Korea or made by Korean designers and brands; rather, they perceive what is worn by them as K-Fashion no matter the brand's nationality. It can be said that for foreigners, brands are not substantive in K-Fashion.

I think it is a bit ironic that a lot of things Koreans wear and styled by Korean stars can be described as K-Fashion but a lot of times, they are from foreign brands. [...] For us (foreigners), 'Korean style' is a depiction of Korean fashion style but often, the brands themselves are from the overseas fashion brands that are applied and dissolved in K-Fashion in Korean-way with the Korean sensitivity. (Participant LH from China)

This is shown throughout the interviews as they describe some brands as K-Fashion brands when they are not really domestically designed or produced Korean brands. There was an interviewee who described a sneaker brand 'Excelsior', a non-Korean brand, as a favorite K-Fashion brand. She elaborated her loyalty to the brand and explained how she buy a new pair whenever she visits Korea. However, it was found not to be a Korean brand, showing the participants did not notice it was an overseas brand during the interview. This backs up the fact that consumers of K-Fashion do not really make purchase with recognition for where the products are from. Also, according to the foreign participants, it was hard to distinguish which one is an actual Korean domestic brand for them, because the border line between what is 'Korean' and what is not has been blurred due to the globalized fashion style in Korea.

Although brands, such as Reformation, Realization Par, Maje, and Zimmerman, are foreign brands, clothes from those brands are named after Korean stars, for example, like 'IU skirt' and 'Rosé dress', and they become a sensation. Even for Chinese, they are known as those names. (Participant LH from China)

I actually don't really know what K-Fashion brands are and what are not. [...] I don't know of domestic Korean brands, that are fully made in Korea. When you take a look at the foreign brands, when they launch in Korea, they become Koreanized [...] that's why I can't really tell which one is actually a K-Fashion brand. (Participant JW from China)

Globalized K-Fashion brands

It was noticeable how up-and-coming Korean designers and brands are recognized and popularized by many foreign consumers. Some of the brands they mentioned were also those brands that are following the global fashion trends and sometimes, worn by global stars. This could be attributed to the designers' globalized background, for example, of having an experience studying abroad or influenced by cultures from overseas countries. For example, Andersson Bell, which was mentioned by many participants as their favorite K-Fashion brand, is a Seoul-based brand but it is influenced

by the Scandinavian aesthetics. The brand is now on global fashion retailers including Ssense, Farfetch, and Net-A-Porter. Andersson Bell has even described its acknowledgement for the influence of various cultures on the brand's designs in the introduction of the brand on the website.

Launched in Seoul the year of 2014, the brand "Andersson Bell" began from a Creative Director, who got an inspiration from contrasting two different cultures of Korea and Scandinavian. Andersson Bell was launched by reinterpreting Scandinavian vibes to create new objects from a point of Korean's view. Andersson bell brand's each word contains its own meaning. [...] At this point, Andersson Bell likes to show its perspective and unique brand by putting contrast various cultures together and not just only set limits to the Scandinavian. (Andersson Bell, n.d.)

Another brand, Ader Error, is a brand that was preferred by some participants. Although Ader Error is a brand based in Korea, it is perceived as a contemporary and classic street wear brands that is comparable to the brands such as Acne and Vetemente. The brand's global popularity is quite huge, as the brand can be found numerous global fashion retailers such as Ssense, Hypebeast, END, Farfetch, LN-CC, and Luisaviaroma. Also, the brand the Open Product, a brand

once based in Dongdaemun markets have recently launched as an independent designer brand in 2020, was brought up as a favorite K-Fashion brand by a participant. The brand has been getting a global recognition – even the huge global celebrity and model, Kendall Jenner has worn some of their pieces. It has been favored by the international consumers as it is now on global shopping platforms such as Ssense and Hypebeast. There was also the street-wear brand, Thisisneverthat, which is sold at Ssense, Hypebeast, and END. The brand is based on the street sub-culture and skateboarding culture coming from the West, which means that the clothes from the brand are not particularly Korean style but street style that can be suitable for skateboarders and street-wear lovers worldwide.

The Open Product is worn by famous models and K-Pop idols nowadays wear their products a lot too. The brand offers trendy designs that are not too flashy, basic but with some additional trendy details.
(Participant YM from China)

What is more, many participants have brought up the fast fashion brands to as their favorite brand or place to shop for K-Fashion. The fast fashion brands mentioned were Top10, SPAO, and 8 Seconds; the reason for that being the convenience to shop, reasonable price range, and the likable designs. However, one of the characteristics of the fast fashion brands is that they aim to follow along the latest

fashion trends, which indicates their designs are not necessarily based on Korean style in particular, but they go for universally popular designs that are trending in many parts of the world.

(2-3) Non-fixed and changeable nature

Changes in social atmosphere

The globalization that has been taking place in Korea has led to the changes in the social atmosphere to accept new fashion styles that go against the traditionally accepted ways of dress for Koreans. As the younger generation of Korean people is becoming more individualistic than collectivistic, they are becoming less caring about what others think of the way they dress, thus, tend to dress more colorful, more revealing, bolder, and more unique. This was recognized by many foreigners who have experience traveling in Korea or have lived in Korea. According to their observation, the places where they found the most people wearing those new kinds of styles were places like Hongdae (Hongik University area), Itaewon (an international district located in Yongsan District, Seoul, neighboring the U.S. army base), and Gangnam (the modern district in Seoul that has a large floating population of young people). This indicates that the K-Fashion style is not so conservative and uniform anymore; with the flow of global influence coming into the country and the younger generation accepting the new cultures, the fashion styles in Korea are becoming broader and broader in the range.

Nowadays, I see that Korean are more accepting the revealing clothes such as that are showing cleavage, off- shoulder, and backless dress. (Participant NS from Indonesia)

People don't wear the bright colors here, so you kind of stand out (when you wear bright colors). But the only place where you can actually find even Koreans wearing those kinds of colors, places would be like Itaewon or Hongdae - like Hongdae you see a lot of people wear it. And then you realize, okay so they wear it too. So this is a misconception now because there are youngsters in Korea that are wearing colors which are not very monochromatic - black, white, grey. (Participant, KS from India)

The rise of hip-hop culture in the recent years has impacted the K-Fashion as well. In Korea, where the majority of people own smartphone, music streaming platforms are growing faster. In 2015, the percentage of the smartphone using population was already 83% and music streaming applications have always on the popular download list on the app stores (Bell, 2016). In addition, hip-hop reality shows such as Show me the Money, UnPretty Rapstar, and Street Women Fighter have introduced hip-hop subculture to the

general public and the youth in Korea. Although hip-hop music has always existed since the 1990s in Korea, it is only a recent phenomenon that hip-hop culture has become popular among the general audience (Bell, 2016), thus making hip-hop fashion more popular to be adopted by many young people. During the interview, many participants have mentioned about their observance of hip-hop fashion on the streets of Korea as daily wears and associated it with K-Fashion style.

I've thought of hip-hop style since before from Bigbang, but after 'Show me the Money' was broadcasted, it (hip-hop style) has become more common and ordinary people wear this fashion style in their daily lives.
(Participant LH from China)

Influence of the cultural background of the recipient

The interview results showed how K-Fashion is perceived differently according to the own cultural backgrounds of the interviewees. For interviewees who have come from the countries where majority of people are Muslim, K-Fashion was perceived differently from other participants. For example, Indonesian participants' perception regarding K-Fashion was divided into two opinions; on one side, there were those who think of K-Fashion as suitable and friendly for Hijabis to adopt, on the other side, K-

Fashion was perceived to be a bit overwhelming and revealing compared to the fashion style from their country.

