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The Hallyu Wave and tourism in South Korea

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1. Abstract.

The Hallyu or Korean Wave is South Korea's powerful tool to attract revenue and tourists. This study aims for the understanding of the relationship between popular culture and tourism: how it has increased the number of visitors and how it has affected the destination image. Due to the vast range of popular culture, the study focuses on entertainment, especially, on music, film, and television. The results must showcase wherever or not the Hallyu Wave is a positive form of promotion. Firstly, the Hallyu Wave will be contextualised and the impacts it has had on South Korea's economy and tourism will be presented. Furthermore, to study the relationship previously stated, a SWOT analysis will be conducted. The results portray South Korea's strong foundation for tourism development and Hallyu's power to attract demand. However, it must solve on-going issues through further governmental support and involvement. Moreover, further globalisation and the appearance of new travel trends are bound to increase Hallyu tourism.

2. Introduction.

South Korea has managed to position among what is commonly known as the “Four Asian Tigers” alongside Hong Kong, Singapore, and Taiwan. Its success has been achieved due to its rapid economic growth and leading technology, home of huge companies such as Samsung and Hyundai. However, they are also becoming leaders in the cultural industry. South Korea’s former presidents Chun Doo Hwan (1980-1988) and Kim Dae Jung (1998-2003) played notable roles involving the government to shape a country that supports and invests in the cultural industry. Those politics have been closely followed by subsequent presidents (Šarmanová, 2015, pp. 87-106). Nowadays, South Korean popular culture is being exported worldwide and has achieved a remarkable relevance as well as being an important source of income. This rising popularity of Korean culture is also addressed as the Hallyu or Korean Wave. It serves as a promotional image of the country and, therefore, has been notably increasing the number of tourists either interested in or visiting the country following rising curiosity for its culture. President Moon Jae In addressed its relevance several times, including in his 2020 New Year’s speech: “We will further promote the Korean Wave – K-pop, K-dramas, K-beauty, K-content and K-food – and usher in an era of 20 million foreign tourists visiting Korea” (President Moon Jae In, 2020 New Year’s Address). Furthermore, the President included Hallyu in the keywords for 2020 (Lee, 2020).

In the tourism industry, there is plenty of destinations that have succeeded as film or music destinations, meaning that there are already existing and successful forms of the kind of tourism South Korea could develop. For instance, Liverpool suffered a huge increase in visitor arrivals following The Beatles’ success which has maintained in the subsequent years. In general, countries such as the U.K., the U.S.A., or Cuba, are powerful examples of music tourism destinations. When it comes to film tourism, countries like New Zealand and Scotland have become relevant thanks to The Lord of the Rings and Harry Potter, respectively. Lastly, Croatia and, again, Scotland became some of the most relevant destinations for small screen tourism following the success of “Game of Thrones” and “Outlander”, respectively. Those examples of success showcase all possibilities presented to South Korea, being a high-exporting country of those three forms of entertainment and, therefore, able to offer high amounts of cultural tourism.

2.1. Literature review and definitions.

The concept of soft power was first used by Joseph Nye in *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power* (1990) and later developed in *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (2004). According to Nye, “soft power rests on the ability to shape the preferences of others” and is an “attractive power” that relies on “institutions, values, culture, and policies” (Nye, 2004, pp. 17-19). He then defines culture as “the set of values and practices that create meaning for a society” and added that “when a country’s culture includes universal values and its policies promote values and interests that others share, it increases the probability of obtaining its desired outcomes because of the relationships of attraction and duty that it creates” (Nye, 2004, p. 21). Moreover, soft power can

be closely related to creative economies, defined as “one in which businesses promote creativity, knowledge convergence, and advanced scientific technology based on coordinated learning in order to create new markets and new jobs” (Sung, 2015, p. 89). Therefore, South Korea’s successful cultural soft power, named Hallyu or Korean Wave, is being used to raise their creative revenue and incoming tourism.

Cultural tourism is defined as “a cultural meaning-making process in tourism, including interpreting cultural significance and values in tourism production and consumption” (Su and Cai, 2019, pp. 291-302). Cultural tourism owns several sub-categories, however, due to the matter of study, the focus will be on film and music tourism. Film tourism is defined as “the phenomenon of people travelling to locations or sites because of their association with a movie or TV series” (Kim and Reijnders, 2018, p.1). Therefore, music tourism can be defined as the same phenomenon but associated with music. The Hallyu Wave and its effects on tourism have become a relevant matter of study conducted by plenty of authors such as Bae (2017), Kim and Nam (2016), and Kim et al. (2009).

2.2. Objectives and methodology.

The main objective of this study is to understand the close relationship between South Korea’s Hallyu Wave, and tourism. To do so, a SWOT analysis will be conducted to evaluate the actual and future situation of tourism and popular culture in South Korea. SWOT stands for Strengths and Weaknesses (environmental analysis), and Opportunities and Threats (organisational analysis). Its main purpose is to analyse internal and external factors for strategic planning and marketing, among others. According to Ghazinoory, it “can be regarded as the most important reference in this field” despite its limitations (2011, pp. 24-48). To avoid possible flaws related to SWOT methodology, empirical research has been introduced to support certain statements.

