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COSMETIC TOURISM: MAKEUP, SKINCARE AND THE KOREAN TREND

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Abstract

The trend in Asian cosmetics has become one of the most influential touristic matters in some of the eastern countries of Asia, such as South Korea, Japan, Thailand, and Taiwan. Some western countries are becoming more interested in skincare knowledge, plastic surgeries, and Asian makeup trends, which has led to a massive increase in tourism matters in those countries, specially and due to the popularization and huge influence of K-pop artists in South Korea.

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1. Introduction

The world of cosmetics (in which is included both skincare and makeup) became popular during the 90s with the commercialization of luxury products for the skin, which made an important pathway for Korean cosmetics to expand to neighbor countries as the case in Japan, which lead to the well-known "*hallyu*", the rise of the export of the Korean market. Investment, marketing, and the implantation of new technologies in the world of cosmetics were key to the development of those well-known low-cost companies in Asian eastern countries, which has become more influential in the last decade in the United States and Europe.

It wasn't until the boom of the k-dramas (Korean soap shows) and the K-pop (Korean music) what led to a great development of the Korean cosmetics market in the late 2010s.

Nowadays, k-beauty is a widely known term that refers to the skincare and makeup born in Korea that has been used since the early 2000s by countries like Japan, Thailand, China, and Taiwan and is now expanding to the rest of the world, following the trend of natural beauty and healthy-looking skin.

1.1. Election of the topic

The importance given to the skincare is a completely new concept for the west, although it is not for me.

Heavy makeup application, which can translate to the need to hide our skin and its imperfections and not enhancing it, is becoming less popular since natural beauty is the focus on society during these days as we can see in social media as TikTok and Instagram.

Knowledge on cosmetics, applications, and appreciation of one's skin are new concepts for us, the western people, who have grown in the world of makeup that followed the Kardashian model, which I would describe as full coverage makeup designed to soothe out the skin texture, the power of using contouring to enhance cheekbones and face structure and dark eyebrows to be the focus on the face.

With these in mind, it's compulsory to say that makeup in occidental countries is not viewed as something bad or out of trend. Makeup is a way of art in our own skin, shared in social media as it is. The main reason to choose this topic was, indeed, my love for makeup. It is my favorite form of expression, in which I feel most comfortable, and, although it is an ephemeral art, it just helps to reinforce my creativity and improve my skills from learning while practicing with my own skin.

I have been interested in the world of beauty since I was an early teenager and new concepts always fill my desire to learn. Cosmetics are always in constant

evolution, adapting to new technologies, trends, cultures, and personal needs. It is an abstract art, subjective for everyone, and every brand that enters in the world of beauty must be aware of that. Neither everyone enjoys the trend on k-beauty and its “glass skin” nor the occidental meaning of cosmetics or the makeup expression of African tribes. I personally love all branches of cosmetics as I have learnt to appreciate those art forms.

One of my biggest dreams since I started to become interested in the world of makeup and cosmetics have been to create my own makeup brand. Following the example of one of my favorite Spanish influencers in the YouTube era, Álvaro Krusé, who is the creator and founder of one of my most-liked makeup companies, Krash Kosmetics, a genderless and cruelty-free brand, I wish one day I can also say that I have created my own makeup company.

With that being said and now knowing which have been my motivations to start on this project, I will now focus on the Asian cosmetic concept, and I will try and expose the reason why this is not just a casual trend and how it has had an influence in the 21st Century’s world.

1.2. Objectives

The objective of my Final Degree Project is to learn about the Korean benchmarks, explore on startups and trends that are relevant to the study on entrepreneurship in cosmetics, and how this concept of k-beauty has had a social and economic impact in the world with the popularization of the cosmetic tourism in eastern Asian countries.

1.3. Structure

The first thing I want to focus on is the term of cosmetics. Knowing its definition and how this expression of beauty has had an impact in society in the different civilizations during history, can make us understand why cosmetics are one of the most important and influential markets, especially due to its impact in social media. It will be explained in detail the importance of Asian cosmetics and its globalization and how the cosmetics in the Western society are competing with it.

The next point to be discussed will be the entrepreneurship in cosmetics. New brands, terms and methods are being affected and created due to the great impact of social media, which is nowadays the most important means for trendsetters and, consequently, a key for demand. One of the focuses on this issue will be the relationship between society and cosmetics, regardless of cultures or its history, which will be an introduction point for the economic value of Korean cosmetic companies.

Following the main topic in my Final Degree Project, cosmetic tourism, a relatively new concept that has its origins in Eastern-Asian countries, as Thailand, Japan and, of course, South Korea.

To carry on a case study, I have contacted one of my best friends, Laura Rebasa, who is taking a Chinese course in Taiwan this year 2022, to prove the importance of cosmetics in Asian countries. I asked her to make a few questions to her Taiwanese friends related to the concept of beauty and their relationship with Korean cosmetics brands, but also their opinions on cosmetics in general, in which I have included plastic surgery, skincare and makeup.