Because there are majority (Koreans) do not wear closed (less revealing / modest) clothes, so sometimes I have to think twice about buying Korean fashion items that are not friendly for women in hijab. (Participant RAA from Indonesia)

If you wear a hijab, it will be either you wear a tight thing, that 'I'd really like to show my body', or very loose things. And here when I combined hijab and Korean fashion, I found a middle kind of fashion sense, where I don't really have to wear very loose clothes, but I don't have to wear very tight clothes. That's how I also describe Korean fashion - something in the middle, of like, they can wear a flowy skirt and a tight top, or they can wear like a tight skirt and a flowy and a loose sweater. So we as a Hijabi it's really helpful I guess, to learn this kind of K-Fashion to make you look nice. (Participant KB from Indonesia)

It could be infer from the fact that Indonesia, where 90 percent of the population are Muslim, is slowly becoming less strict in forcing women to wear hijabs, thus, younger generation Hijabis are becoming

more open-minded to other fashion style, though the conservative and modest clothes are more widely accepted throughout the nation. K-Fashion was described as the fashion style that is 'in the middle' of the extremes, meaning that it is not too revealing nor too overly-loose, which makes it suitable and acceptable for women wearing Hijabs to refer to when getting dressed up.

And that people really somehow make themselves look beautiful and attractive and just really flattering styles without showing much skin and that's beautiful - like I think that's really interesting and it maybe the achievement of Korea. And maybe that's why it is so famous too, in like southeast Asia and in countries with like - there are a lot of like Hijabi women right? - so it's becoming like settable worldwide trend because it's kind of carrying to those people that do not really agree with any of those of these extremes of this spectrum. And want something like in the middle.
(Participant CM from Spain)

The Indonesian participants perception of K-Fashion was different from other participants due to the unique climate condition they have in their country. Indonesia, where there are only two seasons of Rainy and Dry, has a very different climate environment from South Korea, where there are four seasons that are very

distinct. Due to this difference, Indonesian participants perceived K-Fashion to be less suitable to follow because the clothes worn by Koreans tend to be specifically suitable for each season.

When the season changes, the clothes style is also changing. It is different from my country (Indonesia) because we only have two seasons, so it did not impact much on our types of fashion. And also maybe because our country has relative high temperature and humidity so we usually wear simple clothes. (Participant SS from Indonesia)

The cultural backgrounds of the foreign participants including their religious beliefs and climate condition have very much influenced their perception of K-Fashion, but their idea of what is socially acceptable and appropriate to wear and what is not has also impacted on forming their perception of K-Fashion. The participants from countries where there are less cultural restrictions in the way one dresses, K-Fashion was perceived to be less free to be expressive as one would like. As opposed to the Muslim participants, K-Fashion was considered to be modest by the North and South American participants in particular, when compared to the way the people dress in their countries.

I think in China, people wear revealing styles more boldly, much bolder than Korea... (Participant LH from China)

In Latin America, that (dressing up in a cute way) doesn't really happen. Like people are more on the sexy side of clothing. [...] In Latin fashion, usually things are very tight. You usually wear everything to the body. And here I see that people were a lot of like oversized things, and that's very very different from what we wear. (Participant MP from Ecuador)

I feel like a lot of American style is playing up certain features you have, certain curves you have, accentuating certain features. [...]like accentuating certain features of somebody's body, so if somebody's a little bit curvy, they might have a certain, you know, gear towards certain pieces that accentuate that curviness... (Participant KT from U.S.)

Subjective experience and flexible perception

How foreign audience perceive K-Fashion is heavily influenced by their personal experience, which could be subjective than objective. Thus, their formation of idea of K-Fashion is also flexible and can change at any time in accordance with their experience. This

indicates that what they are experiencing at the moment plays quite an important role in how K-Fashion is being perceived by them.

For foreigners who have encountered Hallyu at its early stages, their first impression was still remaining and has been impacting their idea of K-Fashion. As mentioned in previously on how K-Fashion is perceived to be cute and youthful, for the participant who has first gotten to know about Korean wave through the boyband Shinee, K-Fashion is still perceived as a cute style because her first impression is still impacting the way she thinks of K-Fashion. Also, a participant from the U.S. has come up with G-Dragon as his style icon as he used to be the style icon that represent K-Fashion around the mid 2000s, stating that he is from the 'older perspective of K-Pop'. Although it has been a long time, participants were still associating K-Fashion with what they have first observed in Korean Wave.

... How people dress up, how they behave, how they act was very different than what we had back home, so I think that is when I first got myself associated with the (K-)fashion. Yes that was my first drama, how can I forget? It was a Full House. The actress was Song Hye-Kyo. (Participant KS from India)

What is currently being watched and what is on their minds were also influencing how they perceive K-Fashion. While giving her own

description of K-Fashion, a participant stated that her idea could change at any time depending on what she is currently watching.

I just finished watching kingdom so like right now, I'm all into the old Korean hats and stuffs. So when I think of K-Fashion, that's like the first thing that comes to me but if you ask me this in a month and (if) I'm watching another drama I would probably have a different answer. (Participant NZ from the U.S.)

The participants' personal appearance also mattered when it comes to their formation of perception of K-Fashion. For those who have more figures, Korean fashion style seemed less flattering, as for them, K-Fashion was perceived to be more suitable for skinnier people. However, there were also comments about how K-Fashion items tends to be too big or loose for them by those who have smaller body frames. It could be said that their perception of K-Fashion being too loose or too small depend on the personal body types and appearance. An interesting comment by a participant from was that K-Fashion suits her more than the European fashion style since she has a baby face. It could be inferred that K-Fashion could be preferred by some people from the West who are younger-looking.

So for a long time, I had no idea how to do any make-up because it all looked really weird on my face [...] here in my country rarely has anything that would suit me, so one of the reasons why I got into K-Fashion is because a lot of people in Korea, [...] kind of looked like me [...] (so it) suits my features a lot more or a little bit more. (Participant LV from Portugal)

What the participants prefer in terms of styles and colors also made a difference in the way they perceive K-Fashion. It could be due to the fact that the people recruited for the interviews were those who are already interested in K-Fashion and Korean Wave, but they showed their preference for simple and neat fashion styles, which go along with how they described K-Fashion.

I think Korean clothes have nice colors, and the materials and designs are also nice. I prefer simple style, so I don't really buy clothes from Chinese online malls. The clothes from China tend to be too-much [...] in terms of colors and the silhouettes. (Participant YY from China)

For foreigners who are living in Korea or have Korean colleagues, Koreans they observe around them were the important source of information of K-Fashion and their idea of K-Fashion was formed

from them. Many people have stated that the people they see on the streets of Korea influence how they perceive K-Fashion, as they could know what is trending at the moment and how people express themselves by giving a little twist when styling.

Probably because I live in Gangnam, sitting in cafes around here and just seeing people is probably the main source (of information about K-Fashion). (Participant MB from Australia)

As someone that is not really in touch with dramas or the K-Pop scene, I get the most information when going out. I tend to go out a lot, and the trendiest brunch places or cafés are full of very stylish people. In those places you can really see all styles, from classier, beigey and elegant, to a more westernized vibe [...] I like knowing how real people dress, and [...] people in Seoul pay a lot of attention to how they present themselves. (Participant CM from Spain)

I think I get the most influence from the people around me, and by observing how they dress since I've moved to Korea. (Participant HY from China)

Whether they are personally into and in favor of Korean culture also influenced the formation of the perception of K-Fashion. For some participants, the desire for learning Korean language or to visit Korea was because of their interest in K-Fashion. For some participants, the traditional Korean costume, Hanbok, has fascinated them and made them want to know more about K-Fashion.