In tourism, the analysis is mostly applied to “assess tourism potentials in a particular geographic area”. Moreover, tourism is the third area of study with most publications using SWOT (7.4%), only after agriculture, and health/healthcare (Ghazinoory, 2011, pp. 24-48).

The study is aimed to understand if popular culture can be a positive and sustainable form of tourism promotion or not, as well as how much of an impact it has on destination image. Popular culture involves a wide range of sub-categories. However, the study is mostly focused on the entertainment industry and, particularly, music, film, and television.

3. Hallyu Wave.

3.1. Contextualisation.

The Korean Wave or Hallyu Wave first spread through Asia from 1993 to 2007. In China, TV dramas "*Jealousy*" (1993) and "*What is Love All About?*" (1997) gained an extensive audience and recognition that would kick-start the wave. However, it wasn't until 2002 when K-Pop also had its breakthrough. Boy group H.O.T debuted in 1996 under SM Entertainment and became the first-ever "idol" group, a model that would be closely followed by future groups. They were the first group to perform in China, in 2002, an event that caused the Chinese press to talk about "Hallyu" for the first time. Quickly after, South Korea's culture started to spread in other Asian countries including Japan, Hong Kong and Thailand (Kim, et al., 2009, pp. 314-315). K-Pop would reach its breakthrough in Asia due to success from artists such as Shinhwa (1998), BoA (2000), TVXQ (2003) and Super Junior (2005).

In non-Asian countries, K-Pop started to be notable following different groups including Big Bang (2006), Girls Generation (2007), Wonder Girls (2007), SHINee (2008) and EXO (2012). However, it wasn't until July 2012 when it took the world by storm. PSY's "*Gangnam Style*" managed to become the first-ever video on YouTube to account for a billion views and still maintains its powerful position being the 5th most streamed music video of all time (Kwordb.net). Without a doubt, PSY's success paved the way for other Korean artists to benefit from the power of YouTube, digitalisation and social media as well as globalisation. This is commonly known as the Hallyu Wave 2.0.

BTS (2013), under Big Hit Entertainment, has strongly positioned as the main player for the new Hallyu Wave. The group's popularity has spread widely thanks to the internet, taking the position for the most-watched music video for their single "*Boy With Luv*" in the first 24 hours with 75 million views (Guinness World Records) as well as winning Billboard's Music Award for Top Social Artist for 3 years on a row (2017, 2018 and 2019).

However, not only the music industry has benefited from the "new wave". The Korean big and small screen has also found its gold: streaming websites. Nowadays, Netflix offers an extensive number of Korean TV series and films, fully subbed in different languages, making them available for a wide audience. Moreover, Netflix is not only showcasing series originally from Korean broadcasting channels. They are creating their own such as "*My First First Love*" (2019) and "*Love Alarm*" (2019).

Korean film could also be close to its peak following the worldwide success of "*Parasite*" (2019). Bong Joon-ho's film became the most awarded at the 92nd Academy Awards with 4 awards. Doing so, "*Parasite*" became the first-ever non-English language film to win the Best Picture award. Furthermore, the film also managed to win the Palm d'Or at the 2019 Cannes Film Festival as well as other awards. South Korea's President Moon Jae In (since 2017) wrote about the film's success on his Twitter account, referring to it as a "historical achievement" and promised to further support the film industry for greater accomplishments.

3.2. Impacts on the economy and the tourism industry.

Recently, the Korea University professor Pyun Ju Hyun conducted a research study about BTS' World Tour "*LOVE YOURSELF: SPEAK YOURSELF*", which concluded in Seoul in October 2019 at *Seoul Olympic Stadium*. All three concert dates were fully sold out, with 129.268 attendants (per show) and a total gross sale of US\$12.109.026 (Billboard). According to professor Pyun, the three shows accounted for US\$286 million of direct economic impact and US\$511 million of indirect economic impact, which sums up to almost US\$796 million. Moreover, the event drew around 187.000 tourists, increasing the average number of visitors in South Korea in 2019 (87.000 more tourists than average). Professor Pyun praised the concert's relevance by implying that "this sort of high-quality cultural content can attract foreign tourists in numbers comparable to the Olympics, and potentially open a new form of service export." (Soompi).

In 2018, South Korea's GDP recorded a value of US\$1,619,423.70 million, becoming the 12th largest economy in the world and the 5th largest economy in Asia. GDP growth amounted to 2.7%, rating higher than the average for OECD member countries, which measured up to 2.3% (World Bank). While numbers might be misleading, researchers consider South Korea to be "the world's greatest economic success", going from a per capita income similar to Africa (1960) to join the OECD (1996) in a relatively short period (Kriekhaus, 2017, pp. 43-69).