The next point I have developed is makeup. It is one of the most important matters in the cosmetics market and my personal favorite, so I wanted to include research on makeup brands and products that have had an impact this decade and its influence on social media and society.

The last topic before my conclusions on my project is forecast view of cosmetics in my future career. As mentioned in the point 1.1., I have always been attracted to the idea of creating my own makeup brand, so I wanted to explain how I would like this company to be, how it would affect my actual career and the impact in society I want to create with my own brand.

1.4. Methodology

To carry out this project, I have done a study on the relevant Asian markets focusing on the cosmetic entrepreneurship that has had an impact on the western markets in the past years. I have made bibliographic research of reports on the library of the Universitat de les Illes Balears as well as the analysis of trends, the relationship between people and cosmetics, and the economic value of the different relevant companies in articles and some brand's websites.

On the other hand, I have made a qualitative analysis of the Asian concept of beauty and the relevance of cosmetics in Taiwan, which has consisted of the field work carried out by my friend Laura Rebasa who is living in the mentioned country with the objective of determine the differences in the thought of beauty and cosmetics in Asia opposed to the concept we have in Europe.

2. Cosmetics

2.1. Definition

The definition that the Oxford English Dictionary gives to cosmetics is "having power to adorn, embellish or beautify", which refers to the superficial complexion of the skin.

Every product used for enhancing the appearance of people, from cleansers, hydrating creams and makeup to shampoos, deodorants, or tanning lotions, is considered a cosmetic product.

2.2. History of cosmetics

The use of cosmetics is not a modern concept. It has been discovered that the Neanderthal man used natural paints in their own bodies, probably to camouflage

themselves during the hunt of animal. Another version on the usage of makeup or body paint is the one that can be related to the Disney movie "Brother bear" (Schroeder, 2013), in which three prehistoric siblings were given a totem of one animal, which is related to the believe that Neanderthal men used to choose or be given one spirit animal that was painted with natural products as charcoal directly into their skin to provide themselves the powers that the chosen animal was known for having. Some of them, according to the Disney movie (2003), were the eagle for its leadership, the bear for the love and the wolf for the knowledge.

However, the concept that we have today of cosmetics, especially in makeup and according to González and Bravo (2017), started in the Ancient Egypt, where people used to line their eyes and waterlines with kohl, a rich and pigmented product made with natural ingredients that is still used nowadays, in the pencil form of an eyeliner. They were also known for being one of the first civilizations to get rid of body hair with natural-made creams and razors, to prevent insects as lice and nits to get into their hair and cause infections. Egyptians were known for being one of the first civilizations to take real care on hygiene. They used to bathe everyday with cleansing creams made of animal oils (Chaudhri and Jain, 2009) and used perfumed oils to get rid from bad odors as well as for preventing dryness caused by the hot temperatures.

Another makeup product that Egyptians used was the henna, a semi-permanent tint that is still used, mainly in the Indian and the Arabic culture. The main use of henna in Ancient Egypt was for tattooing their fingers for aesthetics and for dyeing the hair, as the plant from where it is extracted was a natural tint that had short-term tattooing skills. Henna was also used for rejuvenating the nails and hair in the mummification process (Gallo, 2014). The most documented and famous case on the usage of this cosmetic was the one of Ramses III, who had his hair dyed during his mummification to keep it blonde after death.

The most influential person in terms of beauty and cosmetics was Cleopatra, who was admired by her milk baths to maintain her youth and her makeup application of kohl eyeliner and clay blush to enhance her natural beauty.

The skills in cosmetics that the Ancient Egyptians were famous for spread all over the continent, and some important civilizations in Western Asia and Southern of Europe as the Hebrews and the Babylonians adopted and traded their cosmetics.

The only documented cases of cosmetics in Eastern Asia during the Ancient ages were the usage of fragrances by the Chinese high-class. They also used to paint their nails with natural ingredients as beeswax mixed with clay or gum Arabic for aesthetics, in which the colors that were used to stain the fingernails were a representation of social classes.

The etymology of the word "cosmetology" comes from the Greek, as they were one of the civilizations that adopted some usages of the Egyptians regarding cosmetics. Greeks used to use plant-based cosmetics and, sometimes, animal-

based ingredients as pork fat or crocodile droppings (Stewart, 2017) to keep their skin youthful and healthy-looking. The beauty standard for women in the Ancient Greece was to have pale skin and rosy cheeks to appear innocent and young, opposed to the male population, who only used cosmetics for hygiene purposes and oils to keep their hair being glossy and healthy-looking.