I got introduced (to K-Fashion) around 2000s while watching some K-Drama and I was so fascinated. I think one of the reasons for me like even trying to do something with Korea or learning Korean language was mostly looking all those that the fashion trends and how it is done. (Participant KS from India)

I think maybe interest started from hanbok, it was just realizing that the style of Korean people and Russian people (is) different, and then (the interest moved to) about K-Fashion. (Participant M from Russia)

For some participants, Korea was now perceived as a global fashion-leading country, which was something not to imaginable just a decade ago. Thanks to the rising population of Korean wave worldwide, K-Fashion is also perceived as fashionable and leading the general fashion trend.

I feel like K-Fashion is like elevated almost, because any other type of fashion can accomplish something like this but it's never done as well. (Participant SY from the U.S.)

To describe K-Fashion, I think in one word, I would say it's a game changer. I have never seen in my entire life, any kind of fashion trend coming so strong and so fast [...] that can be attributed to K-Pop, sure, but still I'm sure it has something that make people to buy it or to adapt it. (Participant KS from India)

I think that Korean fashion is really influencing the general trend of clothing [...] for example the things that are in trend here in Korea this year would be trending overseas like next year [...] Now I go to Zara, and I feel like it's so Korean-ish, Korean fashion-friendly. (Participant CM from Spain)

Lastly, personal experience related to Korea was also influencing the perception that the participants had of K-Fashion. Thanks to the elevated global status of Korea, the interest in Korean culture has also risen, and it was reflected throughout the interviews as they describe their past experience they had back home. Whether it was learning Korean language at the Korean Cultural Center, learning

Hanbok from a class, or seeing a brand participated in the fashion week and an exhibition, the participants description of K-Fashion in relation to those other Korean culture related experience gave clue of how K-Fashion is being encountered by foreigners from various sources other than K-Pop and K-Dramas.

In Jakarta Fashion Week, they usually also held a side event before the main event started, such as an exhibition for brands from another country outside Indonesia. When I was looking around there, I saw a brand from Korea. I forgot the name of the brand, but since then I began to develop an interest and awareness in Korean fashion brands. (Participant NS from Indonesia)

I used to have a part-time job as an interpreter back in 2019 in Shanghai, and the first exhibition that I've worked at was the fashion exhibition. There were these K-Fashion brands that participated as well, so that was the first time I've become knowledgeable about K-Fashion. (Participant JW from China)

V. Conclusion

As the recent global success of the K-Drama Squid Game, the K-Pop boyband, BTS, and the K-Movie, the Parasite, indicate, there has been a significant surge in the public interest for Korean popular culture under the name of Hallyu, or Korean Wave. A question of where K-Fashion is at the moment arises from these achievements. K-Fashion has a high potential to become more global since fashion is closely related to the Hallyu stars as it is exposed constantly to foreign audiences through media such as music videos, movies, and reality TV shows. However, there has not been much scholarly attention on K-Fashion from the perspective of foreigners. This paper aims to investigate foreign perspectives of K-Fashion, by examining the recognition it is receiving from the world and the attitudes that foreigners have on K-Fashion.

K-Fashion does not only mean a kind of fashion design that reflects Korean traditions or national identity, but it also implies the fashion style that is created and consumed by Koreans as a whole. The coinage of the term K-Fashion was by the governmental effort to invigorate the Korean fashion industry and introduce Korean fashion to the whole world. Since the concept of K-Fashion targets

foreign audiences around the world, it is crucial to understand foreigners' perceptions of K-Fashion.

However, there has been no comprehensive study conducted to investigate K-Fashion thoroughly from the viewpoints of the foreigners. The past research on K-Fashion has mostly focused on examining how Korean traditions or national identity are integrated into K-Fashion, and others focused on the governmental strategies and policies implemented for the development of K-Fashion. There was a study on analyzing K-Fashion from foreign views, however, the research had a limitation in using its research scope to the foreign literature about K-Fashion. Thus, this research is meaningful as it provides new academic comprehensions and meanings of K-Fashion from the foreign public's point of view by conducting interviews. The study expects to contribute to the development of the K-Fashion industry, by suggesting approaches for entering the global market and developmental strategies.

To investigate how K-Fashion is recognized and perceived by foreigners, semi-structured group interviews were conducted with 46 foreigners from 16 different countries. The Focus group interview (FGI) method was considered to be appropriate for this research as it allows participants to share and discuss their K-Fashion-related experience in a more interesting, engaging, and casual atmosphere. To constitute the interview groups with people from diverse backgrounds, the recruitments were done both offline and online, such as on the school campus and the web pages dedicated for

interest in K-Fashion. Also, the age of the participants was restricted to the range from 19 to 34, as the research focused on investigating the perception of the younger generation who are active media users and consumers of fashion. Although it was inevitable to do interviews non-face-to-face due to the COVID-19 situation, it was better for interviewing foreigners living abroad. During the interviews, 10 semi-structured questions were asked, and the composition of the questions was categorized into three parts: information source and gathering of K-Fashion, description of their images of K-Fashion, and the consumption of K-Fashion. Under the SNU IRB approval, each interview took about an hour and a half and was video recorded with the consent of the participants. The phenomenological study was carried out, and the collected data were explicitated referring to the method proposed by Hycner(1999). For explicitation of the data, the researcher went through a process of transcribing the interviews, looking for meaning units, and grouping and categorizing all the units of meaning, while making sure that any bias was not present.

The findings of this research are as follows.

First, as a result, the foreign perception of K-Fashion could be described as the categories of dynamic and diverse, and double-sided and ambiguous. The dynamic and diverse nature of K-Fashion was explained through the three superordinate themes, including the extrinsic environmental characteristics and the intrinsic characteristics of the style. According to the interviews with the

foreign participants, K-Fashion is actively spreading through the media, such as K-Drama, K-Pop, and social media platforms. K-Fashion was recognized to have an advanced textiles and apparel industry system. The foreigners highly appreciated the professional and skillful pattern-making and quality control, the multiple shopping options offered for the consumers according to their needs, and the designers' strong attention to detail. The foreign consumers also recognized K-Fashion as global and universal thanks to the fusion of styles from many cultures and perceived the co-existence of different colors and styles in K-Fashion and the unique styling methods of mix and match.

Secondly, K-Fashion was recognized to be double-sided and ambiguous. Based on their perception, what makes up the idea of K-Fashion was the 'whole look', which involves not only the clothes and the accessories, but also the attitudes, the stance, and the personality of the person wearing them. Also, the Korean characteristics of conservatism and courteousness were identified as the traits of K-Fashion, as there are strict social atmosphere and strict dress codes applied to all, tendency to avoid sensuality, to use conservative color schemes, and to dress formally. Another aspect of Korean culture as a collectivist society was recognized in K-Fashion by foreigners. Due to the Korean mindset of group conformity, people tend to be very sensitive to the latest trends, which makes them look uniform in style since everyone tries to be up to date.

According to the foreigners' perception, nationality and national identity are lost in K-Fashion, meaning that they do not genuinely care whether their favorite stars are wearing products made in Korea or made by Korean brands; instead, they perceive the look worn by them as K-Fashion itself. Going along with the globalization in all sectors nowadays, K-Fashion brands are also perceived to be quite globalized by foreigners. The up-and-coming Korean designers and brands, plus the fast fashion brands are now representing K-Fashion for the global audience; while those brands do not necessarily design products that reflect Korean traditions and cultures, they are universal and likable for a wide range of consumers globally.