Since 2001, South Korea's cultural contents exports have risen by over 40% annually, amounting to US\$ 5273.32 million in 2014 (Bae, et al., 2017, p. 22). While largely attributed to visual media and music, other players such as video games have contributed to such an increase. K-Pop is a great example of creation music revenue with its creative album packaging and merchandise, often referred to as music memorabilia, worth collecting by followers of the genre.

In 2019, South Korea accounted for a total of 17,502,623 visitors, a 14% increase compared to 2018, and a tourism expenditure of US\$28,855,400,000. East Asia and the Pacific countries still make up for 83.1% of the tourists visiting South Korea, with 34.4% of those being Chinese visitors (KTO).

The following graphic represents South Korea's tourist arrivals from 1997 to 2019:



Table 1: South Korea tourist arrivals 1997-2019. (Korea Tourism Organization).

South Korea’s tourism has been remarkably growing, strongly benefited by the Hallyu Wave and the rising interest it has brought to the country and its culture. As stated by Huh Chan Guk and Jie Wu, “the Korean tourism industry is viewed as a key beneficiary of Hallyu” (Huh and Wu, 2017, pp. 1388-404). Hallyu tourists not only visit the country but they also participate in activities such as attending concerts or enrolling in a Korean language course. A relevant survey conducted in 2004 by the Korea Tourism Organization (KTO) about tourists’ influences that led them to visit the country, to which 47% of the respondents agreed to be influenced by Korean drama. Moreover, it is important to point out the fact that the number of Japanese tourists increased by 35.5% following “*Winter Sonata*” success (Bae, et al., 2017, p. 22).

Tourist arrivals peaked both in 2016 and 2019 and, although other variables must be considered, K-Pop might be the reason behind those peaks. In 2015, Korean music started to be recognised worldwide, some of the most successful songs of the genre being released that year: *I Need You* and *Dope* by BTS, *If You Do* by GOT7, *Bad* by Infinite, *Call Me Baby* by EXO and *Lion Heart* by Girls Generation. 2015 stands as one of the most notable ones in K-Pop and, consequently, may have boosted South Korea’s tourism in 2016. K-Pop would suffer its biggest worldwide expansion in the following years, becoming the 7th most listened music genre in the world in 2019 (IFPI). Despite this, not enough research has been conducted to determine the exact number of tourists that decided to visit South Korea due to the Hallyu wave.

Hallyu artists and celebrities are often showed as the promotional image of the country to attract more tourists. For instance, the KTO has been using this strategy for the past years, including relevant acts in its promotional advertisements and naming them ambassadors for tourism in South Korea. Examples are Im Yoon Ah from Girls Generation (2019), EXO (2018), Lee Jong Suk (2017) and Song Joong Ki (2016). Ever since 2017, the Seoul Tourism

Organization has included BTS in their promotional activities, making them the main image of Seoul. The boy group has appeared in all the commercial spots ever since and has also become the main image for promotion at international tourism fairs such as Fitur in Madrid (2020).

Tourism promotion is also conducted through international music festivals, which aim to bring Korean artists and culture to other countries. The biggest example being KCON, held yearly since 2012 in different countries around the world: the United States of America, Japan, Thailand, United Arab Emirates, France, Mexico, and Australia. The festival's purpose is not only to showcase popular artists' performances but to expand South Korea's culture. To do so, expositions, panels, and workshops are conducted through the event. Programs range from traditional Korean food to K-Beauty, while workshops offer an educational approach to the country's culture and Hallyu. Based on KCON's website, the festival has been attended by more than 150.000 people, offering performances of more than 200 artists and over 200 programs. The KTO joined SEMMEL Concerts Entertainment in 2019 to create the Finger Heart Festival or the Korea Culture & Tourism Festival in the SAP Arena (Mannheim, Germany). Along the lines of KCON, the festival included both performances as well as seminars. Both the KTO and the Korean Cultural Center held their stands along private enterprises who had partnered with the festival (Asiana Airlines, Holiday Planners, KoreaTravelEasy, etc.).

SM Entertainment, home to some of the most successful Korean artists, is a great example of mixing tourism and K-Pop. In 2015, the company opened SMTOWN at COEX Artium in Seoul, under the slogan "theme park in the city" and referring to it as "A unique space for entertainment that no one has experienced before" (smentertainment.com). The building has now become a must-see for tourists visiting Seoul. SMTOWN consists of differentiated spaces that visitors can enjoy, including a store, a museum, a cafeteria, and a theatre. Different events are conducted at the park, such as screenings of recorded tour concerts or fan sign events.

Moreover, some places in Seoul have become notably popular due to K-Pop's success, becoming a must-see place for visitors interested in music. District Gangnam quickly became one of the most popular ones in Seoul, especially after the "*Gangnam Style*" boom. Nowadays, it has attracted tourists all over the world for various reasons, as well as becoming the economic centre of Seoul. It has also become the preferred location for entertainment companies, as one can find almost all the popular labels: SM Entertainment, JYP Entertainment, Big Hit Entertainment, FNC Entertainment, Pledis Entertainment, Cube Entertainment, and many more. Another relevant location at Gangnam is the K-Star Road, a path decorated by sculptures of relevant K-Pop groups. Visitors can walk around and find their favourite artist sculpture as well as taking a picture with it. Nowadays, it accounts for a total of 17 sculptures including ones of INFINITE, 2PM, EXO, BTS, Girls Generation, and FT Island.

