How popular culture influences Asia tourism trends within 10 years (especially in China and Korea)?

Bachelor Thesis for Obtaining the Degree

Bachelor of Business Administration in

Tourism and Hospitality Management

Submitted to Ivo Ponocny

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Affidavit

I hereby affirm that this Bachelor's Thesis represents my own written work and that I have used no sources and aids other than those indicated. All passages quoted from publications or paraphrased from these sources are properly cited and attributed.

The thesis was not submitted in the same or in a substantially similar version, not even partially, to another examination board and was not published elsewhere.

18th January, 2020

Date

Abstract

In the past ten years, popular culture has developed rapidly and has a huge influence. In Asia, popular culture has become the main reason for people to travel, and even affect people's psychology and behaviour. According to previous literature, there is a lack of research on the impact of popular culture on Asians and Asian tourism. This thesis studies the differences between culture and popular culture, and through self-experience and qualitative data collection, research and analysis of people's views on popular culture triggering tourism. Interview was conducted with 10 respondents from Asia, and realized that the interviewees mainly believe that popular culture is a trend at a specific time. During the interview, Korean popular culture became the example mentioned by most interviewees. According to the respondents' experience, they used to travel because of popular culture, and agreed that popular culture motivates people to travel, which has a certain impact on Asian tourism. In addition, Korean popular culture not only has a significant impact on Korean tourism, but also Asian tourism industry. They also believed that people's enthusiasm for popular culture affects the performance of local tourism.

Keywords:

Popular culture, Culture, Asia tourism trend, Induced Tourism, K-Pop, Idol

Table of Contents

Preliminaries

Main Text

Reference Material

1   Introduction

1.1   Background

The following research is about the tourism status in Asia within the last 10 years. It has discovered the problem of how popular culture affects the tourists index in Asia, especially in South Korea and China. The study has focused on the relationship between popular culture and tourism trends. The success of popular culture can produce positive economic effects in an indicated place. It tries to determine people's psychological change caused by popular culture can induce their behaviour in the tourism industry.

In the last 10 years, Asian popular culture such as pop music, movies and drama have been raising people enthusiastic to travel to those destinations. And the most successful example is Korea. Foreign tourists willing to travel to Korea because they have enhanced a good impression of K-Pop, Korean dramas and movies (Choi 2012, cited in Koo et al. 2013: 2). Korea's tourism industry has obviously grown up since the past 10 years, and the idolatry of K-Pop has become the main factor for admirers to travel.

According to the Korea Tourism Organization (2020), as shown in Table 1 the number of visitors per year in total that people travelled to South Korea. Before 2009, there was a modest rise in the total number of visitors who visited South Korea. Visitors numbers grew steadily up to 2008 followed by a sharp rise from approximately 6.8 million visitors to 7.8 million visitors in 2009, and it reached over 17 million in 2019. In contrast, the number of visitors increased around 3 million between 1999 and 2009 while 2009 to 2019 increased 10 million. In addition, compared to other countries, South Korea is the only place which has increased 3 million visitors between 2009 and 2012 (Koo et al. 2013: 2). It can be concluded that there has been a significant rise in Korea's visitor arrivals in the last 10 years.

Table 1. Korea, Monthly Statistics of Tourism - Statistics Arrivals & Departures by year

(adapted from Korea Tourism Organization, 2020)

Year	Visitor Arrivals	Growth (%)		Year	Visitor Arrivals	Growth (%)
1999	4,659,577			2009	7,817,533	13.4
2000	5,321,600	14.2		2010	8,797,658	12.5
2001	5,146,012	-3.3		2011	9,794,796	11.3
2002	5,346,117	3.9		2012	11,140,028	13.7
2003	4,752,762	-11.1		2013	12,175,550	9.3
2004	5,818,138	22.4		2014	14,201,516	16.6
2005	6,022,752	3.5		2015	13,231,651	-6.8
2006	6,155,046	2.2		2016	17,241,823	30.3
2007	6,448,240	4.8		2017	13,335,758	-22.7
2008	6,890,841	6.9		2018	15,346,879	15.1
2009	7,817,533	13.4		2019	17,502,623	14

Various Korean culture such as pop music, movies, food, fashion and other culturally influenced items seen on TV programs have aroused people's interest due to the success in Korean drama (Kim et al. 2007: 1341). Many countries have led Korean Pop culture into their countries because of the success of Korean wave. For example, Korean reality-variety show "Running Man" has sold the franchise to China, Vietnam and Indonesia. Philippines and Thailand are having their upcoming seasons in 2021. Also, the reality television talent competition "Produce 101" in Korea has sold the franchise to China and Japan. It can show that South Korea has exported their popular culture to other countries and so as to succeed in pop culture.

1.2   Presentation of the Problem

Popular culture is hard to define, not just in terms of meaning, but also the misleading in any theoretical blind alley (Bennett 1980, cited in Storey 2009: 1). In Asia, people mentioned South Korea while they were discussing popular culture, although they are still unclear about what is popular culture. This is undoubtedly an affirmation of Korea, and even serves as a representative and successful example of Asian popular culture. In recent years, popular culture has been used as a marketing tool to attract a large number of tourists, which has greatly changed the Asia tourism trend. Many researchers studied this phenomenon of tourism and published several related research forms such as TV-induced tourism and movie-induced tourism. They try to discover the motives that influence the tourism industry with popular culture, and how popular culture can affect people's decisions and boost the economy. However, there are still no specific answers to certain motives and whether there are conspiracy theories that make people travel to related places.

As time goes on, tourists decide to travel because of popular culture rather than expanding perspective, challenging, learning and relaxing. About popular culture, its promotion and prosperity are based on the changes in popular culture and admiration of people. And it is worth studying why popular culture has such a big influence in Asia tourism industry. However, there are not many studies to discuss popular culture in detail and explain the impact that popular culture may have on the tourism industry. In the early years, South Korea began to promote the local economy with popular culture, and other places began to follow suit. And this is undoubtedly an acknowledgment of the success of Korean pop culture and its influence on the Asian economy. Does everyone clearly understand the positive and negative effects that pop culture will bring? Are people blindly pursuing popular culture or even morbid? And tourists' psychological process when making a decision, or are there other reasons that motivate them?

Lifestyle changes over time. The influence of social trends and attitudes on culture will affect people's lifestyles, especially cross-cultural business activities and international markets, which are particularly important to consumers' consumption patterns (Chaney 1996, cited in Lee & Sparks 2007: 506). Cross-cultural research has obvious marketing applications, it can study the psychology and behavior of consumer groups with similar behaviors, and the most influential one is popular culture (Tan et al. 1987, cited in Lee & Sparks 2007: 506).

Popular culture has left a deep impression on people, but there is a lack of information about reasons why people are influenced by popular culture and the power of popular culture. How does popular culture make changes in people's lifestyle? Does popular culture affect the whole Asia tourism industry? In order to boost the economy, does the government take advantage of the influence of popular culture? Some studies even point out that popular culture can change people's perceptions of national historical hatred and the relationship between people in two countries. It is reasonable to suspect that the government uses idolatry to attract people in the tourism industry, because people may change their thoughts and impressions due to their favours idols or drama. Or any other conspiracy theories that make people change their impression from negative to positive or addictive.

1.3   Aims of the Bachelor Thesis

The rapid development and trend of Asian popular culture in the past decade has led to a change in the direction of tourism development. It attracts people's interest and motivation for exploration. However, the results of the research on how popular culture boosts the economy and motivates people are still not comprehensive. Therefore, the thesis will explore what is the motivation for popular culture lovers to travel and how popular culture influences Asia tourism trends. Since people can only see the visible impact caused by popular culture, it is important to study the impact of long-term exposure to different cultures on their own psychology and behaviour. Also, people's enthusiasm for popular culture may come from idolatry, drama or variety shows. They are satisfied with popular culture, so they become enthusiastic and motivate them to spend money on it.

In general, the most important goal of this thesis is how people understand popular culture, and how does popular culture affect Asian tourism? When people's enthusiasm for popular culture ceases, what will happen to the country's economy and Asian tourism? When the national economy is too dependent on the benefits of popular culture, what will be the consequences? Does the country use popular culture to reduce the hatred and prejudice between the two countries? In order to solve these problems, there are different ways to collect data, including self-experience and making assumptions.
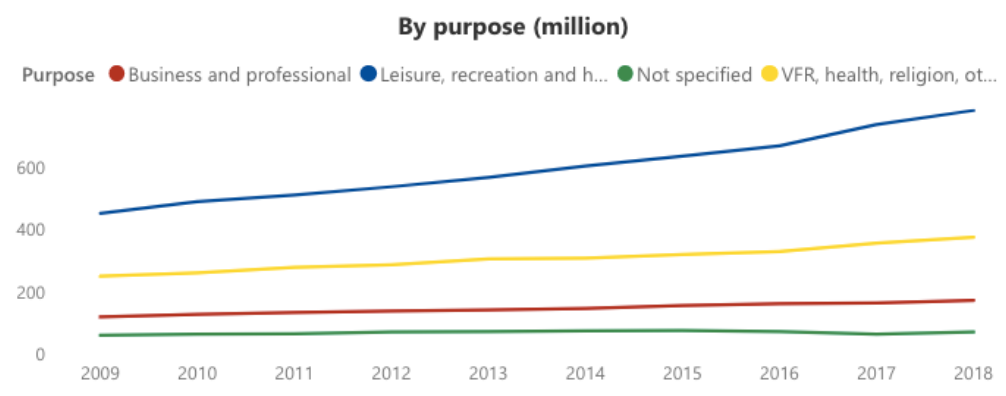
2   Literature Review

2.1   Tourism in Asia

According to the World Tourism Organization (2020), as shown in Table 2 the top 10 tourist destinations in the world in 2009, the Asian countries on the list are China and Malaysia, ranking 4th and 9th respectively. In 2019, the 10 most visited destinations around the world, China ranked 3rd, Thailand ranked 7th and Japan ranked 10th (UNWTO: United Nations World Tourism Organization, 2020). The results in Table 2 show that compared to 2009, Asian countries performed better in 2019, and most of the rankings improved or maintained, while China has remained the best performer among Asian countries, and even became the top 3 in 2019.