Based on the interview results, the foreign perception of K-Fashion is not fixed and changeable at any time. In contrast to the past, there have been changes in the Korean social atmosphere to be more acceptable to new cultures and to be individualistic, and these shifts are also reflected in how people dress as well. The broadened variety of styles that go against the social norm can be observed in Korea nowadays, with younger people wearing bolder and more unique styles. Also, as the younger generations are now embracing individualism more than collectivism, there are tendencies to wear whatever they desire, such as revealing clothes that the older generation tried to avoid wearing. The non-fixed and changeable nature of K-Fashion was also shown throughout the participants' description of K-Fashion in relation to their personal experience and judgment. It was revealed that one's socio-cultural background,

including the religious background, the climate in their country, and what is socially acceptable and not, mattered in the formation of their idea of K-Fashion. Also, what forms one's perception of K-Fashion was identified to be their personal experience, including when they have first encountered Korean Wave, interest at the moment, personal appearance, style and color preference, Korean people around them, appreciation and experience of Korean culture, and their perception of K-Fashion as a global fashion leader.

What noticed from the interviews, was that K-Fashion is lacking its accessibility for global consumers. Although there is a rising demand for K-Fashion brands and products as K-Fashion is slowly getting worldwide recognition, their needs are not quite satisfied yet. According to the participants, there is a lack of K-Fashion brands that are available to shop for global customers and there are critical difficulties of the complicated purchasing process that hinders them from making a purchase. Also, the narrow size range and the designs that only serve Korean consumers were acting as huge obstacles for foreigners.

Furthermore, the foreigners were not getting in touch with K-Fashion through Korean introducers only but also by non-Korean influencers. According to their explanation, K-Fashion is familiarized through foreign influencers and friends that follow Korean fashion trends in the first place, which indicates how K-Fashion is becoming more globalized as it is not limited to spread through native Koreans

and Korean media only. In addition, products labeled as K-Fashion are purchased in non-Korean online or offline shopping malls, such as YesStyle and Taobao, while acknowledging the fact that, likely, they are not Korean-made products. This also backs up the lack of shopping options for foreign consumers to get K-Fashion products and increased demands for K-Fashion items worldwide. Furthermore, it suggests the need for the Korean fashion industry to go more global and make them available to a broad range of audiences.

The implications of the discovery in this research provide a meaningful analysis of how K-Fashion is perceived by the global audience nowadays, of which Hallyu influences of K-pop, K-dramas, and movies are making history around the world. Unlike the previous research regarding K-Fashion that lacked focus on the global viewpoints on K-Fashion, this paper aimed to explain the phenomenon of K-Fashion from the perspectives of foreigners, who are the target consumers of K-Fashion. This research will help not only the Korean fashion brands and businesses that try to expand globally but also the future researchers in the related fields.

This research, however, is limited in that the composition of the interview participants was not as diverse as expected; the majority of the participants were those from China and Indonesia, while there were few participants each from the rest of the countries. However, due to the COVID-19 situation, there was a limitation in the recruitment of the participants. Also, the study tried to look at the

perception of K-Fashion among foreigners with no regard for their ethnicity or nationality, since it was revealed that the perception is formed based on their personal experience and ideas rather than where they are from. Although this study put less emphasis on the importance of one's nationality when it comes to how K-Fashion is perceived, analyzing data considering the participants' demographical aspects with more participants from different countries, may show interesting and meaningful results.

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<Appendix 1> Confirmation from Seoul National University Institutional Review Board (IRB)

심의결과 통보서

수신

연구책임자	이름: 하지수	소속: 생활과학대학 의류학과	직위: 교수
지원기관	해당없음		

과제정보

승인번호	IRB No. 2109/002-027		
연구과제명	외국인 관점에서 본 K-패션에 대한 고찰		
연구종류	면담(FGI 포함), 학위 논문 연구		
심의종류	재심의		
심의일자	2021-09-13		
심의대상	설명문 및 동의서 또는 서면동의 면제서류, 연구결과정리양식, 재심의 답변서		
심의결과	승인		
승인일자	2021-09-13	승인유효기간	2022-09-12
정기보고주기	12개월		
심의의견	1. 심의결과 제출하신 연구계획에 대해 승인합니다. 2. 연구자께서는 승인된 문서를 사용하여 연구를 진행하시기 바라며, 만일 연구진행 과정에서 계획상에 변경사항(연구자 변경, 연구내용 변경 등)이 발생할 경우 본 위원회에 변경신청을 하여 승인 받은 후 연구를 진행하여 주십시오. 3. 유효기간 내 연구가 끝났을 경우 종료 보고서를 제출하여야 하며, 승인유효기간 이후에도 연구를 계속하고자 할 경우, 2022-08-12까지 지속심의를 받도록 하여 주십시오.		
검토의견	계획서 검토의견		
	동의서 검토의견		
	기타 검토의견		

2021년 09월 13일

서울대학교 생명윤리위원회 위원장



본 위원회가 승인한 연구를 수행하는 연구자들은 다음의 사항을 준수해야 합니다.

1. 반드시 계획서에 따라 연구를 수행해야 합니다.
2. 위원회의 승인을 받은 연구참여자 동의서를 사용해야 합니다.
3. 모국어가 한국어가 아닌 연구참여자에게는 승인된 동의서를 연구참여자의 모국어로 번역하여 사용해야 하며 번역본은 인증 및 위원회의 승인을 거쳐야 합니다.
4. 연구참여자 보호를 위해 불가피한 경우를 제외하고는 연구 진행중의 변경에 대해서는 위원회의 사전 승인을 받아야 합니다. 연구참여자의 보호를 위해 취해진 응급 상황에서의 변경에 대해서는 즉각 위원회에 보고해야 합니다.
5. 위원회에서 승인 받은 계획서에 따라 등록된 연구참여자의 사망, 입원, 심각한 질병에 대하여는 위원회에 서면으로 보고해야 합니다.
6. 임상시험 또는 연구참여자의 안전에 대해 유해한 영향을 미칠 수 있는 새로운 정보는 즉각 위원회에 보고해야 합니다.
7. 위원회의 요구가 있을 때에는 연구의 진행과 관련된 사항에 관하여 위원회에 보고해야 합니다.
8. 연구참여자가 모집광고는 사용 전에 위원회로부터 승인을 받아야 합니다.
9. 강제 혹은 부당한 영향력이 없는 상태에서 충분한 설명에 근거하여 연구참여자로 부터 동의를 받아야 하며, 잠재적인 연구참여자에 대해서 연구 참여 여부를 숙려할 수 있도록 충분한 기회를 제공해야 합니다.

<Appendix 2> Recruitment for participants

연구참여자 모집 문건 [Recruitment of Participants for Academic Research]

As a master's student from the Fashion Design Lab at Seoul National University, I am looking for participants for my research on what is K-fashion from Foreign Perspectives.

연구과제명 [Research Title]
What is K-Fashion from Foreign Perspectives?

연구 책임자명 [Chief of Research]
하지수 (서울대학교 의류학과) / Jisoo Ha
(Department of Textiles, Merchandising and Fashion Design, Seoul National University)

연구 목적 [Purpose and Scope]:

본 연구는 K-패션이 외국 대중에 의해 어떻게 인식되고 있는지 분석하여 외국의 관점에서 그 용어에 대해 연구하고자 하며, K-패션을 외국인들의 시각에서 바라보고 분석하여 그 의미를 재정비한다는 데 의의가 있습니다.