Hongdae is largely known for its music culture and artistic background. Street performers covering famous K-Pop songs are a usual thing to see when walking around the location. These performances are often conducted by amateur artists,

however, professional artists such as soloist Hyolyn and band The Rose have performed as well to promote their music. A major example is the 5-member boy group A.C.E, known for their busking or street performances. Under small label Beat Interactive, the group has tried to self-promote through free street performances for years and has continued to do so even after their debut in 2017. At Hongdae, one can also spot headquarters for YG Entertainment, home for extremely successful musical acts such as Big Bang and Blackpink. YG Entertainment makes up the last of the “Big Three”, the major music labels, alongside SM Entertainment and JYP Entertainment.

SM Entertainment has furthered its steps towards joining K-Pop with tourism creating their own travel company, SMTOWN Travel. Opening in 2011, it aims to bring fans from around the world to events related to artists under the company. The offer consists of package vacations that include events and/or concert tickets as well as accommodation, transport, and other additional services. According to the company’s website,

S.M.Global Package is a personalized tour experience provided for international KPOP fans, which includes attending an artist’s concert and sightseeing. The tour package is provided for both domestic and international concerts of artists from S.M.Entertainment. Since the inception of S.M.Global Package in 2012, more than 20,000 overseas fans annually have visited Korea from over 30 countries throughout the world. (smtowntravel.com)

K-Drama has also contributed to the rising popularity of certain locations. Dae Jang Geum Park, located in Yogin, is a set created for recording series and films, as well as commercials. It was build based on the traditional Korean architecture of the Three Kingdoms of Korea, the Goryeo Dynasty and the Joseon Dynasty. It is currently the main stage for historical dramas of MBC (Munhwa Broadcasting Corporation) such as *Jewel in the Palace* (2003), *The Great Queen Seondeok* (2009), *Moon Embracing the Sun* (2012) and *The Crowned Clown* (2019). The park can be visited throughout the year and aims to “become the biggest Korean wave theme park and a culture experience centre where visitors can fully enjoy a trip to the past” (djgpark.imbc.com). Another relevant location is Nami Island, which became a popular destination following the success of KBS’ *Winter Sonata* (2002), considered one of the main drama boosters of the Hallyu Wave. Visitors can visit the drama’s filming location and the statue of the main characters, as well as enjoying the island’s overflowing nature and culture.

4. SWOT Analysis.

The following table outlines the main points that will be later developed in the SWOT analysis:

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stable and powerful economy • Technological leader • Smart cities and high technological advancements • Safety and low crime rates • Rich traditional and modern culture • Government's support to the Hallyu Wave 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Western countries as culture leaders • China's anti-Hallyu movement • Relationship with North Korea • Extreme competitiveness • Accommodation industry issue of "love motels"
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Globalisation and digitalisation • Korean artists' image and high involvement with social issues • Long-term plans for the development of Hallyu tourism • Monitorisation of Hallyu tourism • Better relationships with high-consuming countries of Hallyu 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lawsuits against entertainment companies • Mental health and suicide • Lack of LGBTQ+ rights and representation • Burning Sun scandal • Rising countries in the entertainment industry • COVID-19 pandemic outbreak

Table 2: SWOT analysis summary.

4.1. Strengths.

As stated previously, South Korea's economy has managed to position itself as the 12th greatest in the world, growing steadily throughout the years. From 1981 to 2019, economic growth percentages have turned out positive, except for 1998, showing the country's economic stability (International Monetary Fund). South Korea is also considered a leading economy in the technological field, being home for Samsung Electronics and LG Electronics. Certainly, economically powerful countries are bound to provide high-quality tourism and attract tourists of high income, increasing their tourism revenue in response.

As a technological market leader, some areas of South Korea and, distinctively, Seoul have turned into smart cities. Seoul has set its own goals to be achieved by 2022, which include: reduction of traffic accidents and fine dust, implementation of solar panels, support for start-ups and raise of innovation funds. Moreover, high technology advancements such as AI (artificial intelligence) are being used to improve transport connectivity and traffic speed. Seoul is also aiming for free and public Wi-Fi in all public areas, as well as being a pioneer in the usage of 5G (SmartCitiesWorld, 2020). These kinds of improvements suppose a great advantage for tourism development for various reasons. Firstly, good transport connectivity is key for tourism, since it allows tourists to safely and quickly commute around Seoul. And, additionally, makes it

easier for tourists to visit other cities near Seoul, spreading the flow of travellers to more areas. Secondly, newer generations of travellers value highly connectivity and being able to use public Wi-Fi systems that will allow them to use applications to get around easier, such as translators and maps. Furthermore, newer generations also seem to form a better image of environmentally friendly cities. Lastly, the government's support of start-ups boosts the creation of tourism supply. Young entrepreneurs, particularly, could represent a high developer of Hallyu tourism supply, for instance, creating Hallyu themed cafes, accommodations or tours.