Table 2. COUNTRY PROFILE – INBOUND TOURISM - Ranking of Destinations on Key Indicators
(adapted from World Tourism Organization, 2020)

Rank	Destination Ranking			
	World 2009		World 2019	
	Country Name	Arrivals (Million)	Country Name	Arrivals (Million)
1	France	76.8	Spain	83.7
2	United States	55.1	United States	79.3
3	Spain	52.2	China	65.7
4	China	50.9	Italy	64.5
5	Italy	43.2	Turkey	51.2
6	Turkey	30.2	Mexico	45
7	United Kingdom	28.2	Thailand	39.8
8	Germany	24.2	Germany	39.6
9	Malaysia	23.6	United Kingdom	37.5
10	Mexico	22.3	Japan	32.2
11	Austria	21.4	Austria	31.9
12	Russian Federation	21.3	Greece	31.3
13	Ukraine	20.8	Malaysia	26.1
14	Hong Kong (China)	16.9	Portugal	24.6
15	Canada	15.7	Russian Federation	24.4
16	Greece	14.9	Hong Kong (China)	23.8
17	Thailand	14.1	Canada	22.1
18	Egypt	12.5	Poland	21.2
19	Saudi Arabia	10.9	Netherlands	20.1
20	Macao (China)	10.4	Macao (China)	18.6
21	Netherlands	9.9	Vietnam	18
22	Croatia	9.3	India	17.9
23	Hungary	9.1	Korea (ROK)	17.5
24	Czech Republic	8.8	Croatia	17.4
25	Denmark	8.5	Hungary	16.9
26	Morocco	8.3	Utd Arab Emirates	16.7
27	Switzerland	8.3	Singapore	15.1
28	Korea (ROK)	7.8	Saudi Arabia	13.6
29	Tunisia	7.8	Morocco	12.9
30	Singapore	7.5	Taiwan (pr. Of China)	11.9

UNWTO interacted with travellers from all over the world and concluded that from 2009 to 2018, the number of tourists visiting in Asia and the Pacific region who traveled for leisure, recreation and holidays rose from 47% to 58%. The average annual growth rate of leisure, recreation and holidays option was 6% between 1999 and 2009; in contrast, from 2008 to 2018, it rose to 9% annually (UNWTO, 2020). The results in Figure 1 show that the number of people travelling for this purpose was less than 100 million in 2009, but in 2018, it rose to 200 million.

By purpose (million)

Purpose ● Business and professional ● Leisure, recreation and h... ● Not specified ● VFR, health, religion, ot...

Figure 1. GLOBAL AND REGIONAL TOURISM PERFORMANCE - Purpose of Visit
(adapted from World Tourism Organization, 2020)

It can be seen that tourism in Asia is developing rapidly. At the same time, as the development of leisure and entertainment in Asia attracts a large number of tourists, it has increased the recognition of the Asian region in the global tourism industry. Because supply and demand can achieve social and economic benefits, the Asian tourism industry pays more attention to the development of this aspect, and the growth and changes in the market make Asian tourism a competitive and diverse environment (Cochrane 2008: 2).

2.2   Tourism in Korea

In order to improve the service industry, South Korea is paying more and more attention to the tourism industry (Oh & Zhong 2016: 239). KTO follows four core values, dedication, development, innovation and communication to promote the tourism industry and improve the quality of life of the people (KTO: Korea Tourism Organization, 2020). From 2010 to 2013, South Korea's growth rate of foreign tourists is 12.5%, which is the highest among OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) members (Koo et al. 2013: 2). Among the four major strategic directions, the "Traction in improvements to regional tourism" section has mentioned strengthening targeted international marketing (KTO, 2020).

According to the Korea Tourism Organization (2020), between 2000 and 2012, the number of foreign tourists to South Korea increased from 5 million to 11 million. In contrast, it took 12 years in 2000 to increase the number of foreign tourists by 6 million, when it took only 4 years in 2012 to reach 17 million in 2016 (KTO, 2020). This shows that South Korea attaches importance to foreign tourists in the development of its tourism industry and has made good progress in its strategy for international marketing.

In order to develop new international markets, KTO has formulated different strategies to cater to different markets to attract overseas tourists (KTO, 2020). For example, make use of the Hallyu (Korean Wave) trend to develop and promote a variety of Korean tourism products. Also, there are 5 focus groups divided by geographical location, which is Japan, China, Asia, Europe & Americas, and Oceania (KTO, 2020). The target customers in Asia are mainly women, youth, and Hallyu tourists, which shows that Hallyu has a great influence on Asians.

In addition, the official website of Korea's official tourism brand "Imagine Your Korea" developed by the Korea Tourism Organization (KTO) has introduced the filming locations and K-Pop in the promotion of attractions and activities. For example, the filming sites of Korean drama "What's Wrong with Secretary Kim" (2018), K-Pop festivals in Busan, Changwon and Seoul (Imagine Your Korea, 2020). Finally, the tourism advertisements were shot by idol groups, such as Girls' Generation and EXO, which shows the importance of Korean pop culture to Korean tourism (Imagine Your Korea, 2020).

2.3   What is Popular Culture

As mentioned before, popular culture has a messy and contradictory definition. In order to clarify the definition of popular culture, it can be analysed from 3 aspects, which are culture, ideology and finally popular culture. The word "Culture" is hard to understand because there are many explanations, and there is not only the Western problem but also universal concerns (Montovani 2000, cited in Baldwin et al. 2006: 3).

A brief summary to define culture, it refers to the process of thinking, judgment and aesthetic development, lifestyle and artistic activity (Williams 1983, cited in Storey 2009: 1-2). The theories of philosophers, artists and poets of the process of thinking, judgement and aesthetic development can mean culture, their speeches can inspire and change the thoughts and behaviour of others. Regarding culture, a common example is that different countries have different cultures, such as religion, food and language. Movies, pop music and dramas are examples of artistic activities, which are more focused on practise and are the way most people acknowledge different cultures.

Ideology refers to the same thinking mode of a group of people, distorted thinking, the French cultural theorist Roland Barthes proposed that people regard culture (humanly made) in a broad sense as a "natural" phenomena, and the French Marxist philosopher Louis Althusser brings out ideology and practice are inseparable (Storey 2009: 2-4). And then, ideological forms which is similar to the distorted thinking (Marx 1976, cited in Storey 2009: 4).

The word "popular" is defined as a work that many people admire, inferior works, works created to win favour with people, as well as a culture that people actually create for themselves (Williams 1983, cited in Storey 2009: 5). Regarding popular culture, people think that it is equal to trends, which is favoured by many people and share posts on social media to make it become fashionable for a period of time.

To find out whether it belongs to popular culture, the important thing is whether people can reach a consensus, otherwise it is just culture (Storey 2009: 5-6). Popular culture needs official recognition, which depends on quantitative dimensions, like the sales of CDs and DVDs, ratings of television programs and movies' box office (Bennett 1980, cited in Storey 2009: 6).

However, even though popular culture is very popular among people, people still think that it is the inferior culture left over from the high culture (Storey 2009: 6). This class concept gives people a sense of superiority, and they feel that high culture is superior to popular culture. Popular culture is more regarded as mass culture, it was established to obtain business opportunities, and mass production for non-discriminating consumers mass consumption (Storey 2009: 8).

On the other hand, popular culture is more regarded as culture-derived from people's lives, and folk culture reflects people's real-life conditions (Storey 2009: 9). Therefore, popular culture is generally regarded as the main source of symbolic protests within contemporary capitalism, which is equivalent to the concept of working-class culture (Bennett 1980, cited in Storey 2009: 9). It brings out the concept of hegemony of Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci, and those who use this approach view popular culture as a struggle between the lower class and the capitalists (Storey 2009: 10).

In addition, it involves ideas surrounding the postmodernist debate, which means that people no longer distinguish between high culture and popular culture (Storey 2009: 12). If people no longer recognize cultural differences, it will make people wonder whether popular culture works are produced for cultural or commercial purposes.

Finally, to be defined as popular culture, it needs the favour of many people, and the higher the quantitative index, the higher the acceptance (Storey 2009: 5). The initial popular culture may only exist in the lower class, reflecting people's lives, thus creating cultural differences between societies (Storey 2009: 6). Nevertheless, the development of popular culture nowadays has brought many business opportunities, making culture and commerce an inseparable relationship (Storey 2009: 8).