본 연구는 패션 산업 분야에 있어 K-패션에 대한 의미 있고 유용한 학문적 정의와 정보를 제공하여 K-패션의 세계시장 진출에 기여하고자 하며, 향후 패션 관련 분야의 학자들과 연구자들을 위해 외국인의 관점에서 본 K-패션에 대한 연구의 토대를 마련하는데 그 목적이 있습니다.

This study aims to analyze how K-fashion is viewed by the foreign general public and provide a definition of the term from a foreign perspective. It is meaningful that the term K-fashion is redefined by analyzing K-fashion from the perspective of foreigners.

This study aims to contribute to K-fashion's enhanced competitiveness in the global market and to establish a solid foothold by providing meaningful and useful academic definitions and information about K-fashion. The purpose of this study is to lay groundwork for the study of K-fashion from the perspective of foreigners.

참여자 선정 조건 [Who's eligible to participate?]:

- 한국에 1년 이상 거주 중인 만 19-34세의 외국인
Foreigners living in Korea for more than 1 year within the age range of 19-34
- 한국 문화에 대해 관심이 있거나 친숙하며, 외국에 거주 중인 만 19-34세의 외국인
Foreigners living outside of Korea within the age range of 19-34 who are interested/familiar with Korean culture

- 집단 면접의 원활한 진행을 위해서는 한국어 또는 영어를 사용한 의사소통이 가능해야 할 것
It is required for you to be able to communicate in English or Korean for participating in the group interview.

참여 내용 [Participation contents]:

연구에 참여하는 약 60 인은 만 19-34 세의 한국에 1년 이상 거주 중인 외국인들과 외국에 거주 중이며 한국 문화에 관심있는 외국인들을 대상으로 그룹 심층 면접이 진행될 예정입니다. 인터뷰는 현재 COVID-19의 상황을 고려해 줌(Zoom)을 통해 진행될 예정입니다. 인터뷰는 4-6 명의 연구 참여자를 한 그룹에 묶어 그룹 인터뷰를 진행하려 하며, 각각 60-120 분 정도 소요될 예정입니다. 그룹 구성은 한국에 거주 중인 외국인들을 포함한 그룹, 그리고 외국에 거주 중인 외국인을 포함한 그룹으로 나누어질 예정이며, 출신 국가와 사용 가능한 언어를 고려해 그룹이 구성될 것 입니다. 그리고 참가자들은 K-패션에 대한 5 개 연구 문제에 대한 답을 위한 8 개 질문에 자유롭게 답하도록 요청 받을 것입니다.

Approximately 60 participants in the study will participate in in-depth group interviews with foreigners living in Korea for more than one year and foreigners living in other countries who are interested in Korean culture, with the age range of 19-34. The interview will be conducted via Zoom (or any other video call applications that is comfortable for you to use) considering the current COVID-19 situation. The interview will take about 60-120 minutes each, with 4-6 participants in a group. Groups are going to be divided into groups of foreigners in Korea and groups of foreigners living outside of Korea, and which country you are from and which language you are using will also be considered. Participants will be asked to answer eight questions and have a discussion freely to answer five research questions regarding K-fashion.

참여 기간 및 장소 [When & Where will participation occur?]:

- 1) When: 2021.09. : 그룹 심층 면접 진행
Focus-group interviews
- 2) Where: 줌 (코로나-19 대응 차원)
Zoom (Due to Covid-19)

참여 방법 [How to participate?]:

연구 담당자 유한빈 원생에게 아래 연락처로 문의 및 신청 바랍니다.
Please contact Han Bin Yoo, a conducting investigator of the research, to ask any questions or to participate in the research.

E-mail: hailevyoo@snu.ac.kr
Phone : 010-0000-0000

<Appendix 3> Instruction and consent forms in Korean/English

연구참여사용 설명문 (한국어본)

연구 과제명 : 외국인 관점에서 본 K-패션에 대한 고찰

연구 책임자명 : 하지수(서울대학교 의류학과, 교수)

이 연구는 K-패션에 대한 해외의 인식 분석에 대한 연구입니다. 귀하는 한국에 1년 이상 거주하고 있으며 한국 문화에 친숙한 외국인 (또는) 외국에 거주하고 있으며 한국 문화에 관심이 있는 외국인이기 때문에 이 연구에 참여하도록 권유 받았습니다. 이 연구를 수행하는 서울대학교 소속의 유한빈 연구원(01000000000, haileyoo@snu.ac.kr)이 귀하에게 이 연구에 대해 설명해 줄 것입니다. 이 연구는 자발적으로 참여 의사를 밝히신 분에 한하여 수행 될 것이며, 귀하께서는 참여 의사를 결정하기 전에 본 연구가 왜 수행되는지 그리고 연구의 내용이 무엇과 관련 있는지 이해하는 것이 중요합니다. 다음 내용을 신중히 읽어보신 후 참여 의사를 밝혀 주시길 바라며, 필요하다면 가족이나 친구들과 의논해 보십시오. 만일 어떠한 질문이 있다면 담당 연구원이 자세하게 설명해 줄 것입니다.

1. 이 연구는 왜 실시합니까?

이 연구의 목적은 K-패션을 외국인의 시각에서 분석해 K-패션의 해외 시장 진출에 기여하고, 외국인들의 K-패션에 대한 인식에 대한 연구의 토대를 마련하기 위함입니다.

2. 얼마나 많은 사람이 참여합니까?

한국에서 거주하고 있거나 외국에서 거주하고 있으며, 한국 문화에 친숙한 만 19-34세 사이의 외국인 약 60명의 사람이 참여 할 것입니다.

3. 만일 연구에 참여하면 어떤 과정이 진행됩니까?

만일 귀하가 참여의사를 밝혀 주시면 다음과 같은 과정이 진행될 것입니다.

- 1) 귀하는 줌 또는 기타 화상 통화 어플리케이션을 통한 비대면 그룹 인터뷰에 참석하도록 요청 받을 것입니다.
- 2) 인터뷰 시간과 날짜는 그룹 구성원(참여자)의 일정에 따라 정해질 것입니다.
- 3) 그룹 인터뷰는 그룹의 일정에 맞춰 정해진 시간과 날짜에 줌 또는 다른 종류의 화상 통화 어플리케이션을 통해 이루어지게 될 것입니다.
- 4) 귀하는 연구 담당자 유한빈 연구원의 주도 하에 진행되는 그룹 인터뷰에서 준비된 8 가지 질문에 답하고 그룹 구성원과 자유롭게 토론하게 될 것입니다. 인터뷰에 사용될 언어는 영어/한국어 중 구성원의 편의에 따라 결정될 것입니다.
- 5) 인터뷰 시간은 60-120분 정도 소요될 예정이며, 유연하게 조정될 수 있습니다.
- 6) 각 그룹 인터뷰는 참가자의 동의 하에 녹화됩니다.

4. 연구 참여 기간은 얼마나 됩니까?

약 60-120분의 시간이 소요될 것입니다.

5. 참여 도중 그만두어도 됩니까?

예, 귀하는 언제든지 어떠한 불이익 없이 참여 도중에 그만 둘 수 있습니다. 만일 귀하가 연구에 참여하는 것을 그만두고 싶다면 담당 연구원이나 연구 책임자에게 즉시 말씀해 주십시오. 그만두는 경우 모아진 자료는 폐기를 원하시면 즉시 폐기됩니다. 그러나 폐기를 원하지 않는다면 중도 탈락 이전 자료는 연구 자료로 사용됩니다.