The country's overall safety and low crime rates stand as a strong advantage for South Korea and tourism in the country. Not only it is relevant for residents but also to develop as a solid tourism destination. The following table showcases crime and safety rates of the 5 countries with the most tourist arrivals (UNWTO) in comparison to those in South Korea:

	Country	Crime Index	Safety Index
1	France	47.68 (moderate)	52.32 (moderate)
2	Spain	32.23 (low)	67.77 (high)
3	USA	47.64 (moderate)	52.36 (moderate)
4	China	31.99 (low)	68.01 (high)
5	Italy	44.51 (moderate)	55.49 (moderate)
	South Korea	27.61 (low)	72.39 (high)

Table 3: Crime and safety indices. (Numbeo).

South Korea's percentages are notably better than the other listed countries, which makes it a preferred destination for tourists that position safety high in their priority list when choosing a destination.

Furthermore, South Korea has a powerful culture that can strongly appeal to tourists. As mentioned before, they are Asia's biggest cultural export as well as a pioneering country in technology, meaning it is a strong pull factor for tourists interested in those aspects. However, its traditional culture can also be valued highly as a tourism attraction, and it is strongly benefited when connected to modern culture. For instance, followers of K-drama, and especially historical drama, will feel drawn to South Korea's architecture and older infrastructures. They will aim to visit places remarkably similar to those watched on the screen such as Gyeongbokgung Palace in Seoul. Tourists may also enrol in activities such as dressing with a Hanbok (Korean traditional clothing) during their tours. It does not only empower the feeling of being part of a historical drama, as traditionally-dressed visitors can visit certain palaces for free. Traditional culture has also been showcased in K-Pop, for example in "IDOL" by BTS, "LIT" by ONEUS and "Arario" by ToppDogg. This is extremely relevant to export its traditional culture alongside its modern, making followers not only interested in Korean culture as a source of entertainment but giving a reason to want to visit the country and immerse in the culture they have been presented.

South Korean entertainment has also boosted interest in the Korean language. For instance, the Asian streaming website Rakuten Viki introduced learning programs that can be used while watching films and series. Recently, BTS has

also launched “*Learn Korean with BTS*”, teaching the language with videos of the group. These efforts have resulted in many universities and schools offering courses of the language, raising the percentage of educational tourism. According to Big Hit Entertainment’s statement,

With the recent popularity of K-pop and other Korean cultural contents, the demand for learning Korean is increasing greatly. We are planning Korean education contents to improve our accessibility. We hope that through learning Korean, global fans will be able to deeply empathize with the music of artists and enjoy a wide range of contents. (Big Hit Entertainment, Forbes)

Nevertheless, to study South Korea’s cultural success, it must be considered the efforts and support provided by the Korean Government. Despite the extensive recognition that Hallyu increases inbound tourism drastically, it wasn’t until 2011 when the government started to create clearer development plans. The MCST (Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism) focused on the development of four areas to increase Hallyu tourism supply:

- The *Hallyu Star Street*, to be located in Chungmuro, a relevant location for Korean film.
- A K-Pop concert hall or arena able to hold 18.000 attendees and an additional 2.000 in a second venue, aiming for the increase of international attendants.
- The *Hallyu Complex Centre* alongside KOCCA (Korean Cultural Content Agency) which is supposed to act as the centre for the investigation of the Hallyu Wave and its international development.
- The *Hallyu Experience Facilities* catered to provide cultural activities including fan meetings, drama filming, and the Korean language and culture courses.

(Kim and Nam, 2016, pp. 524-40).

4.2. Weaknesses.

Despite globalisation, Western countries are still considered culture leaders. Societies have grown up to their country’s culture along with a strong media influence of either American or British culture. Nowadays, listening to music or watching films in the English language is an extremely common act. However, South Korea, as well as other Eastern and Latin countries, find difficulties exporting their culture as they are often met with reluctance and feelings of inferiority from Western societies.

South Korea’s relationship with China is extremely relevant, being the country that invests the most in its exports and the main outbound tourism market. While cultural similarities had brought them together in the past, differences started to surge due to K-Pop male artists and their “unacceptable” appearance. Consequently, anti-Hallyu movements started to emerge in 2005. Statements supported the historically-rooted hierarchy of South Korea as an inferior country that should not surpass Chinese or Western culture. Since 2007, the anti-Hallyu movement expanded greatly and developed into an anti-Korean radicalised

attitude. For instance, the movement led to the collection of signatures to boycott Korean drama and to Chinese students' attacks to Korean organisations during the Beijing Olympic Games. The movement quickly spread through the internet causing defamation of K-Pop groups which would lead to the Anti-Korean Holy Wars from 2008 to 2010. These consisted of online attacks conducted on Korean websites, ranging from K-Pop group forums to the government's website (Chen, 2017, pp. 374-90).