2.4 Popular Culture Tourism in General

The environment in which people live is very important, because the culture they receive affects all aspects of their personal behaviour (De Mooij 2011, cited in Frías-Jamilena et al. 2018: 350). In popular culture, visual media like TV and movies are more likely to influence people's values, such as their fashion sense and interests (Kim et al. 2007: 1343). Films and TV series can affect tourists visiting destinations, which is called on-screen tourism (Hudson & Ritchie 2006, cited in Li et al. 2017: 177).

Film-induced tourism, as one of the cultural tourism, is growing globally driven by the development of entertainment and global tourism industry (Hudson & Ritchie 2006, cited in Wen et al. 2018: 212). In order to reenact or experience the plots filmed in movies and TV dramas, tourists will especially look for filming locations (Beeton 2001, cited in Kim et al. 2007: 1343). Film-induced tourism not only affects the economy, but also increases the intangible value of the host community, affects people's postmodernist views and brings negative effects (Kim et al. 2007: 1343). The audience intention to travel the filming location will change due to the movie or television characters, including the relationship between the role and the filming location, audience and the characters, and the interaction between these first two (Russell & Stern 2006, cited in Su et al. 2011: 805).

To promote film tourism, marketing activities play an important role at the film release stage (Grihault 2003, cited in Li et al. 2017: 183). According to research and analysis, compared with before the movie came out, the number of visits to 12 filming locations in the US after the screening increased by approximately 43% (Riley et al. 1998, cited in Kim et al. 2007: 1343-1344). Since movie-induced tourism brings huge economic benefits to the community, many local governments and tourism officials encourage Hollywood to film TV dramas or shoot movies in their places (Kim et al. 2007: 1344).

In Asia, the famous Chinese director Yimou Zhang cooperated with the DMOs of the Shiqiu town government in Nanjing during the filming of the movie "The Flowers of War" for tourism promotion (Ji & Beeton 2011, cited in Wen et al. 2018: 213). After the release of the film, Shiqiu town became a famous tourist attraction for both domestic and international movie audiences (Ji & Beeton 2011, cited in Wen et al. 2018: 213). It proves that a film that successfully attracts the tourism industry will increase the reputation and attractiveness of the shooting place, and at the same time stimulate the audience's curiosity about the tourist destination.

On the other hand, local tourism promoters pointed out that due to the difference between TV series and movies, weekly broadcasts have continued to increase the attractiveness of the filming locations, which will bring miracles to the tourism industry (Bly 2004, cited in Kim et al. 2007: 1345). In other words, the success of the TV series will have a good economic impact on a particular location (Kim et al. 2007: 1342). Among the various choices of visual media, television, as one of the most attractive mediums, is the most popular and influential (Kim et al. 2007: 1340). Popular TV series, as one of the addictive providers of many TV programs, is the most topical and makes audiences discuss the plot and actors (Couldry & McCarthy 2004, cited in Kim et al. 2007: 1340). The audience ignored the surrounding reality temporarily, while they were immersing in the story, empathizing and identifying with the characters (Fu et al. 2016: 38). Incheon International Airport, Changdokgung, Sarawak and other attractions with Korean cultural characteristics and historical value have been successfully promoted by Korean TV dramas (Lin & Huang 2006, cited in Su et al. 2011: 806).

In addition, reality shows are another popular television program, which aims to record someone's real-life situation. Reality shows are more realistic than other TV shows, and viewers will become empathetic and reflective, so shooting reality shows at destinations can improve the audience's understanding and feelings of those destinations (Fu et al. 2016: 39). There are many programs that have cooperated with the tourism administration of other countries to promote tourism while filming the show. Audiences are more likely to search for relevant information about the show, thereby stimulating people's interest in visiting the destination in person, generating positive behaviours, and promoting or recommending the destination to their relatives or friends.

The more emotional the audience invests in a destination on the screen, the more likely for them to visit that place (Kim 2012, cited in Fu et al. 2016: 45). Nowadays, more and more people are visiting movie and television venues, which reflects how entertainment programs affect the audience's impression of the destination and thus their decision on where to travel (Fu et al. 2016: 39). Finally, in addition to movies or TV shows, popular music induced the tourism industry as well, and K-Pop is one of the successful examples.

2.5 What is K-Pop

K-Pop refers to Korean pop music, which is one of the Korean popular cultures, and it is also a successful strategy to break into the international market to enhance the image of Korea. The South Korean government uses K-Pop as a soft power to promote its culture in Asia and the world, and to enhance its export power, making K-Pop popular all over the world (Lie 2012: 340).

In addition to solo singers, K-Pop is mainly popular among girl and boy groups. Unlike J-Pop or American pop music, K-Pop's easy-to-spread music style and choreography showcase different music cultures, making K-Pop a success in Asia, and even set off a wave of Korean pop culture around the world. Korean entertainment companies focus on diversified development of idols, such as their singing voice, dance skills and appearance. Large entertainment companies such as JYP, YG and SM Entertainment hold periodic auditions and overseas selections. To become idols, they need to be trainees when they were young, and within a few years they need continuous and rigorous training, selection and elimination.

Entertainment companies train Korean boy and girl groups to perform apparently simple synchronized dance choreography, which makes it easy for lay audiences to imitate and became a sensation (Lawlietta 2009, cited in Kim 2013: 167). Take "Gangnam Style" as an example, it was rated as the most popular video by YouTube in 2012, and received 1 billion YouTube views in 2013 (Metro News 2012, cited in Koo et al. 2013: 2). At that time, the release of the MV caused many people to imitate the dance and post it on social media. It caused a sensation and was widely acclaimed all over the world, and now, it has gained 3.7 billion YouTube views.

The idol's fan base is mainly composed of young people aged 10s to 20s, so the marketing strategy is mainly to use social media such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram to spread information to fans, thereby reducing market costs and time. Young fan groups often use 3C products, so they are easy to accept foreign cultures. The age of idols and fans are close, so the self-awareness expressed in songs, the pursuit of dreams and authenticity make it easy for fans to have a sense of identity, which is more like participating in the process of idols' pursuit of dreams.

Another reason for the popularity of K-Pop is that they have a lot of opportunities to promote themselves on TV. Korea has many different types of variety shows, such as King of Mask Singer, Running Man and Radio Star, which are music, sports and talk shows. The company will make use of reality shows to let artists show their true personality. Sometimes live broadcast synchronization is used to enable fans to join in it and narrow the distance between fans and idols. When they participate in dramas, radios and variety shows, it is an opportunity to promote their groups and show themselves.

2.6 Popular Culture Induced Tourism in Korea

Regarding pop culture tourism, Japan is often mentioned and discussed in the context of its origin (Beeton et al. 2013, cited in Lee et al. 2019: 271). And South Korea's popular culture, such as movies and soap operas have spread rapidly in many Asian countries since the late 1990s (Lee et al. 2019: 271). Due to the Asian Financial Crisis in 1997, many East Asian countries affected by the economic crisis were looking for some programs that were cheaper than Japanese dramas, which accelerated the export of Korean TV drama as a part of national export industry and created "Korean Wave" (Chua & Iwabuchi 2008: 4). There are some reasons that made people want to travel South Korea, including traditional culture, humanitarian topics, empathy to celebrities, beautiful shooting scene and lyrical original soundtrack (OST), and curiosity about new things (Kim et al. 2007: 1347).

Successful TV series will have a positive economic impact on the filming location. After the Korean TV series "Winter Sonata" was broadcast, more than 1.4 million foreign tourists visited the filming location in Korea in 2004, an increase of 40.4% compared to 2003 (Donga 2005, cited in Kim et al. 2007: 1342). In order to witness the two celebrities, tourists flocked to various fan meeting events, and participated in handprints, photo exhibitions, and autograph sessions (Kim et al. 2007: 1343). In terms of film tourism, fans will participate in film festivals, celebrity home tours and movie-themed attractions (Lee et al. 2019: 271). In order to gain the identification from other members, fans will participate in popular culture events (Fiske 1992, cited in Lee et al. 2019: 270). Fan membership provides a sense of belonging which encourages a widespread social bond and identification (Bhattacharya et al. 1995, cited in Lee et al. 2019: 270).

Fans travel to destinations related to pop stars because of the idolatry that is created by their sense of identity and active participation (Lee et al. 2019: 270). At the same time, idolatry makes pop culture fans have an emotional attachment to idols, which allows them to participate actively (Fiske 1992, cited in Lee et al. 2019: 270). Idolatry is like a pilgrimage, people visiting the idol's country is like a journey to find religious experience, thereby developing group identification (Reader 2007, cited in Lee et al. 2019: 270).

In terms of K-Pop, the success of "Gangnam Style" has aroused people's interest in Gangnam, and various IT platforms provided relevant travel information, which eventually led people to travel in South Korea (Koo et al. 2013: 11). Also, there are 50 Korean idol groups debut every year, and many groups and solo singers hold numerous concerts in Korea each year. Popular idol groups such as BTS and BLACKPINK even hold world tours, and fans from all over the world will participate in concerts, which has promoted Korean tourism industry and brought positive economic benefits. In addition, many different themes of dramas, movies and animations are broadcast in Asia every year, which usually leads to different trends. There are many shooting locations and related themed activities attract tourists from different countries, such as Petite France where the Korean drama "My Love from the Star" (2013) was filmed, and the large-scale theme park "Tokyo One Piece Tower" of Japanese anime "One Piece". Therefore, we can see that pop culture lovers are willing to visit those filming locations and fans meeting in order to get in touch with the drama, movies, or celebrities.