The greatest expansion of the usage of cosmetics came with the Romans, which cared for their hygiene and enhanced natural beauty with makeup products, which were needed to have a pale skin, hard to get due to the sun exposure of the Mediterranean. Makeup took an important role in the Roman society, especially among women, who started to put on makeup products by the age of fourteen (Stewart, 2017), when they started to look for a husband. Eye makeup was needed to accentuate and enlarge the eyes, as their beauty model was established on the god Venus, with her pale skin and big, almond shaped and dark eyes. As an inheritance from the Ancient Egypt, women used kohl to paint their lashes and eyebrows and make them look darker and longer to appear more beautiful.

Hygiene and skincare started being famous during the time of the Roman Empire. Roman baths were used by both men and women as they cared for the health of the skin and oils were used to hydrate and as cleansers. One of the main characteristics in the concept of beauty in the Empire was the need of appearing youthful. Anti-wrinkle creams made with swan's fat started to become the main skincare product for women and its commercialization had a massive impact on society, mainly on the elite society, and the prostitutes, who also has an important role in the use of cosmetics and makeup.

Due to the expansion of Christianity and the need of appearing sober and not ostentatious, cosmetics stopped its development, and the use of makeup was condemned.

During the Middle Ages the rise of the important religions as Islam and Christianity, cosmetics did not have any impact on society and they had a basic and exclusive use for hygiene, until Renaissance, when people started to give again an importance to appearance and beauty. The main representation of the trend on cosmetics during those ages was the Queen Elizabeth I of England, with her high forehead achieved by removing permanently with acid her hairline, her pale white skin and her rose or red cheeks and lips (Stewart, 2017).

Trends in cosmetics had a visible change with the raise of the French society and its concept of beauty. Marie Antoinette was the main reference during the 18th Century and her beauty routines became popular among the high-class of France and in some other European countries. Her milk and strawberry baths were known as a new and more extravagant view on Cleopatra's hygiene routine (Hunt, Fate & Dodds, 2011) and her use of makeup had also an impact on the French high society. Both men and women used powdered wigs that used to be sprayed with fragrances and the makeup that was in trend was, again, the powdered skin look,

adding the importance of orange or pink blush and lipsticks and the glossy look on the eyelids. After the French Revolution and the raise of the working class, the standard of extravagant beauty of the queen and the elite became less popular and cosmetics had a downfall of commercialization and usage in the Revolutionary countries.

The use of chemical products to whitening the skin started to be a trend in the 1800s. Acids that were considered poison in ancient years as mercury or lead were now used for enlarging the pupils, clear dark spots and freckles and whitening the skin until veins were completely visible. In Spain, the trend to make the pupils brighter and bigger used to squeeze orange juice directly into their eyeballs (Marsh, 2014) Makeup wasn't in trend with the rise of the romanticism, but the neat and healthy-looking skin with little or inexistent makeup application.

Makeup trends evolved during the 1900s with the empowerment of women and beauty brands started to appear as cosmetics were more in trend. Brands as Estee Lauder, Revlon, Dior, or Lancôme spread the trend of skin care products we use nowadays and the need to look pale, innocent, and childish stopped being a trend. The use of the rouge became popular as the raise of the actresses and most upper-class women used powders and rouge on a daily makeup routine (Marsh, 2014).

The raise of cosmetics to all the public was given in the 1920s after the WWI. The offer on inexpensive makeup products was key for the opening of cosmetic chain stores (Hunt, Fate & Dodds, 2011) and new products as mascara, lipstick and nail polish started to become popular among women.

The bold usage of makeup grew in popularity during the 1960s as Audrey Hepburn or Twiggy were the main influences on that time. New lip colors were in trend and brows had an important impact in women's routines. The following two decades were key on skincare, when cosmetics started to be tested to prevent poisoning with dangerous ingredients as in the previous century. Skincare brands started to have a great impact in society and the importance given to the cult on the skin was as popular as the use of the bold makeup in the 1980s, the first that allowed every woman to express themselves with the use of cosmetics.

This idea of self-expression related to makeup application evolved in the 90s as a way of doing art more than just another trend in fashion. Supermodels were the cosmetic influencers on that decade, as Cindy Crawford or Naomi Campbell, and every skin-related trend was followed by the beauty standards of those supermodels. Fake-tanning and plastic surgeries were new concepts in the world of cosmetics and became more popular due to the need to resemble those runway models.

Nowadays, plastic surgery is taking a big role in the cosmetic industry, as people is starting to change their bodies without restrictions. Not only that, but skin care is taking a big role in the younger generations due to the "perfect skin" ideals,

which directly relate to the Korean idols (K-pop singers) or actors, which have the well-known “glass skin”. Regarding makeup, it is now more than a way to enhance beauty in men or women. Makeup can be also considered as a way of expression, a different form of art, and the product range is extremely wide, with makeup products that can be suitable for every single person regardless of their gender or preferences.