6. 부작용이나 위험요소는 있습니까?

연구 담당자는 어떠한 중단이나 충돌 없이 인터뷰/토론을 이끌 수 있도록 매우 주의할 것입니다. 모든 참가자들은 다른 문화를 경시하거나 타인에게 차별적인 언급을 하지 않도록 주의하도록 요청 받을 것 입니다.

7. 이 연구에 참여시 참여자에게 이득이 있습니까?

귀하가 이 연구에 참여하는 데 있어서 직접적인 이득은 없습니다. 그러나 귀하가 제공해 주신 귀중한 자료는 K-패션을 외국인의 시각에서 더 잘 이해하는데 기여할 수 있을 것입니다.

8. 만일 이 연구에 참여하지 않는다면 불이익이 있습니까?

귀하는 본 연구에 참여하지 않을 자유가 있습니다. 또한, 귀하가 본 연구에 참여하지 않아도 귀하에게는 어떠한 불이익도 없습니다.

9. 연구에서 얻은 모든 개인 정보의 비밀은 보장됩니까?

개인정보관리책임자는 서울대학교의 연구 책임자 하지수, 연구 담당자 유한빈 (01035456232)입니다. 본 연구에서 수집되는 개인정보는 이름, 나이, 연락처, 직업, 국적, 거주 중인 국가, 사용 가능한 언어[한국어/영어]이며, 그 중 이름과 연락처는 수집 목적이 완료된 후 폐기될 것 입니다. 이러한 개인정보는 연구 책임자인 하지수와 연구 담당자 유한빈에게만 접근이 허락되며, 그룹 심층 면접의 녹화 자료는 전사를 마친 후 바로 폐기 처리 될 것 이며, 그룹 심층 면접의 전사 자료 보관 장소는 연구자가 소속한 연구실(서울대학교 222동 205호)의 개인 컴퓨터에 모든 참여자의 전사지를 취합하여 암호 잠금 처리하여 저장하는 방법으로 보관이 될 것 입니다. 동의서는 관련 법령에 따라 3년을 보관한 후 폐기할 예정이며, 연구자료의 경우는 서울대학교 연구윤리 지침에 따라 가능한 한 연구 보관할 예정입니다. 저희는 이 연구를 통해 얻은 모든 개인 정보의 비밀 보장을 위해 최선을 다 할 것입니다. 이 연구에서 얻어진 개인 정보가 학회지나 학회에 공개 될 때 귀하의 이름 및 기타 개인 정보는 사용되지 않을 것입니다. 그러나 만일 법이 요구하면 귀하의 개인 정보는 제공될 수도 있습니다. 또한 모니터 요원, 점검 요원, 생명윤리위원회는 연구참여자의 개인 정보에 대한 비밀 보장을 침해하지 않고 관련규정이 정하는 범위 안에서 본 연구의 실시 절차와 자료의 신뢰성을 검증하기 위해 연구 결과를 직접 열람할 수 있습니다. 귀하

가 본 동의서에 서명하는 것은, 이러한 사항에 대하여 사전에 알고 있었으며 이를 허용한다는 동의로 간주될 것입니다.

10. 이 연구에 참가하면 사례가 지급됩니까?

죄송합니다만 본 연구에 참가하는데 있어서 금전적 보상은 없습니다.

11. 연구에 대한 문의는 어떻게 해야 됩니까?

본 연구에 대해 질문이 있거나 연구 중간에 문제가 생길 시 다음 연구 담당자에게 연락하십시오.

이름: 유한빈 전화번호: (+82)01000000000

만일 어느 때라도 연구참여자로서 귀하의 권리에 대한 질문이 있다면 다음의 서울대학교 생명윤리위원회에 연락하십시오.

서울대학교 생명윤리위원회 (SNUIRB) 전화번호: 02-880-5153 이메일: irb@snu.ac.kr

동 의 서 (연구참여자 보관용)

연구 과제명 : 외국인 관점에서 본 K-패션에 대한 고찰

연구 책임자명 : 하지수(서울대학교 의류학과 패션디자인 연구실, 교수)

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2. 나는 위험과 이득에 관하여 들었으며 나의 질문에 만족할 만한 답변을 얻었습니다.
3. 나는 이 연구에 참여하는 것에 대하여 자발적으로 동의합니다.
4. 나는 이 연구에서 얻어진 나에 대한 정보를 현행 법률과 생명윤리위원회 규정이 허용하는 범위 내에서 연구자가 수집하고 처리하는 데 동의합니다.
5. 나는 담당 연구자나 위임 받은 대리인이 연구를 진행하거나 결과 관리를 하는 경우와 법률이 규정한 국가 기관 및 서울대학교 생명윤리위원회가 실태 조사를 하는 경우에는 비밀로 유지되는 나의 개인 신상 정보를 확인하는 것에 동의합니다.
6. 나는 언제라도 이 연구의 참여를 철회할 수 있고 이러한 결정이 나에게 어떠한 해도 되지 않을 것이라는 것을 압니다.
7. 나는 수집되는 자료가 본 연구 이외에 연구책임자 및 다른 연구자의 연구의 목적으로 사용되는 것에 동의합니다.
동의함 동의하지 않음
8. 나의 서명은 이 동의서를 받았다는 것을 뜻하며 나와 동의받는 연구원의 서명이 포함된 동의서를 보관하겠습니다.
9. 나는 연구를 수행하는 중에 (녹화)가 진행되는 것에 동의합니다.
동의함 동의하지 않음
10. 나는 나의 (나이, 직업, 국적, 거주 중인 국가, 사용 가능한 언어[한국어/영어])가 수집되는 것을 알고 있으며, 연구에 사용되는 것을 허락합니다.

동의함 동의하지 않음

_____	_____	_____
연구참여자 성명	서 명	날짜 (년/월/일)
_____	_____	_____
동의받는 연구원 성명	서 명	날짜 (년/월/일)
_____	_____	_____
연구책임자 성명	서 명	날짜 (년/월/일)

동 의 서 (연구자보관용)

연구 과제명 : 외국인 관점에서 본 K-패션에 대한 고찰

연구 책임자명 : 하지수(서울대학교 의류학과 패션디자인 연구실, 교수)

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동의함 동의하지 않음
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9. 나는 연구를 수행하는 중에 (녹화)가 진행되는 것에 동의합니다.
동의함 동의하지 않음
10. 나는 나의 (나이, 직업, 국적, 거주 중인 국가, 사용 가능한 언어[한국어/영어])가 수집되는 것을 알고 있으며, 연구에 사용되는 것을 허락합니다.
동의함 동의하지 않음

_____	_____	_____
연구참여자 성명	서 명	날짜 (년/월/일)
_____	_____	_____
동의받는 연구원 성명	서 명	날짜 (년/월/일)
_____	_____	_____
연구책임자 성명	서 명	날짜 (년/월/일)

Instruction and Consent for a Research Participant (English Ver.)

Subject of a research: What is K-Fashion from Foreign Perspectives?

Principal Investigator: Jisoo Ha (Fashion Design Lab, Department of Textiles, Merchandising and Fashion Design, Seoul National University, Professor)

This research is about analyzing the perception regarding K-fashion by foreigners. You are asked to participate in the research because you have lived in Korea for more than 1 year and are familiar with Korean culture / (or) you are a foreigner interested in Korean culture, living outside of Korea. A conducting investigator who belongs to Seoul National University, Han Bin, Yoo(+82 01000000000, haileyoo@snu.ac.kr) would explain to participants about the research. The research will be conducted only for the participants who voluntarily reveal intention of involvement and before your decision is made it is important to understand contents and purpose of the research. Read carefully and thoroughly the contents below and please let us know your intention of involvement. If necessary, ask your family members or friends. If you have any question, the investigator will explain in detail.