On the other hand, many pop stars are spokespersons for different brands, such as cosmetic, clothing, food and beverage, many fans will buy their endorsement products because of idolatry. Myeongdong is the main shopping district in Seoul, with many international brand outlets and Korean cosmetics brands, it is one of the most popular places for travellers. Celebrity posters are posted at the entrance to attract tourists, and there are Chinese-speaking staff to attract Chinese tourists to shop. After shopping, the staff will give a large number of celebrity-related products to welcome customers to shop again. Therefore, South Korea's economy is constantly rising because of Korean popular culture, travel experience and friendly hospitality.

Finally, popular culture attracts potential travellers, and becomes loyal customers or travellers during pilgrimage or idol worship, thereby promoting economic development. As time passed, many people have become interested in other popular cultures in Korea, such as cosmetic surgery, clothing, etc. This proves that Korean popular culture has played an important role in Korea's economy and tourism industry.

2.7   The Influences of Korean Popular Culture in General

As mentioned before, Korean popular culture not only affects Korea, but also affects other Asian countries and even the international market. Based on different Korean popular culture, there are different ways to enter the international market. In order to introduce Korean Wave into Asian and international market, the rise of social media and the integration of marketing strategies will be used to promote K-Pop (Kim 2013: 167).

First of all, on the song, they will release different language versions to suit different countries, such as Japanese, Chinese and English. For idol groups that have become a big hit in Asia, their entertainment company will find foreign production teams or well-known producers to create music for them, thereby entering the international market. For example, the Girl's Generation (also known as SNSD) song "I Got a Boy" (2013) was created by composers from the United Kingdom, Norway, Sweden and South Korea (Choi & Maliangkay 2015: 4). Next, in order to enter the American market, conducted by famous manager Scooter Braun, and the English version was released through Interscope Records and owned by Universal Music Group (Choi & Maliangkay 2015: 4). Sometimes, music videos will add local cultural elements to match songs in different languages, so that audiences in a particular market will feel pleasantly surprised and intimacy after seeing the music video. For example, T-ara covers the song "Little Apple" (2014) by the Chinese duo Chopstick Brothers. In the music video, except they are singing both in Korean and Chinese, they also dress like Bruce Lee (a Hong Kong American actor, director, martial artist, martial arts instructor and philosopher), which is a surprise for Chinese fans. With the rise of Korean idols, international singers cooperate with them to enter the Asian market, for example, "Physical" (2020) by Hwa Sa and Dua Lipa, "Ice Cream" (2020) by BLACKPINK and Selena Gomez. This kind of cooperation can enhance each other's reputation in different markets, which can be described as mutually beneficial.

Moreover, large-scale music festivals bring economic benefits to the tourism industry. Mnet Asian Music Awards (MAMA) is a global music festival in Asia, which started in 1999. Since 2010, it has been held in different places, including Macau, Singapore, Hong Kong, Japan and Vietnam (Mwave, 2020). During the MAMA event every year, the number of tourists will rise sharply. For this reason, Hong Kong was the host site of MAMA from 2012 to 2018. It proves that Korean pop music has a strong influence and also drives the tourism economy to different places.

On the other hand, TV media is one of the channels to convey Hallyu to the audience. It can spread information quickly, and is vivid and interactive. Korean TV dramas brought different gimmicks to the audience, such as storylines, costumes and filming locations. For example, when "My Love from the Star" (2013) was broadcast, the cosmetics and clothing used by the heroine in the play became a hot topic in Asia at that time, and many female audiences wanted to buy products as same as the heroine. Also, the haircut of the main actor in Korean dramas have become popular hairstyles for Asian men, such as the short bangs in the "Crash Landing on You" (2019) and the chestnut (crop) haircut in "Itaewon Class" (2020) that were aired a while ago. At that time, many barber shops posted advertisements saying that they could help customers to get the same hairstyle of the main actor to attract customers. In fact, many Asian travellers come to Korea to make Korean hairstyles, which makes Korean hair salons a must-go place for pop culture lovers. Next, with the prevalent and development of Korean dramas, they are no longer limited to filming in South Korea. For example, "Memories of the Alhambra" (2018) which was filmed in Spain, Hungary and Slovenia and "Vagabond" (2019) filmed in Morocco and Portugal. Due to the success of the series, the audience will travel to the filming sites. For example, the Alhambra Palace in "Memories of the Alhambra" has become a hot spot for Asian travellers on Instagram.

In addition, the famous reality show "Running Man" has been filmed for 10 years. In 2014, national Seoul Korean television and radio company SBS (Seoul Broadcasting System) sold the franchise to China, and every year, regardless of the Korean version or the Chinese version, there are some episodes of overseas filming. For example, in 2017, the Chinese version of Running Man visited the Czech Republic to shoot. The show focused on the friendship between the two countries, invited famous Czech commentators, models and athletes as guests, and promoted Czech culture through games. The president of Czech Republic Miloš Zeman said, after China signed a treaty with the Czech Republic on the Belt and Road Initiative, the number of Chinese tourists to the Czech Republic has doubled (Keep Running, 2017).

The other TV program "Where Are We Going, Dad?" in China, which is based on Korean reality show "Dad! Where Are We Going?", searches for filming locations increased dramatically by 272% after the reality show was broadcast (Hunan TV 2014, cited in Fu et al. 2016: 37). Most Chinese people are passionate about movies and TV series, and their high participation has a significant impact on their motivation for international travel, so they are highly involved in international travel (Wen et al. 2018: 216). Because the lifestyles, food and fashion shot by the visual media are attractive to Chinese audiences, which makes them actively travel abroad (Wen et al. 2018: 216).

Finally, there are many programs in China that are influenced by Korean culture, and most of the viewers like to watch Korean programs. Other Korean popular cultures such as cosmetic surgery, skin care and fashion attract Chinese audiences, thereby increasing their participation. Therefore, Korean TV programs promote global tourism and bring economic benefits.

2.8   The Unknown of Korean Popular Culture

Korean pop culture has not only brought about changes in people's behaviour, but also brought about psychological changes, which may cause unknown problems. According to a survey conducted by the NHK Broadcasting Culture Institute in Japan in 2004, 26% of people have a change in their impression of Korea after watching a romantic show, 22% have increased their interest in Korea (Modung Ilbo 2005, cited in Kim et al. 2007: 1343). The success of the program has ignited a craze for Japanese to learn Korean culture from many aspects, such as Korean, CDs and books, movies and food (Modung Ilbo 2005, cited in Kim et al. 2007: 1343). According to the Institute of Modern Economics (2004), apart from an increase of 134% in universities offering Korean language lectures in Japan, Japanese women are more inclined to marry Korean men after watching programs (Faiola 2006, cited in Kim et al. 2007: 1343). Brasor (2004) pointed out that the broadcast of the Winter Sonata has eased the discrimination of Japanese against Korean Japanese and Koreans living in Japan (Faiola 2006, cited in Kim et al. 2007: 1343). The history of war between countries has caused hatred and reduced the cultural intimacy between the two countries, which has an impact on the relations between the two peoples and the economy. Consumers' attitudes towards products in a certain country will be affected by their hostility, easing the relationship between the two countries will help economic development (Klein et al. 1998, cited in Su et al. 2011: 813). This shows that to a certain extent, popular culture can make people change their views on other countries, reduce national hatred, and even become loved and accepted.

On the other hand, although special locations such as filming locations increase the country's tourism, it also brings some troubles, such as traffic congestion, pedestrian congestion and urban commercialization (Tooke & Baker 1996, cited in Kim et al. 2007: 1345). Moreover, some general negative issues such as rising prices of specialty products, the exploitation of locals or tourists, the gap between filming locations on screen and reality that disappointing tourists, and the loss of original characteristics of the city's excessive commercialization (Riley et al. 1998, cited in Kim et al. 2007: 1345). In addition, some life issues, such as the increase in the number of tourists, the increase in rents for houses and shops, and the local residents suffer intrusion or invasion of privacy by cameras and outsiders (Beeton 2001, cited in Kim et al. 2007: 1345).

Finally, as the development of Korean pop culture is booming, it is rumored that China has imposed restrictions on South Korea since 2016, banning Korean stars from performing in China, stopping investment by new Korean cultural industry companies, and banning new Korean TV dramas and variety show cooperation projects. Although Korean celebrities have no longer performed in China since 2016, and many Korean tourism products or programs can no longer be broadcast, the Chinese government still denies that it has imposed restrictions on South Korea. Therefore, it cannot be confirmed whether the Chinese government believes that it is threatened by South Korean pop culture and imposed political restrictions. Under the influence of the incident, the performance of Korean celebrities in China has been greatly affected, and the exchange of popular culture between the two countries has also been restricted. It is not yet known whether it will seriously affect the relationship between the two countries. If the Chinese government does impose restrictions on South Korea, what causes the Chinese government to abandon the economic benefits of cultural exchanges between the two countries, and may even lead to tensions between the two sides.