Cosmetics are in constant evolution and even more ancient than the invention of the wheel. There is a lot to analyze in terms of social impact and economic value in society, but the one I would like to focus on and the one with the biggest trend in cosmetics in the 2020s is, without a doubt, K-beauty.

2.3. Korean cosmetics and the 10-step beauty routine

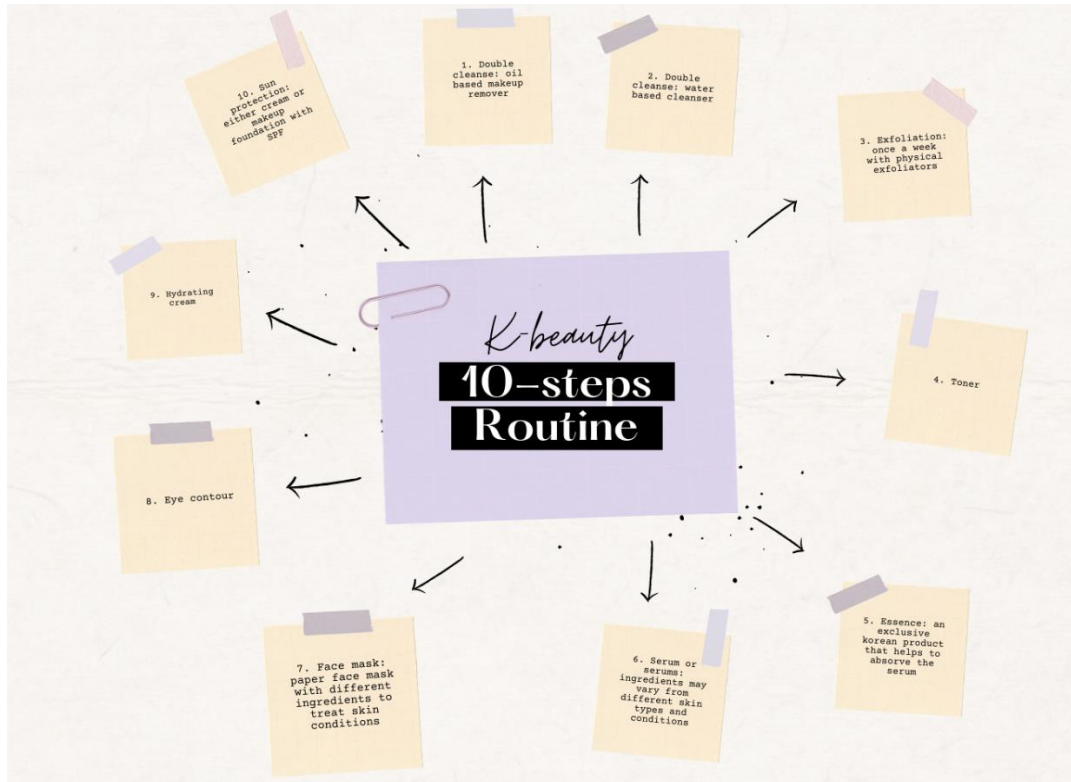
Usually, when it is referred to K-beauty, it is usually considered to all the skincare and, sometimes, makeup products that have been made in South Korea.

Having that basic level in mind regarding the origins of the cosmetic products, we can now shift to what really defines K-beauty: the customization of skincare for everyone and their own routines and the ingredients used in them.

There is a full ritual regarding K-beauty that may vary in products depending on who is using it. It is common that people in South Korea know exactly which is their skin type and which are the ingredients they might need to enhance their natural beauty, which might sound incredible for some western people. Self-care and knowledge on the skin needs are basic concepts in some Asian countries for centuries, but products and ingredients have evolved due to the high development of the new technologies since then.

Apart from the implantation of new products and technologies to enhance the skin, there is a full ritual known as the 10-step Korean skincare routine to make sure that all products are used correctly and are being applied in a specific order. In the Figure I, I have created a mind map with the correct order of application according to K-beauty.

Figure 1: K-beauty 10-steps routine



Source: Own elaboration from *Cómo mejorar tu piel en 15 días* (Miin Korean Cosmetics)

2.4. Cosmetics in the West

Western cultures tend to compare beauty with the body figures. It is also a thing in Asia, with the said K-pop idols, which enhance an extremely thin and sometimes unhealthy body type. In Western countries body dysmorphia is also a common thing, but the ideals are different, as some role models of beauty are the Kardashians, slim but voluptuous women that have empowered the plastic surgery trend.

The importance given to skincare in Asian countries is not a common thing in Europe and America. Makeup is the most influential part in cosmetics, as most women and some men are used to wear makeup on a daily basis. Makeup is usually used to change de appearance, some to look older with more bold and glam makeup and others who want to look younger, with a lighter application of products.