In 2018, both North Korea and South Korea agreed to formally end their conflicts that had lasted for 65 years and caused the Korean War between 1950 and 1953. Unstable political relationships lead South Korea to the implementation of compulsory military service since 1957. Nowadays, male citizens, whose ages range from 18 to 28, are required to perform their military duties for a duration of 2 years. When applied to media and its key to promoting the country, this may have some drawbacks. Compulsory military service has significantly shortened the period for K-Pop boy groups to become successful and, even then, many suffer a huge decrease in followers during their serving years, finding it difficult to maintain in the industry after. Like musicians, actors suffer a stop on their career, however, they seem to be able to go back as usual with no difficulties. This may be due to the lack of loyalty and excessive music supply, making it easy for fans to switch from one group to another or even to other genres, especially during inactive periods. Hence, military service forces a pause on the promotional efforts made through media, even if just for 2 years, and may not exhibit the same results after.

Competitiveness is not only an issue with other countries but a problem within South Korea. Residents are often led to stressful situations to become successful in whatever area they are pursuing, a side-effect of their Confucian traditions. For instance, academic performance seems to be one of the main reasons behind youth suicide (Park, et al., 2014, pp. 102-09). Competitiveness is a core of Korean media, especially K-Pop, considered by many to be extremely manufactured due to the procedures followed. Entertainment companies recruit artists at a young age, starting a "training period" that could range from one month to ten years. These are often criticised for being highly demanding, with over 12 training hours plus compulsory school attendance. Furthermore, being a trainee does not even guarantee the possibility of debut and, even then, many find it difficult to succeed in such a competitive market. For example, over 60 K-Pop groups debuted in 2019, reassuring the common beliefs of it being a manufactured industry that lacks individuality.

Finally, South Korea's accommodation industry suffers a major drawback due to motels. While motels do not generally have an appealing image, many visitors on a budget might see it as an option to travel without spending a large amount of money on accommodation. However, a concerning number of motels in South Korea may turn out to be "love motels", accommodations created especially for sexual encounters that can be rented on an hourly basis. "Love motels" are a widespread issue mostly in Asian countries, such as Japan and Thailand, being a key factor in the number of sex tourists visiting and highly damaging the image of the country as a tourist destination. In South Korea, many owners of said kind of accommodation have tried to pursue a somewhat better image by creating very

discrete and private buildings, with modern interior design. Nevertheless, in 2019, the National Police Agency issued a demand for illegal recording in 30 motels, located in 10 different cities. According to the statement, approximately 1.600 users had been illegally filmed. Recordings were streamed live in an online site that had over 4.000 subscribers, creating a profit of US\$ 6.000. Unfortunately, cases concerning hidden cameras in South Korea have been an issue since 2011, found not only in motels but also in public toilets and even private properties. Following the spread of spycams, many women have been protesting for further government involvement, fighting for the obvious need for a solution (CNN).

4.3. Opportunities.

Without a doubt, South Korea's biggest opportunity to promote its cultural media is globalisation and digitalisation. Moreover, Asian countries are on a steady rise to become economic, technological, social and cultural leaders that could quickly overtake Western leaders such as the United States of America. The best example that showcases the worldwide spread and rising relevance of South Korean media is BTS. Their success appears to have improved K-Pop's image, raised the global recognition of Korean artists and furthered interest in Korean culture. Seemingly breaking all kinds of cultural barriers, they have managed to become the third top artist by album sales in the USA (Buzz Angle) and their release "*MAP OF THE SOUL: PERSONA*" ranked third for most sold albums in 2019 with 2.5 million units sold globally (IFPI). along with the other achievements previously mentioned. Recently, member V (Kim Taehyun) released "*Sweet Night*" as part of "*Itaewon Class*" OST. The song became the second most to top charts, achieving a number one in 86 countries, only after "Gangnam Style" by PSY. Moreover, it was the first time a Korean OST achieved that position in the U.S. and U.K. charts, proving once more how international Korean drama and music have become.

Lack of musical and lyrical content, a common statement against K-Pop, seems to not be a reasonable critique of the genre anymore. BTS, along with other Korean artists, have proved wrong with self-produced music, a strong sense of individuality and lyrics about social injustices, mental health issues, and youth empowerment. While many believe Korean artists are "manufactured", others praise them for their high involvement with social issues and monetary donations, as well as their clean image and good manners. In 2017, BTS launched a joined campaign with UNICEF called "*LOVE MYSELF*" to promote the "*#ENDViolence*" campaign. Funds raised from both the group and the fans were destined to "protect and support child and teen victims of domestic and school violence as well as sexual assault around the world" (love-myself.org). The campaign led the group to deliver a speech at the United Nations in 2018, becoming the first K-Pop group to do so. Following the Sewol Ferry sinking in 2014, one of South Korea's worst disasters, many artists used their music to commemorate the victims. For example, "*Yellow Ocean*" performed on "*Tribe of Hip Hop 2*" by Cheetah and Jang Sung Hwan. Recently, most Korean artists have donated high amounts of money to aid the spread of COVID-19 as well as showing support for the government's petitions regarding the "Nth Room" case of sexual exploitation (Soompi).