3   Methodology

In the center of this thesis, the paper explores how popular culture has affected Asian tourism in the past 10 years, and takes Korean popular culture as an example to understand the impact of popular culture. Therefore, research was conducted to help solve these problems, and some assumptions based on "How Popular Culture influences Asian Tourism Trends in 10 years".

First, qualitative research is used for research methods. Qualitative research can bring more accurate results to the research, because the interviewees can describe their situation and experience in detail, thereby providing substantive assistance to the research goals (Silverman 2016: 26). Respondents are able to answer questions based on their own experience, so as to understand everyone's views on the research topic. And the answer is not only limited by the scope of the interviewer's knowledge, but also hope to get different results and opinions from the interviewee's answer.

Regarding the focus group information, since the project focuses on Asian tourism, the interviewees are all from Asia, because Asians have a better understanding of the state of Asian tourism and Asian popular culture. As mentioned before, teenagers in 10s and 20s are susceptible to idol worship and K-Pop fandom. Therefore, the interviewees are only in their 20s. They have witnessed the rise and development of Korean pop culture 10 years ago, and they are good at using 3C products, and are easy to understand and are influenced by popular culture. And 10 years later, they become mature, whether the decline in enthusiasm affects the tourism industry? Therefore, some interviews have been conducted with people who have experienced and participated in the development of Asian popular culture and tourism industry in the past decade.

There are four main assumptions that directly revolve around the research questions of this thesis, and some extraneous assumptions are used for in-depth explorations and test other correlations that may be caused by the survey results. The main assumptions are as follows.

The main Assumptions are as follows:

1: There is a relationship between liking popular culture and Asian tourism.

2: There is a relationship between liking popular culture and motivation to visit locations related to popular culture.

3: There is a relationship between the preference for popular culture and tourists' travel decisions.

4: There is a relationship between the preference for Korean popular culture and the overall tourism industry in Asia.

The further Exploratory Assumptions are as follows:

5: There is a relationship between the enthusiasm for Korean popular culture and the overall performance of the South Korean tourism industry.

6: There is a relationship between the passion for popular culture and the tourism industry.

7: There is a relationship between the spread of popular culture and political means.

8: There is a relationship between the spread of popular culture and the reduction of racial prejudice and hatred.

Regarding the main assumptions, it is possible to understand some obvious problems and investigate the driving factors and motivations of popular culture to boost Asian tourism. The exploratory assumptions explore some unknown and future issues, and explore the influence of people's attitudes towards popular culture on Asian tourism and political issues.

In order to allow respondents to express their thoughts on each question, qualitative research is used for in-depth interviews. Qualitative research can ask questions in more depth, which can see the details, and make the survey results more humane. The questions are open-ended; therefore, more personal information can be obtained. The interview was conducted in Chinese and English, and finally translated into English for thesis research and summary.

The personal data of the interviewees is treated confidentially. The answers collected about the purpose of this study have been analyzed, and each question has been analyzed separately. Finally, each answer has been mixed together to obtain the consensus of all participants.

4   Descriptive Statistics

There are 10 interviewees in total, all of them from Hong Kong. There are 8 women and 2 men, aged between 22 and 24 years old. They are all graduates, keep an eye on trends and love to travel. In order to get answers that are more representative of the interviewees, the interview questions are mainly open-ended, so there will be various results, which will be sorted and analyzed after collection.

First of all, Figure 2 below shows everyone's views and perceptions of popular culture. Every interviewee has a different definition of popular culture, and most people mentioned "Trend at a certain time", with 80%. Except for the "Commercialism" with only one vote, all other definitions "Accepted and Liked by the majority of the society", "Influenced by the media", "Affect teenagers" and "Set of behaviours, beliefs and culture" have two votes.
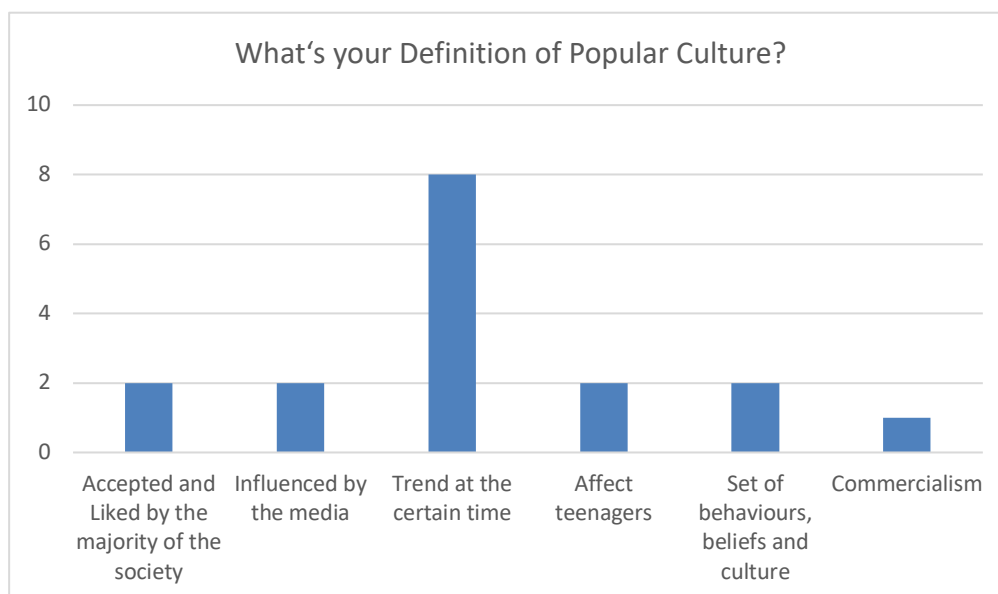
Figure 2. Definitions of Popular Culture

In order to understand how the interviewees distinguish between culture and popular culture, the interview asked them to answer their definition of culture, as shown in Figure 3 below. Half of the interviewees believed that culture is "Tradition and Historical", followed by the elements surrounding life "Language, Knowledge, Beliefs, etc." accounting for 40%. Then came the 20% of "Including Popular Culture" and the 10% of "Less Commercial".
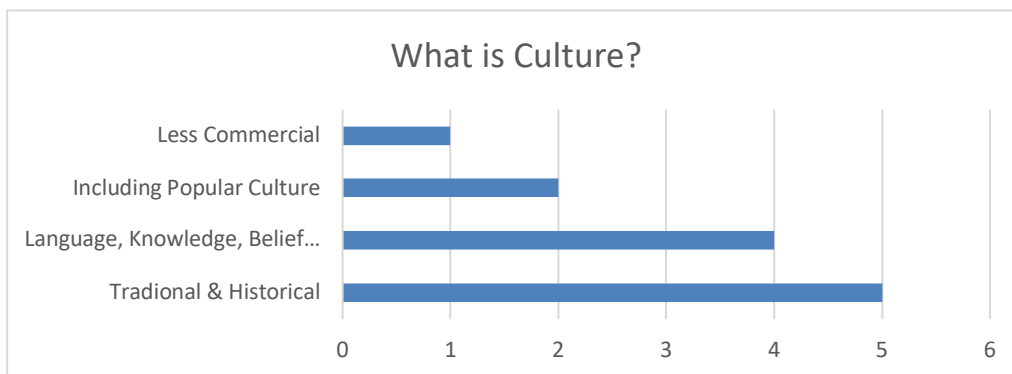

Figure 3. Definitions of Culture

Figure 4 shows an example that most people think of when talking about popular culture. It can be seen from the picture that all the interviewees think of pop music, and some even proposed K-Pop. And "Fashion" was mentioned by 4 people, "Use of Slang", "Movie & Drama" and "Game" were mentioned by 3 persons, and finally 2 people mentioned "Art".
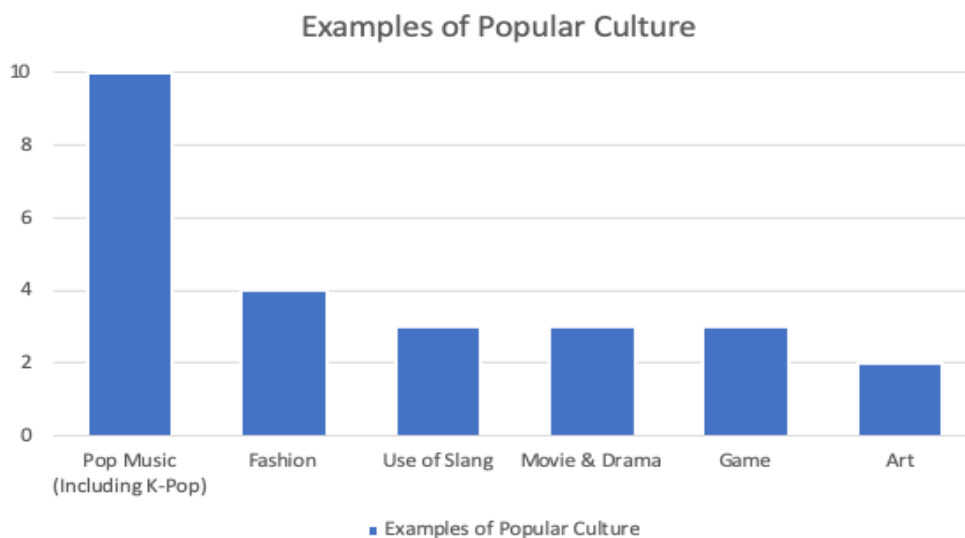
Figure 4. Examples of Popular Culture