The importance given to the skin is, potentially, getting rid of wrinkles, change face structure or control blemishes and dark spots. In occidental countries is more common to take part in a cosmetic surgery, as hyaluronic acid injections for

example, but skin care products also have a little role in the West, mainly in natural cosmetology.

In Spain, the demand on organic and natural cosmetics has grown during the past years with the global conscientiation of the importance of nature and preservation of the environment, conforming an 11% out of the total amount of cosmetics (Verano, 2020).

Due to the impact of social media and love for the Asian culture, some of the western countries, specially the United States, have increased their expectations of cosmetic products in terms of technology and ingredients used in Japan or Korea to improve the skin, which has directly related to the need of Asian knowledge on skincare. The expansion of the *Hallyu* and globalization of the Korean cosmetic industry have influenced the purchases of K-beauty products all over the world and it is in constant evolution and increasing the power that Korean products have in the market of cosmetics in western countries.

2.4.1. Mediterranean cosmetics

The Mediterranean cosmetics could have its origins in the ancient world if we take a glance at the places where cosmetics started to be commercialized and distributed in the most influential societies in the ancient ages. Egypt, Greece, and Rome were the first civilizations to popularize the usage of cosmetics, as mentioned and explained in more detail in the point 2.2. regarding the history of cosmetics.

Having in mind the origins of cosmetics in the Mediterranean, we could describe them as natural-based products with natural properties used to enhance beauty, health, and youth.

There are vaguely records on Mediterranean cosmetics during the Middle Ages due to the Church opposition, but there is one book that is still conserved regarding the use of cosmetics that was especially focused on women that had a different idea of beauty against the sobriety of the Christian Church. The manuscript, written in Catalan by Manuel Diez de Calatayud in the 15th Century, is known as *Flos del Tresor de Beautat* and explains the use of cosmetics related to medical purposes, but also explains its benefits within women's appearances.

When talking about Mediterranean cosmetics, the ingredient that stands the most is the olive oil. It has been used as a moisturizer and cleanser due to its properties since the Roman Empire together with other plants or animal-derived ingredients, and it still has an important role in the production of cosmetics in countries like Spain, France, Italy, and Greece.

The use of ingredients that prevent oxidation in cosmetic products is key when all the main ingredients have their origins in nature, and it has been observed that there might be some chemical antioxidants might have a negative impact in individuals (Bonilla, 2008). Some studies have concluded that the plants that are being cultivated in the Mediterranean, the area with one of the most important

biodiversity, that have a positive impact in the making of cosmetics are rosemary and sage.

Mediterranean cosmetics are mainly related to its making through natural ingredients and biodegradable packaging, maintaining the ecological and zero waste theory of the ecological and Mediterranean beauty products.

Usually, products that claim to be part of the natural cosmetics, especially the Mediterranean-based cosmetic brands, can be easily found in cosmetic stores, as the trend of natural cosmetics had an impact in population during the first half of the 2010s decade and it's still growing in popularity mainly in the skincare and haircare sector (Manson, 2021).

The term of organic beauty has changed over this past decade due to the consciousness of the society in sustainable matters. Products that want to be considered part of the natural and organic trend need to be cruelty-free (against animal testing) and there are many cosmetic brands that also have the Vegan badge, adapting to the younger generations.

This trend of natural cosmetics has had a big impact in the demand in the cosmetic industry in Europe and, together with K-beauty, which has had a more recent inclusion in the European market of cosmetics, mainly in skincare, are two of the biggest segments in the cosmetic industry nowadays.

2.4.2. The case of the natural cosmetics in the Balearic Islands

As observed in the previous point regarding Mediterranean cosmetics, the compromise of brands in the organic and natural cosmetics market with the environment is reflected in the way they manufacture their organic products.

One of the most important events regarding local cosmetics in the Balearic Islands is the "Ibiza health and beauty wellness day for local cosmetics and skincare", with the objective of introducing and promoting the local and ecological cosmetics market (Cárdenas, 2020). They offer masterclasses on how to make organic products as natural soaps, how to use properly the different products or which are the most important organic brands in Eivissa used in local Wellness Centers.

In the case of Mallorca, there is a brand based in Sóller, Fet a Sóller, that produces exclusively products made with local ingredients, as body oils, citric perfumes, and hand soaps. Most of their products are made with Mallorcan olive oil, almonds, oranges, and lemons that they also produce and sell as own products without manufacturing them.

3. Entrepreneurship in cosmetics

The cosmetic market is growing exponentially in the consumer market, with the Gen-Z, the younger generation with purchasing power, and social media taking the role as the most important marketing strategy.

The influence of social media in the target market of Korean cosmetology have constituted an important role in its consumption and the global spread of the K-beauty term.