To create better infrastructures for Hallyu tourism, South Korea's government could further their investments and focus on long-term plans, instead of short-term plans, as they are the key to create a structured and controlled Hallyu tourism supply and revenue (Kim and Nam, 2016, pp. 524-40). They should also aim for public-private collaboration since corporations such as SM Entertainment that have reiterated their interests in branching into the tourism market.

Furthermore, even if the South Korean government and university professors have often talked about the importance of Hallyu in their tourism, it is still hard to find data that supports the statement. The Government must start to monitor Hallyu tourism to improve knowledge and data. Consequently, they would be able to study the variables that influence their demand as well as how to increase it. With a clear understanding of Hallyu tourism, further steps could be taken for its development as a major tourism force.

Lastly, South Korea could aim to form better relationships with high-consuming countries of Hallyu. A priority would be to make Hallyu exports accessible, for instance, K-Pop albums are not easy to find unless in a specified shop. Further promotion through events, such as K-CON, should be more regular and conducted in more countries. This applies especially in Europe, where the demand for Korean exports and interest in Korean culture is high yet little to no events are scheduled. As an example, K-CON has only been held in Europe once (Paris, 2016) while it is held yearly in North America and Japan.

4.4. Threats.

As mentioned before, extreme practices inside the K-Pop industry are common and have developed into many artists filing lawsuits against their own companies. Debuting in 2012, B.A.P became a promising group that took over the industry worldwide, achieving some of the best growth percentages of album sales. However, in 2014, the group filed a lawsuit against their company, TS Entertainment. The lawsuit reported:

- Unfair contract terms.
- The contract's official starting date did not correspond with the signing date and summed up to more than 7 years.
- The contract does not follow what is stated by the Fair Trade Commission.
- Contract clauses against civil rights.
- Unfair distribution of profits and false accounting.
- Physical and mental exhaustion.
- Forced discharge from hospitals against medical requests.
- Threats against the members and their families.

In 2015, both parties reached an agreement and B.A.P went back to TS Entertainment, resuming their activities later that year. However, in 2016, it was stated that the leader of the group Bang Yongguk would be taking a hiatus due to anxiety disorders. Subsequently, B.A.P disbanded and left the company following the termination of their contracts in 2018 and 2019. Some members have talked about the mental health issues they suffered during those years,

mentioning both anxiety and depression. B.A.P's lawsuit led the South Korean government to revise several contracts and became a reference in the industry. Even if the group lacked success after the legal battle, it is still considered by many a group that could have achieved great international success.

The following list contains some examples of lawsuits filed by other K-Pop artists:

Artist/group	Year	Label	Reason
Kris, Luhan, and Tao (EXO)	2014, 2015	SM Entertainment	Lack of freedom, strict contract policies, unfair treatment of Chinese members and lack of health care provided by the company
Alice (Hello Venus)	2018	A Entertainment	Forced revealing clothing, forced +19 entertainment activities, lack of training and unpaid salaries
Lee Seok Cheol and Lee Seung Hyun (The East Light)	2019	Media Line Entertainment	Child physical and verbal abuse, and unpaid salaries
Wooyeop and Taeseon (TRCNG)	2019	TS Entertainment	Child abuse and violence, lack of promotion and management

Table 4: List of lawsuits filed by K-Pop artists.

Indisputably, mental health is a concerning problem in South Korea, being the second-highest suicide rate among the OECD countries after Lithuania (OECD Data). It is not uncommon for artists to go on a hiatus due to anxiety or depression, or even decide to commit suicide. Only in 2019, Jeon Mi Seon (actress), Sulli (actress and former member of f(x)), Goo Hara (actress and former member of KARA) and Cha In Ha (actor and member of Surprise U) decided to commit suicide. The South Korean government has been constantly trying to work on the issue, which has reportedly proved efficient, as they managed to decrease its suicide rate to 24.6 in 2017 (OECD Data). However, the issue has created a bad image of their entertainment industry, as a lot of people believe it is the outcome of their excessive practices. This image could also lead to a high percentage of people seeing South Korea as a not desirable country to visit and/or would feel uncomfortable visiting places such as Mapo Bridge (Seoul), which has registered a high amount of suicides.