1. Why do you conduct this research? / What is the purpose of this research?

The purpose of this study is to analyze K-fashion from a foreigner's perspective and contribute to K-fashion's entry into the overseas market and lay the foundation for research regarding foreigners' perception of K-fashion.

2. How many people will participate in the research?

Approximately, 60 foreign (non-native Korean) people within the age range of 19-34, who are familiar with Korean culture, currently living in Korea or outside of Korea, will participate.

3. If involves, How the research will proceed?

If you show intention of your involvement, following will be proceeding.

- 1) You will be asked to attend non-face-to-face group interviews through Zoom or other video call applications.
- 2) The interview time and date will be set according to the schedule of the group members (participants).
- 3) The group interview will be conducted at a fixed time and date according to the group's schedule via Zoom or a different kind of video call application.
- 4) You will answer the eight questions prepared and discuss freely with the group members in a

group interview led by the conducting investigator, Han Bin Yoo. The language to be used in the interview will be determined by the convenience of group members between Korean or English.

5) The interview will take about 60-120 minutes and can be adjusted flexibly.

6) Each group interview will be recorded with the consent of the participants.

4. How long is the participating duration?

: About 60-120 minutes will be taken

5. Is it possible to stop participating while preceding the research?

Yes, whenever you want, you can stop participating while preceding the research not having any disadvantage. If you want to stop, please tell the investigator promptly. If you quit, the collected data will be discarded immediately if you want. However, if you do not want to dispose of it, the data collected before the dropout will be used as research materials.

6. Any side effect or risk for the research participation?

The investigator will take great care to lead the interview/discussion without any disrupt or conflict. All participants will be asked to be careful not to look down on other cultures or mention something that may discriminate against others.

7. Any advantage for the research participation?

You do not have any directly connected advantage. However, the information you provide will contribute to a better understanding K-fashion from foreign perspectives.

8. Any disadvantage for the research participation?

You are free to participate in the research. Also, if you don't participate, there will be no disadvantage.

9. Is any information gathered during the participation would be secured?

Chief Privacy Officer in Seoul National University is Jisoo Ha, the principal investigator of Fashion Design Lab at Seoul National University and Han Bin Yoo, the researcher of Fashion Design Lab at Seoul National University(+82 01035456232, haileyoo@snu.ac.kr). The personal information collected in this study is the name, age, contact information, occupation,

nationality, and country of residence, and among them, name and contact information will be discarded right after the collection purpose is completed. This personal information will only be accessible to (Jisoo Ha, the professor of Fashion Design Lab at Seoul National University and Han Bin Yoo, the researcher of Fashion Design Lab at Seoul National University), and the video recordings of the group's in-depth interview will be discarded right after the videos are transcribed, and the transcription data will be stored in the personal computer located in the researcher's laboratory (222-205, Seoul National University) by locking and storing collected transcripts of all participants. The consent form will be kept and discarded after 3 years in accordance with the relevant laws and regulations, and the research data will be kept permanently as much as possible in accordance with Seoul National University's research ethics guidelines. We try our best securing and protecting all personal information gathered while processing this research. When the research is reported to academy or academy journal your name and other personal information will not be presented. Also, monitors, inspectors and Institutional Review board are allowed to access directly to research result for inspecting reliability of the research materials and process within the limit of its regulation, not violating participant's personal information security. Your agreement will be regarded as your acknowledgement of all the information related to the research in advance and agreement of all matters.

10. The cost will get paid for the participation?

Sorry, we do not have any actual expense for the participants.

11. How can I ask about the research?

If you have any question related to the research, or if there is any problem related to the research, please contact the investigator below.

Name: Han Bin Yoo

Contact: +82 0100000000 / haileyoo@snu.ac.kr

Any question related to your right as a research participant, please contact Seoul National University Institutional Review Board below.

Seoul National University Institutional Review Board (SNUIRB) Contact: 02-880-5153

E-mail: irb@snu.ac.kr

Consent form(for Participant)

1. I read the instruction above thoroughly, and discuss with the member in charge about the issue.
2. I learn about the risk and advantage related to the research participation and I get content answer for my inquiry.
3. I agree voluntarily participating in the research.
4. I agree of collection and processing any personal information gathered during the research within the bounds of existing legislation and regulation of Institutional Review Board.
5. I agree to accessing personal information which kept secured in the case of managing and processing a result of research by principal investigator or agent and in the case of fact-finding by SNU Institutional Review Board, University authority or sanitation authority.
6. I understand that I withdraw the participation of the research whenever I want and this case, any risk will not be posed.
7. I agree that the data collected is used for the research by the principal investigator and other researchers in addition to this study.
8. My agreements mean that I receive the copy of consent form and I promise to keep the copy 'til the end of the research.
9. I agree that the group interview I participate will be (video recorded).
10. I understand that my (age, occupation, nationality, country of residence, and language ability [Korean/English]) is collected and agree the information to be used in the research.

_____	_____	_____
Name of Participant	Signature	Date (year/month/day)
_____	_____	_____
Name of Investigator (consent received)	Signature	Date (year/month/day)
_____	_____	_____
Name of Principal Investigator	Signature	Date (year/month/day)

Consent form(for Researcher)

1. I read the instruction above thoroughly, and discuss with the member in charge about the issue.
2. I learn about the risk and advantage related to the research participation and I get content answer for my inquiry.
3. I agree voluntarily participating in the research.
4. I agree of collection and processing any personal information gathered during the research within the bounds of existing legislation and regulation of Institutional Review Board.
5. I agree to accessing personal information which kept secured in the case of managing and processing a result of research by principal investigator or agent and in the case of fact-finding by SNU Institutional Review Board, University authority or sanitation authority.
6. I understand that I withdraw the participation of the research whenever I want and this case, any risk will not be posed.
7. I agree that the data collected is used for the research by the principal investigator and other researchers in addition to this study.
8. My agreements mean that I receive the copy of consent form and I promise to keep the copy 'til the end of the research.
9. I agree that the group interview I participate will be (video recorded).
10. I understand that my (age, occupation, nationality, country of residence, and language ability [Korean/English]) is collected and agree the information to be used in the research.

_____	_____	_____
Name of Participant	Signature	Date (year/month/day)
_____	_____	_____
Name of Investigator (consent received)	Signature	Date (year/month/day)
_____	_____	_____
Name of Principal Investigator	Signature	Date (year/month/day)

국문 초록

외국인의 관점에서 본 K-패션에 대한 고찰

꾸준히 매니아 층 사이에서 두터운 팬 층을 이끌어 온 한류는 오늘날 K-팝을 대표하는 ‘방탄소년단’, 최근 선풍적 인기를 끈 드라마 ‘오징어 게임’, 비 영어권 영화로는 최초로 아카데미 시상식에서 수상한 ‘기생충’ 등의 성공에 힘을 얻어 아시아를 넘어 세계로 뻗어나가고 있다. 이러한 한국 문화에 대한 외국인들의 관심은 한류 스타들이 매체에서 착용하는 의상 뿐 아니라 한국인들이 평소 입는 복식 스타일에 대한 관심으로도 이어지고 있으며, 이는 K-패션이라는 문화적 현상에 대한 높아진 관심으로 나타나고 있다. 이런 현상에 따라 한류의 일부인 K-패션이 외국인들에게 어떻게 인식되고 있는지 연구할 필요가 있다. 따라서 본 연구의 목적은 외국인들이 K-패션을 어떻게 인식하고 있는지를 다양한 측면으로 알아보는데 있다.