When referring to entrepreneurship it is understood as the future overview of opportunities that can be exploited as for either success or increasing wealth. The Korean *Hallyu* has led many foreign entrepreneurs to expand their knowledge on the Korean culture, as well as Koreans did in their own country (Otmazgin & Lyan, 2018).

The increasing popularity of the K-culture has given Korean cosmetics a potential for consumption in a worldwide level and some Korean-based brands have expanded their market through different distribution channels internationally.

Three brands that are considered pioneers in the expansion of the cosmetic culture in Korea at a worldwide level are Laneige, Innisfree and Holika Holika.

3.1. Trends in cosmetics

According to Harper's Bazaar, there are a few main trends in cosmetics that stand out during this 2022, considering skincare, makeup, and technology in the cosmetics industry.

Skincare is taking the major role in cosmetics nowadays due to its popularization in TikTok, one of the main social networks. K-beauty products will still be leading the consumption of the cosmetic industry and, thanks to the searches in the Google Trend platform, the fermented ingredients used in some skincare products are going to be the new trend in cosmetics. Ingredients as Kombucha are meant to increase the density of the nutrients that are going to be absorbed by the skin, improving the collagen production, and helping to diminish the aging of the skin.

The trend that stands the most in makeup is the cosmetic makeup, which could be described as hybrids between makeup and skincare products. Natural makeup that acts like a second skin while it also treats it.

Regarding the new technological trends in the cosmetic industry, it is considered one of the biggest concerns: sustainability. The zero-waste concept applies to both products and packaging, relating the plastic-free movement that is usually related to organic beauty products.

The other way that technology is going to play an important role in the cosmetic industry is thanks to the trend in personalization. Color match foundation was a big trend in the 2021 and its popularity is going to increase in the following years. Some products as the Yves Saint Laurent Sur Measure, a lipstick creator that allows its users to choose a color in a photo updated to their app and by mixing other lipstick shades the machine will print out the personalized color. More apps of beauty advice, mainly skincare and makeup related, are now being one of the main trends in cosmetics.

3.2. Relationship between people and Korean cosmetics

The cosmetic industry is growing exponentially in the consumer market, with the Gen-Z, the younger generation with purchasing power, that is highly influenced by social media and its trends, which directly relates to the K-beauty segment.

The popularity of the Korean cosmetics has its roots in the consciousness of the Korean people, especially women, of their own skin and its needs. The usage of beneficial natural ingredients as ginseng or bamboo in the production process is one of the major key things that the average Korean consumer cares about when deciding to purchase one product.

For European consumers, with a different standard of beauty and little ties with the Korean culture (Cho, 2021), the relationship with K-beauty is mainly the result of the late *Hallyu* influence with the popularization of K-pop and K-dramas in the continent during this past decade.

On another hand, the concept of Asian beauty is similar in all the Eastern Asian countries and most Korean cosmetics consider the beauty standard of the society of fair and glowy skin. That's the reason why many whitening skin products are the best-selling creams in the K-beauty market.

South Korean skincare brands consider the society demands, in this case, the pale standard of beauty, and provides products according to their needs, creating a good balance between offer and demand and enforcing the loyalty of the clients and, therefore, the relationship between people and cosmetics, mainly at a domestic level.

3.3. Economic value of Korean cosmetic companies

The most noticeable thing in the economic value of K-beauty brands is its export performance (Park, 2020), which grew exponentially in just one decade and surpassed the import value in 2012, nearly 15 years after the *Hallyu* started.

Most exports are done in neighbor countries as Taiwan, China, and Japan, but the number of countries in which Korean cosmetics lead the market segment. The popularity of K-beauty do not only come due to the word of mouth and the looks on the K-pop idols or K-drama actors, but the great biotechnological development in the industry and the investment in the production of cosmetics, which has been translated into the average growth rate of 16% of the domestic production in the 2010s, overpassing the 3% of the GDP growth rate in the same time period (Park, 2020).

4. Cosmetic tourism

The concept of cosmetic tourism, according to Flawless, refers to the activities done by an individual outside their place of origin to undertake a plastic surgery. Nowadays, the term also relates to the activities and purchases related to cosmetic goods and services. The main countries and pioneers on this type of tourism are Japan, Thailand, and South Korea. We will be focusing on the last

one, as nowadays it is the focus on skincare trends and investment in technology for cosmetology.

4.1. Trends and demand in South Korea

South Korea's culture is starting to become one of the most popular and followed cultures in the world. It has been happening since the beginning of the *Hallyu* in the 90s mainly in Asian countries, but after the global expansion of the Korean wave, its influence has arrived overseas.

The main factor in the expansion of the Korean culture has been K-pop. This phenomenon of the music industry has had a global impact and the biggest boy group in the world, BTS, comes from South Korea.

