

Korean Drama'S Influence on China'S Fashion Industry and Culture

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to discuss the recent impact of Korean movie and TV culture on Chinese female audiences—ways they might be attracted and influenced by the Korean movie and TV culture and the reasons behind this impact. The method we used is based on a literature review, supplemented by a questionnaire survey (for reference only because of our limitations). The document resources include but are not limited to journals, academic websites, news reports, and blogs. We collect quantified data, relevant research, and the history of Korean waves to support this essay. According to the collected information, we can see that the cultural products in Korea are successfully influenced a broader market and audience's consumption. Chinese cultural industry could learn from it, thus developing our culture to achieve more economic benefits brought by culture export and extending its values on a global scale. What sets us apart is that we focus on how young people spend money on pop culture and the economic impact behind them.

Keywords: South Korean drama, Clothing, Consumption, Fashion, Culture output.

1. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, with the increasingly close relationship between Korea and China, the Korean film industry has become more and more familiar and integrated into our daily lives, becoming an event that enriches our lives during our spare time. With the popularity of Korean dramas, the well-made Korean clothing in those dramas also quietly affects the aesthetic tendency and fashion trend in our country. The Evolution of Korean drama started in form 1990s and gradually being exported to Asian markets in the 1990s due to Korean industry strategies and government support. TV drama 'Jealousy' was broadcast on CCTV in 1993, the first Korean drama broadcast in China. Since then, K-dramas have been reaching new heights alongside the rise of digital technology and online media [1]. The Korean wave has become a popular culture in China since 1997, as the TV drama 'What is love?' was imported to China and well-received [2]. Through the modern image presented in this media, audiences could be attracted by fashion styles in Korean dramas. Chinese audiences are also influenced by

the values of respecting the old and caring for the young, unity and harmonious which inspired traditional Chinese concepts that are the same as the Korean culture[3].

Moreover, in Korean drama, the characters always hold a positive attitude towards ordinary lives, which could remind audiences of love and warmth, and that are the things most Chinese are pursuing [3]. For example, 'My Love from A Star' in 2014 has been viewed more than 14.5 billion times on Chinese online platform[4]. With thousands of audience started to buy the Korean style clothes while many online shopping platforms use the name of the drama as the title of their products to promote sales volume [5]. The recent research has shown that in 2000, South Korea's cultural industry exports were only 500 million U.S. dollars. In 2017, cultural industry exports reached 6.89 billion U.S. dollars, an increase of 14.7% year-on-year. The total sales of cultural industries reached 110.53 trillion won (about 652.9 billion yuan), increasing by 4.8% year-on-year. Compared with the Korean economic growth rate

of 3.1% and the industry-wide average growth rate of 1.5% in the past five years, the growth momentum of the cultural industry is very strong. The benefits brought by the export of Korean cultural products far exceed its value [6].

This study is focused on discussing the influence of Korean dramas on the Chinese female audience, especially the desire for clothing. Within the main body paragraphs, we would discuss the impacts mainly through two dimensions: an evolution of Chinese fashion and clothing and Chinese women's understanding of Korean culture through those dramas. This study aims to discuss the recent impacts of the Korean wave while allowing the public to understand how Korean drama is used as a carrier to lead fashion and achieve cultural output. The study is significant because our country can absorb and learn from South Korea's accumulated experience in development, accelerate the promotion of the export of high-quality cultural products and services with Chinese characteristics through our TV series, and continue to achieve large-scale, market-oriented, and international development.

2. TRANSFORMATION OF FASHION STYLE THROUGH THE INTRODUCTION OF KOREAN DRAMA

Fashion for the period is the latest and most admired style in clothes and cosmetics and behaviour. This section would discuss how Chinese concepts of fashion styles varied from the 19th century to the present with the introduction of Korean dramas and the main reasons for those significant changes.