Another threat that concerns both the entertainment industry and South Korea as a tourism destination is the lack of LGBTQ+ rights. In a country where same-sex marriage is still illegal and many still hold onto conservative mindsets, some may struggle to find their sexual identity and feel the need to repress it. It could also appear as a drawback for attracting LGBTQ+ tourists, wanting to feel safe and welcomed during their travels. Nevertheless, it must be considered that South Korea is a growing country, not only economically, but also socially. Mindsets from generation to generation vary widely and small yet definite changes have already been achieved. In 2018, K-Pop singer Holland debuted, becoming the

first openly gay idol in the industry. During the past years, he has challenged the industry with inclusive lyrics and same-sex couple scenes in music videos, even if that has brought him rejection from both entertainment and broadcasting companies as well as the general public. Equally, Korean drama has also started to portray more LGBTQ+ characters. JTBC's *"Itaewon Class"* (2020) may not have been the first K-drama to include a transgender character, however, it showcases the struggles and the bravery required to accept the gender they identify with, along with the importance of love and acceptance (Forbes). It first aired in early 2020, achieving ratings of over 14%, becoming the drama with the highest rating for private broadcasting (Soompi).

Nevertheless, the worst controversy to date may be the Burning Sun scandal. Seungri, member of boy group Big Bang, involved in leading different business, one of them being the nightclub "Burning Sun". In early 2019, numerous accusations against the club started to surge following altercations between a male attendant and the guards, after he tried to stop a sexual assault conducted inside the club. Successive accusations not only related to sexual assault but involved sex trafficking, secret and non-consensual filming and video distribution of sexual acts, drug trade, police corruption, and tax evasion. The case incriminated Seungri as well as Jung Joon Young, singer and television celebrity, and Choi Jong Hoon, a former member of F.T. Island. Lee Jong Hyun and Yong Jun Hyung, former members of CNBLUE and Highlight respectively, were also incriminated with minor charges (Billboard). The Burning Sun scandal led to a huge investigation and re-opened sex crime cases related to the entertainment industry. It included the case of actress Jang Ja Yeon, who had committed suicide leaving a note implying she was forced to perform sexual acts with over 30 men (Campbell and Kim, 2019, p. 62-67). The case might be the result of a men-dominated South Korea, and its deeply-rooted misogyny, along with an extremely criticised and corrupted police system and entertainment industry. And, once again, boosts its image of being an unsafe country for female residents and travellers.

Besides South Korea, other countries are trying to promote themselves in the entertainment industry, possibly becoming direct competitors. Examples of rising countries in entertainment are Turkey, Taiwan, and China. While the music industry may not have succeeded as much yet, it is easy to find series produced by those countries either in television broadcasting or streaming websites.

Finally, the outbreak of COVID-19 must be considered. Declared a pandemic, it cannot be applied only to South Korea and is likely to affect all worldwide economies and tourism industries. Nevertheless, according to Jeff Benjamin, releases of major K-Pop artists accounted for 9 in March 2020 while they accounted for 43 in March 2019. It also forced many artists, such as BTS or Seventeen, to delay or cancel tours and/or events. Currently, music shows are being held with no audience. Moreover, recording of dramas *"I'll Go To You When The Weather Is Nice"* and *"Hi Bye, Mama"* had to be delayed to prevent the spread of the virus (Soompi). While it may be too soon to tell how much it will affect South Korea's tourism in the long run, we can see a slowdown in both the entertainment and the tourism industry, as well as a general economic downfall.

5. Conclusions and results.

Firstly, through the SWOT analysis conducted, it is clear that South Korea owns a stable foundation to develop a high-quality tourism industry as well as being a safe economic leader. Moreover, its distinct language and culture, either traditional or modern, ties in together into a consistent tourism destination. Strong government support and recognition to the Hallyu Wave is a key element that proves its power and relevance, and likeliness of Hallyu tourism being further developed yearly. Nevertheless, the need for long-term plans is plausible and must be considered.

A common issue found in the study of weaknesses and threats is illegal and non-consensual filming that is often related to sexual harassment cases. This concern is found both in motels and in the “Burning Sun” scandal. It appears as a huge drawback for South Korea’s safe image and might prevent female tourists from visiting. Also, legal actions must be introduced into the entertainment industry due to the recurrent issues arising from artists’ mistreatments which, not only goes against basic human rights, it also feeds the controversial image of the industry, especially in K-Pop. Government involvement is requested to find a solution and prevent it from happening in the future.

Additionally, South Korea should work on its relationship with high-consuming countries of Hallyu exports as well as those bringing the most inbound tourists and tourism revenue. For instance, a stable relationship is needed with China, as they are the main country visiting South Korea. Closer relationships with Europe are also needed to improve European flows of inbound tourism.

The image that the Hallyu Wave creates and the effects it has on South Korea as a destination is bound to subjective interpretation and personal preferences as most forms of entertainment are. It is also strongly related to globalisation and, therefore, benefiting from the fact that newer generations seem to be more open-minded and accepting of different cultures. Moreover, those newer generations seem to be more interested in themed travels and cultural experiences which is likely to increase film or music tourists, for instance.

In conclusion, the keys to the further development and long-run success of Hallyu tourism are globalisation, new travel trends, governmental involvement, and monitorisation, as well as the continuous rise of Hallyu exports and tourism supply.

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