K-pop is not a new term. In fact, this genre was created in the early 1990s with the song "I Know" by Seo Taiji and Boys, a mix of the Korean ballads and the hip-hop style that was internationally trendy during that decade due to the influence of the American music industry (Pacheco, 2021). K-pop has grown in number of groups and in popularity during this past three decades and its international market share is considered now one of the biggest ones in the world.

Another important factor that has influenced the rise of the K-culture have been the K-dramas, the Korean series in which is included the most-seen Netflix show ever: *Squid Game*, overpassing the previous records of the British show *Bridgerton* and the Spanish series *Money Heist* (*La casa de papel*), in worldwide numbers.

Korean actors, as well as the Korean idols, have started to be a real influence in cosmetic trends for those fans who want to be just like them, but also have boosted the demand for tourism in South Korea.

4.2. Cosmetic tourism in South Korea

It is known that during the past 5 years, since 2017 and due to the boom of the K-pop industry, the Korean wave or *Hallyu* has hit the world.

The term "K-pop idol" refers to every artist, that usually takes part of a band and of a production company, like Lee Soo-man's SM Entertainment, that distributes catchy songs and choreographies that are intentioned to appeal not only to the Korean society, but internationally. Idols are normally people with a set of characteristics in common: they are conventionally beautiful -according to the South Korean model: with pale skin, thin body figure, round but angled face structure, big almond eyes with double eyelids and perfect-looking skin-, they can sing, rap and dance, in some cases they are also actors and models and have a likeable personality to appeal to the audience. They also have a full production cycle that starts with auditions, hard training, debut, and production that can take years to complete. Styling is one of the most important things in the marketing of the K-pop idols, as personal image takes an important role in the success of any

artist, and that is the reason why cosmetics, especially Korean ones, take a crucial part on the management of the idols.

The South Korean society used to have the figure of the K-pop idols as an idealization of what they should look like, dress or act. The popularization of the usages of cosmetic surgery increased during the rise of the Korean culture, due to the need of some fans to resemble them in any form, but when K-pop expanded internationally, it wasn't just the South Koreans who wanted to look like their idols.

Medical tourism and k-beauty and cosmetics industry are affected by the *Hallyu* abroad, what has directly affected a new type of tourism in Korea: the cosmetic tourism. More than 11 million people visited South Korea in 2014 (Bae, Chang, Park & Kim, 2017), being a 70% of this amount of tourist from China, the United States and Japan. Although it is hard to prove in economic matters that the *Hallyu* has had an important impact in the increase of tourism in the mentioned country, and according to Bae, Chang, Park and Kim (2017), the studies on GDP per capita from the late 1990s until 2014 show that when economy increased during this time period, national income increased as well, which led to the increase of the tourism demand to South Korea. Regarding the CPI, when tourism products were higher in price in the previously mentioned country, inbound tourism decreased, but, when the CPI of tourists increased in relation to the CPI in South Korea, travel demand for Korea increased as well.

Focusing on the medical or cosmetic tourism increased from 60000 in 2009 to 297000 in 2015 (Koh, 2015), more than a 27% of those tourists visited South Korea exclusively for cosmetics, being a 13.9% of them for plastic surgeries and the remaining 13.1% for dermatologic purposes, which have also been affected by the purchase of the K-beauty products.

The marketing used in the purpose of selling K-beauty products have focused mainly in the before mentioned K-pop idols. The celebrities have a great influence in their fandoms and that is the reason why beauty brands usually have the idols as ambassadors or faces of their brands. One example of that would be the Korean brand Etude House, one of the most internationally known companies, who have made a few collaborations with the K-pop band EXO. A result of that, according to Halim & Kiatkawsin (2020), the influence on the purchase of those beauty products increased among the fandom, and also influenced the travel preferences of the consumers that would be potential tourists in South Korea for cosmetic purposes.

5. Case Study: qualitative analysis of the importance of cosmetics in Taiwan

To carry out the qualitative analysis of cosmetics in Asia, I have focused on the case of Taiwan, as one of my best friends, Laura Rebasa, is studying and living in Taipei for this 2022 and has had time to do a field research regarding cosmetics in different stores and interviewing her Taiwanese friends to help me develop this case study for my Final Degree Project.

The first thing I wanted to focus on was the importance of cosmetics in Taiwan. What has been observed is that most girls have a skincare routine similar or based on the 10-steps Korean beauty routine, whilst there are other women who do not really care about the importance of cosmetics in their daily routines as opposed to the Korean society. Mostly elder people use Japanese products derived from the occupancy of Japan from 1895 to 1945 (Ka & Mintz, 2018), as some cultural customs and Japanese products in the Taiwanese market had an impact during their childhood and youth.

There is a few evidence in social media regarding Taiwanese products being influential or taking a big role in the market in cosmetics and, as observed with Laura's friends, people do not usually use local products.