본 연구를 수행하기 위해서 온오프라인상에서 다양한 방식으로 모집한 외국인 46 명을 대상으로 반 구조화된 집단 면접 방법을 사용하였다. 참가자들의 국적과 구사 가능한 언어를 중심으로 한 팀당 5 명 이내로 구성된 13 개의 팀으로 나누어 집단 면접을 진행하였다. 참여자들의 집단 면접 참여 여부를 수집 시에 간단한 문화적 배경과 한류에 대한 관심도 등의 정보를 얻었고, 이를 고려해 참여자들을 13 개의 그룹으로 나누었다. 코로나 상황 및 외국에 거주하고 있는 외국인 참가자들의 상황을 고려하여 모든 화상 면접은 Zoom 프로그램을 이용해 비 대면으로 진행하였고, 자료 분석을 위해 사전 동의 하에 모든 내용을 녹화하였다. 집단 면접은 K-패션에 대한 경험과

관련된 10 개 질문으로 구성하여 이루어졌으며, 면접 시간으로는 한 집단 당 약 1 시간 30 분 정도가 소요되었다.

본 연구의 결과 분석을 위해 질적 연구 방법 중 하나인 현상학적 연구 방법을 활용하였다. 현상학적 연구란 개인의 경험을 통해 현상을 분석하는 연구 방법으로, 본 연구의 탐구 주제인 K-패션에 대한 외국인의 인식 또한 그들의 경험을 토대로 형성된다는 특징이 있어 적합한 연구 방법으로 판단하였다. 구체적 방법으로는 녹화된 모든 면접 내용을 전사하여 원 자료를 반복해 읽으며 의미 단위(meaning unit)를 묶고, 이를 하위 범주(subordinate theme), 상위 범주(superordinate theme), 그리고 분류(category)로 범주화 해 나가는 단계를 거쳤다.

본 연구의 결과는 다음과 같다.

분석 결과, K-패션에 대한 외국인의 인식은 '역동적이고 다양함'과 '양면적이고 모호함'의 두 가지 분류로 나타났다. 첫째, K-패션의 '역동적이고 다양한' 특성은 외부 환경적 특성과 내재적 스타일의 특성으로 구성된 상위 범주들을 기반으로 설명할 수 있었다. 인터뷰에서도 출된 결과에 따르면, K-패션은 K-팝, K-드라마, 소셜 미디어 등의 미디어를 통해 외국인들에게 알려지고 있으며, 그들의 인식 형성에 있어 한국의 발전된 섬유 의류 산업도 영향을 미치고 있는 것으로 나타났다. 또한, 외국인들은 K-패션에는 다양한 색상과 스타일이 공존하고 있는 것으로 인식하고 있다는 사실을 발견하였다.

두 번째 분류는 K-패션의 '양면적이고 모호한' 특성에 대한 것으로, 이는 불확실성으로 인해 명확하게 정의할 수 없고 모호하게 인식 되고 있는 K-패션의 특성을 반영한다. 참가자들에 따르면, 외국인들에게 K-패션을 인지하는데 있어 중요한 것은 옷 자체 뿐 아닌 입은 이의 성격과

태도 등이 모두 반영된 '전체적인 모습'이었다. 또한 한국 사회의 보수적이며 예의를 차리는 습성, 집단주의와 동질성을 중요시하는 특성은 한국인들의 옷차림에서도 잘 드러나고 있는 것으로 인식되었다. 세계화로 인한 국가적 정체성의 상실 역시 K-패션에서 나타나고 있었는데, 이는 외국인들이 K-패션을 인식하는 방식에 있어 브랜드의 국적은 더이상 중요하지 않다는 사실로서 드러났다. 그리고 이는 K-패션 브랜드들이 세계적 흐름에 발 맞춰 세계화되어가고 있다는 점에서도 발견할 수 있었다. 또한 외국인들의 K-패션에 대한 인식은 고정되지 않고 언제든지 변할 수 있다는 특성이 드러났다. 외국인들은 한국의 사회적 분위기가 국제화에 발맞춰 계속해 변화해 나가고 있다는 점, 그리고 한국의 젊은 세대들을 중심으로 개인주의 성향이 점차 짙어지고 있다는 점을 인지하고 있었으며, 한국의 복식 문화 내에서 전통성을 탈피한 새롭고 다양한 스타일의 수용이 이루어지고 있다고 인지하고 있음을 알 수 있었다. 또한, 면접을 통해 K-Fashion 에 대한 외국인들의 인식 형성에는 수용자의 문화적 배경과 개인적 경험과 기호가 반영된다는 점이 밝혀졌다.

이 외에도 면접을 통해 외국인이 K-패션 상품을 구매할 수 있는 경로가 부족한 실정임을 알 수 있었다. 또한, 복잡하고 어려운 구매 절차는 외국인들의 K-패션 상품에 대한 소비를 막는 방해 요소로서 작용한다는 사실이 드러났다. 이는 높아지고 있는 K-패션에 대한 국제적 수요에 발 맞추어, 현 시점에서 한국 의류 산업이 앞으로 더욱 세계 시장 진출에 박차를 가하는 것이 매우 중요하다는 점을 시사한다. 또한 외국인들이 K-패션을 접하는 경로는 더 이상 한국인을 통한 것으로 국한되지 않는 것으로 나타났다. 다시 말해, 현 시점에서 K-

패션은 전통적으로 전파 경로로서 작용했던 한국 미디어 콘텐츠 뿐 아니라 외국인에 의해 다른 외국인에게 전파되고 있다. 그리고 높아진 K-패션 제품에 대한 해외 소비자들의 수요에 따라, 해외 판매처를 중심으로 ‘K-패션’ 상표가 남용되고 있다는 사실이 드러났다. 이렇게 판매되고 있는 상품들은 정식 한국 제품 여부에 대한 불확실성에도 불구하고 쉬운 접근성 덕분에 많은 해외 소비자들에 의해 소비되고 있는 것으로 나타났다. 이는 한국의 패션 시장의 보다 발 빠른 해외 진출과 해외 시장 선점이 중요하다는 점을 시사하는 대목이다.

본 연구는 외국인의 관점에서 K-패션을 바라보고, 그들에 의해 인지되고 있는 K-패션에 대한 폭넓고 제고된 이해에 기여하는 것을 목적으로 하였다. 세계적으로 한국 문화의 인기가 높아짐에 따라 K-패션 산업이 더 세계로 뻗어나갈 수 있는 가능성이 높아진 시점에서, K-패션이 외국인들에 의해 어떻게 인식되고 있는지에 대한 연구의 필요성이 높아졌다고 볼 수 있다.

본 연구는 K-패션이라는 용어를 정의하기 보다는 넓은 의미에서 K-패션에 대한 외국인의 인식을 알아보는데 초점을 맞추고 있다. 본 연구의 제한점으로는 모집된 면접 대상자의 다양성 부족을 들 수 있다. 따라서 향후 연구에서는 다양한 국가와 배경을 가진 외국인 참여자들을 연구 대상으로 포함하여 인구학적 특성에 따른 분석까지 수행한다면 본 연구에서는 나타나지 않은 풍부하고 흥미로운 결과를 도출할 수 있을 것으로 기대한다.

키워드 : K-패션, 한국 패션, 한류, 한국 문화, 해외 인식

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