The next part is to study the influence of popular culture. In the interview, all interviewees believed that popular culture can trigger Asian tourism. According to the reason as shown in Figure 5, analyze what is the motivation of people to travel due to popular culture. 50% of the respondents referred to the reason for the "Korean Wave", followed by 20% of "Want to know more", and 10% of "Strong Impact", "Special" and "Filming Locations".
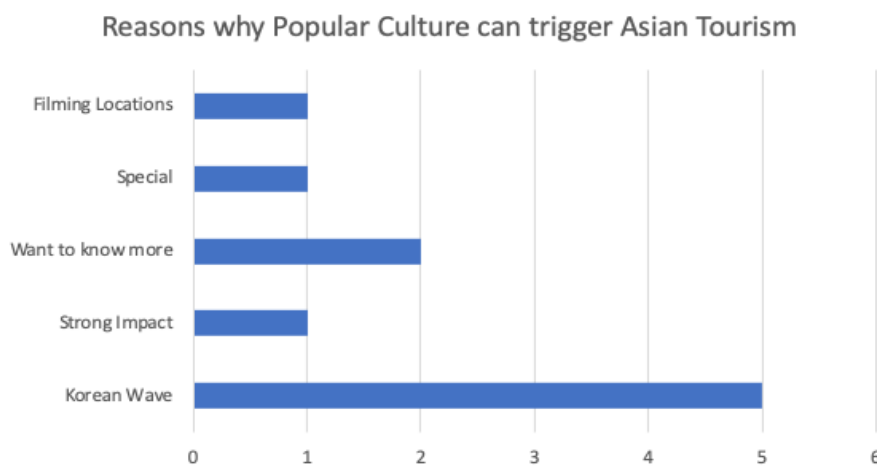

Figure 5. Reasons of Popular Culture trigger Asian Tourism

It can be seen from Figure 6 that 80% of the respondents have travelled under the influence of popular culture. This shows that popular culture has a great opportunity to influence people's psychology and behaviour, thereby changing travel decisions.
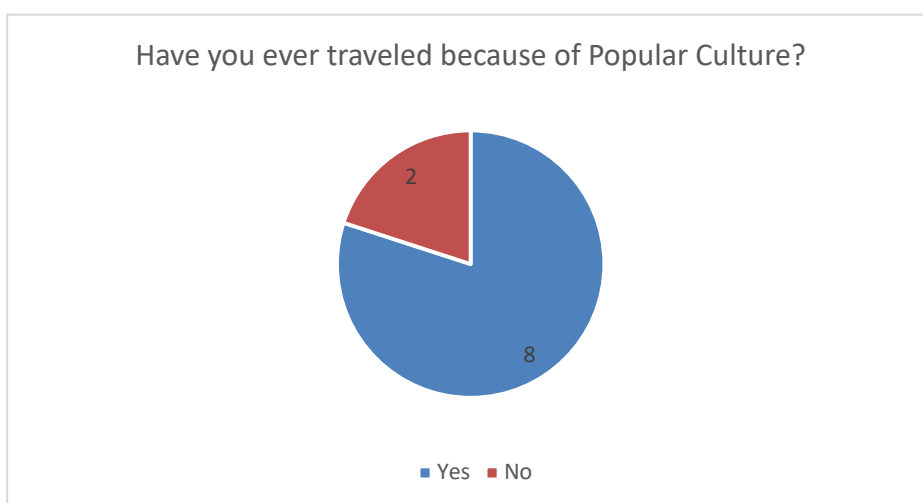
Figure 6. Travel because of Popular Culture

35

Regarding the question of whether Korean pop music will have a significant impact on Asian tourism, all interviewees agreed with that. When asked whether people's enthusiasm for K-Pop will greatly affect South Korea's tourism industry, as shown in Figure 7, 60% of people think it will, 30% think it will not, and 10% think it is possible.
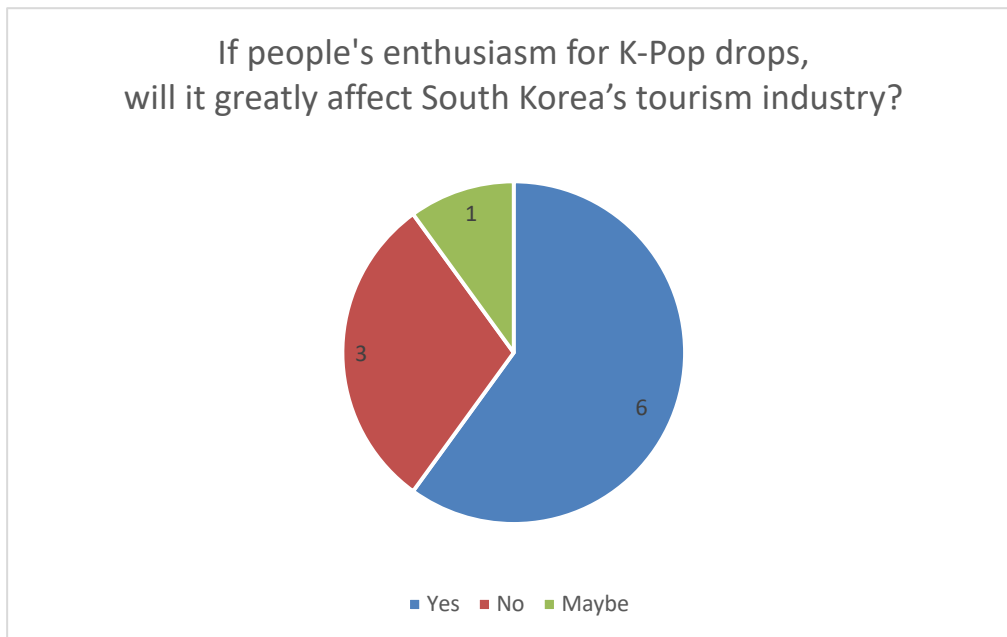
Figure 7. Enthusiasm for K-Pop greatly influences Korean tourism

The last part is to study everyone's views on whether the government uses popular culture to reduce prejudice between countries. From Figure 8, it can be seen that the answers to "Yes" and "No" each have 40%, and the remaining 20% think they are not sure. It can be seen that this topic is controversial and requires careful study.

Do you think that the government has used Popular culture to reduce prejudice between countries?

- Yes
- No
- Not Sure
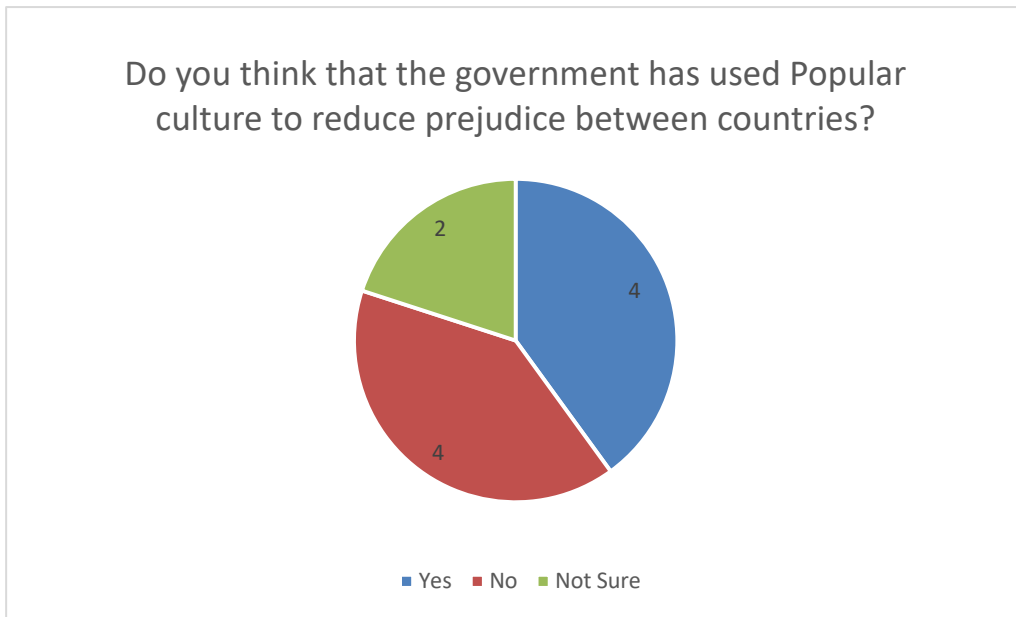
Figure 8. Government has used Popular culture to reduce prejudice between countries

5 Qualitative Data Analysis

In this section, the results collected from the interview will be analyzed after adjustments. In order to obtain consensus and make the thesis go smoothly, this part will deal with the assumptions mentioned before. There are a total of 10 interviewees, the purpose is to get more different answers and different ideas from the dialogue, so as to get results on how popular culture affects Asian tourism, people and countries. The conversation mainly involves 8 questions. In order to protect the privacy of participants, each participant's speech is quoted with a number from 1 to 10.