There is a huge amount of cosmetic stores mainly in Taipei in comparison with Mallorca. There is a particular chain store named "POYA", similar in offer as Primor in Spain. They have body, hair and skin care products as well as makeup, both from national and international brands. The widest range of products that Laura found in the stores were Korean beauty products, the ones that are most used among the young population in Taiwan. Some South Korean brands that have an important role in the Taiwanese cosmetic market are Innisfree and Etude House, two brands that are difficult to find in Europe.

The role that K-beauty takes in the daily routine of Taiwanese women has a real impact in the market demand. Korea has become popular in the past five years in the West, but the "*Hallyu*", the Korean wave, has been for over two decades the main influence in Taiwan. Some k-pop idols as YangYang from WayV and NCT U, one of the most famous bands in South Korea, and Tzuyu from the girl group Twice come from Taiwan, so their popularization is having a real impact on the Taiwanese society since the 2000s. Not only regarding music, but also Korean TV soap shows, known as K-dramas, are influential in terms of the beauty standard that most East Asian people have.

To achieve that perfect-looking skin, younger generations (mainly Millenials and Gen-Z) purchase K-beauty products, as confirmed by Laura Rebasa after asking her group of friends, and follow the idols' routines to fit in the beauty standards of pale but healthy skin.

Cosmetic tourism is not a thing in Taiwan. Nowadays, restrictions due to COVID-19 still exist and no tourist can enter the country, nor anyone without a real reason or Taiwanese passport. This has not affected Taiwan's economy in any way, as tourism only took a little part of it. What happens in this country, and according to some of the interviewed locals, in relation to tourism matters, outbound tourism, mainly to South Korea, is one of the main trends in Taiwan. As mentioned before, Korean products can be easily found in Taiwanese cosmetic stores, so the activities that can be considered as part of the cosmetic tourism are plastic surgeries, which have a very little impact in Taiwan as a way to fit in beauty standards, or visits to spas and specialized saloons.

Laura states that her understanding of cosmetics has changed since her move to Taiwan. The amount of beauty stores is massive compared to Mallorca and the product range is impressive in terms of K-beauty.

As a conclusion of this field study, I can confirm that cosmetics take a different role in East Asia than in Europe. Not only in terms of variety in products or ease in finding cosmetics and brands that are only accessible at high prices in some specialized websites we can find in Spain as Miin Korean Cosmetics, but I also see that the impact of Korea and its culture has had a huge impact in society and, therefore, demand, both in the cosmetic industry, and, in a minor scale, the outbound cosmetic tourism done in South Korea. With that being said, I feel that the globalization of K-beauty is still facing a process of acceptance in the West in oppose to the great integration that it has had in the Taiwanese market.

6. Planning my future in the cosmetic industry

My interest in cosmetics, especially in makeup, started when I was around the age of fourteen. I used to spend hours watching tutorials on YouTube, while I was practicing with myself, and quickly became one my favorite forms of art and for expressing myself.

One of my biggest dreams in relation with the cosmetic industry and my passion for makeup is to have my own makeup brand. As mentioned in the point 1.1. regarding the election of the topic, my inspiration for the perfect makeup brand is Krash Kosmetics, by the influencer Álvaro Kruse, which cares about trends, has a positive message, is genderless and has a social impact supporting the LGBTQ+ community, feminism, and other social issues. It is not just another cosmetic brand, because they get involved with their consumers, care about their needs and has a huge presence in social media.

If I have the opportunity one day of creating my own makeup brand, and following the model of Krash Kosmetics, I would like it to be focused on my consumers, nowadays it would be Gen-Z and probably some Millennials as well, being aware of the trends in cosmetics, fashion, and other influential factors as nowadays the K-culture is. I would like to see myself as a successful entrepreneur in the cosmetic industry and bring my knowledge and passion into a personal brand that I can relate to and which I could consider as my living heritage.

7. Conclusions

Cosmetic tourism is now understood as a new trend in tourism that is a result of South Korea's marketing strategy of promoting their unique culture.

The internationally successful K-pop groups as BTS, EXO, NCT or Monsta X, a few of the most important overseas bands, and the well-known K-dramas have directly affected the way in which beauty is seen, especially in Asian countries as China and Taiwan.

It is not just the culture and the influences of music and TV shows that have made an impact in the success of K-beauty, but the quality of its products, the attention to detail and ingredients in the Korean cosmetics companies and the tradition of the Korean women for their skincare.

The major international impact of K-beauty is, in fact, skincare, which had a secondary role in the cosmetic market in the West, and that thanks to the *Hallyu* and the impact in social media, is starting to become the main interest in younger generations.

Considering the great influence of South Korea's culture, in which it is included the cosmetic industry, and its increasing popularity, the forecast for K-beauty, which is in constant evolution and improving thanks to the technological investment, is that it is not just a casual trend and today's success is just a small part of what, after the analysis, it can grow in the future.

8. References

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9. Annexes





