5.1 Background information Questions

Question 1. *What is your Definition of Popular Culture?*

First of all, apart from understanding the respondents' basic knowledge of popular culture, their views on popular culture are also very important. Since popular culture has never been officially certified, the definition of popular culture is more like the default in people's minds. For most interviewees, popular culture is something that is popular in different ways "now" or at a specific time, and is loved and accepted by most people. Respondents No. 5 and No. 6 said that the main target of Popular Culture Communication is young people, because they receive information quickly and are more receptive and influenced by pop culture. And respondents No. 1 and No. 3 stated that people's ideas about popular culture are mainly influenced by mass media and peer. Respondent No. 1 even stated *"Under peer influence or media effects, more people consume the certain cultural products at that time. It becomes popular. It changes rapidly because of commercialism. The innovation is always evolving for the trend."*, which undoubtedly means that popular culture has a commercial nature and is for profit.

Question 2. *What is the difference between Culture and Popular Culture?*

How to define culture and popular culture is sometimes controversial, so the opinion of interviewees or Asians is worth noting. Regarding the definition of culture, most people respond that it is traditional and has historical value, and it takes time to establish it. Culture is including traditional and popular culture. According to the interviewee No. 3, *"Culture encompasses religion, food, what we wear, how we wear it, our language, marriage, music, what we believe is right or wrong."*. The essence of culture is not for commercial purposes, and popular culture is more concerned with mass consumption and production. Popular culture is mainly spread by different media, and people were influenced by the media, which made it loved and popular by more people at that time. Some people think that the media is not a completely bad thing, at least it can broaden the audience's horizons and establish a global perspective when the audience gets to know different countries or cultures.

Question 3: *When we mentioned Popular Culture, what would you think?*

In this section, since the interviewees are all young people in their 20s, it is important for this thesis to understand what they think belongs to popular culture. From the results of the interview (Figure 4), everyone mentioned pop music, and 3 of them even answered K-Pop. In "Movie & Drama", some people also mentioned Korean TV dramas. And fashion, use of slang, and art that includes design style, Japanese anime and Marvel comics. From the examples cited by the interviewees, it can be seen that Korean pop culture has a deep impression on Asians, proving that it has a lot of influence on Asians. At the same time, it can be concluded that the promotion ability of Korean pop culture is not limited to South Korea, but also the entire Asian region. In fact, people who love these popular cultures are not necessarily young people, but young people are more enthusiastic about following trends than others.

5.2 Tourism Questions

Question 4. *Can popular culture trigger tourism in Asia? Why or why not?*

As mentioned above, the development of tourism in Asia is getting better and better, and the number of tourists has increased significantly, especially South Korea. It is believed that there is a reason the Asian tourism industry has had these circumstances in this decade, and the prevalence of popular culture may become the main reason for the surge in Asian tourism. Therefore, there is a question focused on the assumptions between liking popular culture and Asian tourism, and the motivation to visit places related to popular culture.

In this question, all the interviewees believed that popular culture can trigger Asian tourism, and most of the reasons are the same. 50% of the respondents used Korean Wave as an example. Respondent No. 6 said *"As spreading popular culture is helping more people to get interests towards a country. If they are getting more interested, they would like to explore the places on their own. The BTS (Beyond The Scene), a K-Pop group, who helped South Korea generates an estimated amount of $3.54 billion as economic value to the country per year and $1.26 billion as added value per year (Hyundai Research Institute, 2018)."*. It can be seen from the example cited by interviewee No. 6 that people travel because of idol worship, and interviewee No. 1 even stated that Hallyu has become a global phenomenon. Interviewee No. 3 even *said "K-pop really brings huge traffic to the Korean tourism market. The traveler will visit the place their idols have been before, copying the Korean idols' life while visiting Korean. So as to other Asia countries, Taiwan, China, and Japan all are very rely on Pop culture to bring awareness to the public."*. It proves that people who love popular culture are willing to spend money for their idols and even travel abroad. Not to mention how many idol groups, celebrities and TV dramas are launched every year in South Korea.

Popular culture has a great influence on people, because people who pursue a certain popular culture would be interested in visiting the origins of itself, and want to visit and experience the culture by themselves. Popular culture is very different from European countries in terms of fashion, food and lifestyle. Tourists who love Asian pop culture often visit special attractions related to music and movies. For example, fans of the Japanese animated fantasy film "Spirited Away" (2001) directed by Hayao Miyazaki will go to Jiufen in Taiwan, in order to experience the scenes in the movie.

Based on the responses of the interviewees, it can be concluded for Assumptions 1 and 2 that popular culture can trigger tourism in Asia, which is also the motivation for people to visit places related to popular culture. Within these 10 years, the rapid development of popular culture is the main reason for promoting Asian tourism. There are many different popular cultures in Asia. With the development of technology, it is easier to promote culture, which can attract different potential tourists, such as fans of K-Pop or Japanese animation. In addition to attracting Asian tourists, Asian popular culture that is loved by overseas tourists can expand the Asian tourism market and drive the local economy.

Question 5. *Have you ever traveled because of popular culture?*

This question reflects the true status of popular culture influencing people's travel decisions in life. Regarding whether the respondents have ever traveled under the influence of popular culture, 80% of the respondents said they did. Respondent No. 3 expressed from her own experience, *"I used to be really addicted to K-pop music, like EXO, F(X)... I went to Korean to ice ski and buy the products that my idols use as commercial endorsers. Spent almost 1million KRW (700 Euro) on this trip just buying those products. "*. Interviewee No. 6 also said *"I've been to Japan as I love their songs and the video games so I went for buying some figures and dolls. And the food. "*.

In contrast, respondents who did not travel because of popular culture indicated that they had no interest in popular culture. It shows that people who love popular culture definitely are influenced by popular culture, thereby choosing their tourist attractions, whether the ultimate goal is for celebrities, shopping or other reasons. Popular culture lovers travel and consume because of popular culture, while people who are not interested in popular culture will not be affected. The preference for popular culture does have an impact on tourists' travel decisions, which shows that the Assumption 3 holds.

Question 6. *Do you think K-Pop has a significant impact on Asian tourism?*

In the past 10 years, the development of K-Pop and its popularity in Asia have made people recognize that K-Pop is equivalent to a trend indicator, and the popularity of K-Pop far exceeds other popular cultures. Thus, this question is to understand whether the significant increase in Asian tourism in the past decade is closely related to K-Pop, and whether the overall performance of the Asian tourism industry is greatly affected by K-Pop.

Regarding the influence of K-Pop in the Asian tourism industry, all interviewees said there is no doubt. Interviewee No. 7 said *"As K-Pop is very popular within Asian countries and even European countries, which may trigger people to visit Korea and learn more about pop culture."*. Even in European countries, there are a large number of K-Pop fans who are willing to spend money to support their idols. They will travel the world to support their concerts, and spend money on the place at the same time. And this is one of the most effective ways to increase the economy of the country and boost the tourism industry. Moreover, the increasing advancement of technology has made it easier for people to know and accept Hallyu culture, which has attracted a lot of people to spend money for it.

Even though some interviewees are not popular culture lovers, they believe that K-Pop has a significant impact on Asian tourism. This proves the influence of K-Pop in Asia and even the world, and the recognition of K-Pop by Asians. Also, K-Pop attracts many foreign tourists to travel to Asia, especially South Korea. Therefore, it is verified that in Assumption 4, the preference for K-Pop does have a significant impact on the overall Asian tourism industry.

5.3   Unverifiable Questions

Question 7. *If people's enthusiasm for K-Pop drops, will it greatly affect South Korea's tourism industry?*

Regarding this question, the relationship between the performance of the Korean tourism industry and people's enthusiasm for K-Pop is equivalent to whether the extent of people's passion for pop culture have an impact on the tourism industry. As for whether people's enthusiasm for K-Pop drop will have a great impact on South Korea's tourism industry, the interviewees have different opinions. Respondent No. 2 who thinks that there will be no significant impact said *"Except the K-Pop culture, there are many special cultures of Korea that can attract tourism, such as entertainment and food style."*. They believe that the decline in the K-Pop boom will have an impact on South Korea's tourism industry, but it will not have a serious impact on overall performance. People have their own perspective when they try to experience the culture, and for those who appreciate the culture would stay. In contrast, for respondents who think it will have a significant impact, they think that K-Pop is one of the most influential factors for Korea's tourism industry. Interviewee No. 6 said *"As some of the travellers will go to Korea specifically for a concert or a autograph session of their favourite idol, if people enthusiasm for K-pop drops, people will no longer visit, and maybe they will change the target to another country."*.

For respondents who think it is uncertain, South Korea may no longer be the mainstream or preferred place for travel. But for those who have never been there, it is still worth a visit. Moreover, it depends on the extent to which South Korea has established popular culture. South Korea's clothes and food will also affect the tourism industry, not just K-Pop. There is a bit of contradiction, in Question 6, all interviewees believe that K-Pop has a significant impact on Asian tourism. However, when people's enthusiasm for K-Pop declines, some interviewees believe that it will not greatly affect South Korea's tourism industry. Respondents believe that K-Pop is the main reason for popular culture lovers to travel South Korea, but local characteristics will be found during the journey. The different cultural characteristics of Korea are the reasons why tourists keep visiting Korea, not just because of K-Pop.

Therefore, regarding the argument mentioned in Assumption 5, people's enthusiasm for K-Pop will affect the performance of the Korean tourism industry, but it is uncertain whether it will have a serious impact. And Assumption 6 concluded that people's enthusiasm for popular culture will affect the tourism industry, but the reason for attracting tourists is not only popular culture but also traditional culture.

Question 8. *Do you think that the government has used Popular culture to reduce prejudice between countries?*

Finally, with regard to whether the government uses popular culture to reduce prejudice between countries, the number of people who think "Yes" is the same as "No". Respondents who think "Yes" believe that popular culture can attract most people's attention, which makes people ignore other issues. And people's passion for popular culture will increase their favourability for the country. In addition, respondent No. 6 said: *"Popular culture is the largest advertisement that promotes a country or government. It can be promoted to people around the world through different media to attract different tourists, not only to attract them to travel, but also attract them to consume."*.

On the contrary, some interviewees believe that even if popular culture is very attractive, people are loyal to their country and culture, so they do not think that popular culture can reduce the prejudice between countries. Take China and South Korea as examples. China imposes restrictions on South Korea, and there is no barrier that Chinese people like South Korea's popular culture. But if Korean artists show disrespect to China, those who love Korean pop culture in China will say that they no longer support this artist. Therefore, popular culture cannot reduce prejudice between countries.

Other interviewees said that they believe that the government uses popular culture as an advertising tool to make noise around the world, but they are not sure whether it will reduce prejudice between countries. Finally, for Assumption 7, the dissemination of popular culture may be used as a political tool to gain the favor of people in other countries. But for Assumption 8, the spread of popular culture can reduce racial prejudice and hatred remains to be studied.

This is undoubtedly because there are many uncertain factors. For example, respondents who have long received the popular culture of other countries/regions will subconsciously have a good impression of that place or person. Moreover, each interviewee's preference for popular culture and the level of information received are different, it is difficult to define whether the government has used popular culture to reduce prejudice between countries.

6   Summary & Conclusions

According to this thesis, how popular culture has affected the Asian tourism industry in the past decade, no matter in tourism figures, past literature, or respondents' answers, a lot of information has been obtained. From a large amount of data, it can be seen that the overall tourism industry in Asia is getting better and better. The focus of this thesis is on South Korea. Due to the rapid development of its popular culture, tourists visiting South Korea are increasing significantly. People traveled to South Korea from the past to experience the local culture, and now they have become followers of Korean popular culture. This undoubtedly proves the success of Korean Wave.

The development of various aspects of Korean pop culture has received a good response from the performance of the tourism industry. K-Pop enthusiasts will follow their idols to various places, participate in their activities, buy K-Pop merchandise. K-Pop not only brings benefits to the local tourism industry, but also brings profit to the restaurants and retail industry. K-Dramas makes the audience have fantasies about the scene and the Koreans, reminds the audience to feel the atmosphere at the shooting location, and also has a good impression of Korea. Whether in the programs, K-Pop or Korean TV series, they have achieved success in promoting Korean popular culture to all around the world. Many Asian audiences are curious about Korea because of accepting these media, and they will fall in love with Korean fashion styles and learn Korean.

At the same time, based on the success of Korean popular culture, many countries import Hallyu to their places. This is undoubtedly a certification of Korean popular culture and also proves that popular culture can trigger Asian tourism. However, it is also necessary to consider whether the Korean tourism industry relies too much on Korean popular culture. People's enthusiasm for Hallyu will be extinguished one day, and how much impact it will have on Korean tourism is not yet known.

On the other hand, the rapid development of Korean pop culture has caused other countries to follow suit and scruple to South Korea. China's ban on South Korea is undoubtedly the best example. Regardless of whether the ban is true or not, Korean popular culture has indeed no longer been imported into China since 2016. In addition, as to whether popular culture will reduce prejudice and hatred towards other countries, the best proof is when the audience receives media messages and feels good about other countries.

According to qualitative research, many people classify culture as traditional and historically valuable. In fact, popular culture is also a kind of culture. The popularization of popular culture has motivated many people to travel, and South Korea has indeed performed very well in this regard, so that the South Korean tourism industry has been successful in this decade. Therefore, many Asians agree that Korean pop culture is equivalent to a trend indicator. The enthusiasm of popular culture lovers for popular culture bring tourism and economy to the place, but it is still unknown whether the decline of enthusiasm will greatly affect local tourism, because the interviewees hold different views on this. Similarly, the influence of popular culture on national hatred and the way in which the government uses it as soft power to improve the country's image is still unknown.

Finally, popular culture is derived from the native culture of the country, and every country has its own popular culture. As for whether popular culture will affect people's travel decisions, it depends on how much people love popular culture. The impact of popular culture on young people is mainly derived from the development of technology and the use of technology. It is also because of this that popular culture can trigger large-scale Asian tourism within these 10 years.

7   Limitations

In this thesis, there were some limitations during data collection, which leads to incomplete analysis results and even misjudgments. In the topic about understanding the impact of popular culture on tourism in Asia, this thesis focuses on South Korea and China. However, there are 49 countries in Asia, thus the scope of this study is not extensive and the results are not comprehensive enough. Moreover, interviewees are all from the same region, they may not be representative of all Asian. When everyone is accepting the same culture, geographic restrictions affect the opinions of respondents. Bias may exist because respondents answer questions based on their subjective impressions. However, since their replies are based on real experiences, the results are less affected. Most of the interviewees cited Korean popular culture as an example, which caused the scope of research to remain limited, just as they did not have much exposure to popular culture.

Since there is no standard definition of popular culture, controversy arises when there is no consensus. When it comes to pop culture, most people think of Korean Wave. However, Korean pop culture is just a kind of Asian popular culture, but it does not mean it. And most of the people traveled because of popular culture are ages 10s to 20s, which also reduces the sample size and may affect the amount of data that can be collected. And some factors cannot be controlled, for example, some interviewees may have prejudices against a certain country or popular culture, and their answers will also be affected by prejudice.

Moreover, there is no evidence that the South Korean government uses popular culture to reduce discrimination and prejudice against itself in other countries, or uses celebrity effects to promote K-Pop, so as to reduce friction and hatred between the two peoples. Also, although everyone believes that China has imposed a ban on South Korea, the matter has not been confirmed, so it is still unclear what the main reason for the restriction is.

In addition, younger generations are more willing to travel alone and are susceptible to the influence of idolatry culture. Since the younger generation is good at using 3C products, they can better understand and accept popular culture. Through this research, it can be determined that the idolatry culture does play an important role in motivation. However, one aspect of the study is still uncertain, such as whether people's declining enthusiasm for popular culture will greatly affect Asian tourism, and are there other reasons that affect their motivation to travel?

8   Recommendations

Since popular culture will change over time and everyone's perception is different, the future development of popular culture is unpredictable. This research can provide some suggestions on how popular culture affects people's mindset and behaviour, and how the Korean government promotes Korean popular culture and uses it for promotion in the tourism industry. In this research, it has studied on-screen and K-Pop induced tourism, which can provide some ideas for them and use the knowledge to their study. There are many kinds of popular culture, but this thesis only focuses on studying South Korea and China, and different places have different popular cultures, so the scope of research can be broader in the future.

Next, South Korea has been promoting K-Pop culture in recent years. Most people's concept of K-Pop is deeply rooted in their hearts. Most of the interviewees in this study are influenced by K-Pop or Korean Wave. It is encouraged to extend the interviewees to each country or region to make the research data more comprehensive, and the research results will not be biased towards the same side. The main study target of this thesis is young people around 20 years old. It is recommended to interview more people from different age groups, different occupations and different economic levels to understand their views on popular culture.

Moreover, the research and analysis can be conducted from the highest and lowest points of the research targets' enthusiasm for popular culture. And find out what is the biggest attraction of popular culture to them, and what caused them to change their attitude towards popular culture. Some interviewees have pointed out that South Korea is overly dependent on the economic benefits brought about by the Korean Wave. The boom in tourism is mainly due to the promotion of K-Pop stars, TV shows and TV series. They said that if the Korean popular culture becomes obsolete, South Korea's tourism and economy will be hit hard. It is still unknown how the decline of people's enthusiasm for Korean pop culture will affect South Korea's tourism and economy. Research can be promoted from the Korean government in other aspects of development besides popular culture.

On the other hand, in the future research direction, researchers can learn about the changes in hostility between countries, so as to know the factors that make them change. Just like China and South Korea today, researchers can study the relationship between the two countries in the future, as well as the Chinese government's attitude towards Korean popular culture and artists. It is possible that people with political rights worry that Korean popular culture will have an impact on the status of China's actual culture (Storey 2009: 12).

At last, it is recommended that no matter which country, the local economy should not be completely dependent on one aspect. Because the current popular culture will be unpopular one day, the way to attract tourists or the economy should not be static. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that the government explore the development direction of replacing or offsetting the economic benefits of popular culture, so as to prevent the tourism induced by popular culture being eliminated by the times and greatly affecting the local economy.

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