2.1. Chinese fashion and dressing style before the "Korean wave."

The existing historical records have illustrated that, in the mid-19th century, neutralization and de-sexualization were the only two choices for women in early new China. Even elegant cheongsam still played an active role at that time. As more and more women participated in many political movements, the products of these revolutions and fights were the Lenin coat, Mao jacket, and Chinese tunic suit, which were really well-received by women of the time. During the cultural revolution, women wore old army uniforms, old army hats, army belts, liberation shoes, red sleeve emblem, army satchel with sparkling scarlet characters "Serve the people," which was included in their Red Guard suit. From 1970, bell-bottomed pants, goggles, and jeans came into people's life. Without any restraint and repression, people's dressing styles changed dramatically. Baggy rag, tight, bat shirt, big plastic earrings, and heavy make-up constitute the most beautiful looks for urban gals. Subsequently, in the following decades, as living standards around the country improved, black-and-white

television sets entered Chinese households, along with tape recorders and radios. TV stars instantly became trendsetters [7].

2.2. Introduction of Korean dramas

At the turn of this century in the 1990s, China's reform and opening-up policy brought economic prosperity and opened up a new world for fashion lovers. The Internet and the introduction of foreign culture have injected new choices and opportunities into China's fashion industry. That's when the "Korean wave" found a foothold and many followers in China. Whenever some TV shows become popular in China, young Chinese women would soon study the style of the actresses in the dramas and imitate them [8].

Since then, Korean dramas have gradually been exported into Asian markets due to Korean industry strategies and government support. The Korean wave has soon become a popular culture in China from 1997, as the TV drama 'What is love?' was imported to China and well received. Through the modern image presented in those media, audiences could be attracted by fashion styles in Korean dramas [9].

2.3. The main fashion style presented in Korean dramas

Recent research has indicated that the fashion style showed in Korean dramas is mostly in love with off shoulder and cold shoulder tops these days. While the chest area remains covered, crop tops have become a big trend. They're especially popular to mix with high-waisted pants, shorts, and skirts. On the other hand, going mini in the lower body has absolutely been a trend in Korea for many years. Miniskirts, short shorts, and mini dresses definitely have become an obvious figure of Korean fashion. Nowadays. Oversizing is also a famous feature of Korean fashion nowadays, from tops to coats, and pants to dresses. Korean women love wearing clothes oversized enough to hide their forms. They are especially popular for casual use, existing even in the form of sweater dresses, and focus on utmost comfort, which is a popular type of style gaining popularity amongst Koreans [8]. Korean designing is smart and creates fashion that appeals to the masses, while pop culture also lends a hand here, making sure that trending styles are constantly in the public eye. K-dramas are an important integral part of Korean culture exported into the world on a large scale, ensuring that Korean fashion reaches screens across the globe [10].

2.4. Impacts on Chinese clothing style through those Korean dramas

Korean dramas, Korean straight eyebrows, snow-white skin, two-toned lip color, coral eyeshadow, and

cheek color are a standard look now in China. These days, it's common for both online and local clothing stores in China to relate their goods to Korea, either by saying items are 'Korean-made' or 'Korean-style'. According to the investigation, during the airing of the hit K-drama "My Love from Another Star," the actress was spotted with Yves Saint Laurent's lipstick No.52. The item quickly sold out. Soon, the K-pop star was ranked third most influential star in China by Sina Entertainment, according to his Weibo search analytics and other factors [11]. Women started purchasing the "Korean style" clothing and imitating the fashion presented in those dramas, which quietly affect our country's aesthetic tendency and fashion trend.

2.5. Main reasons of the significant impacts

Korean drama could be widely accepted and spread in China. It can be determined that they are geographically bordered and have a long history of cultural exchanges with similar cultural concepts from words and languages to etiquette and morality [12]. Therefore, Koreans express emotions, thinking patterns, values, and many other aspects that are more similar to Chinese people. The values of respecting the old and caring for the young, unity, and harmony presented in Korean dramas inspired traditional Chinese concepts, the same as the Korean culture. What's more, in Korean drama, the characters always hold a positive attitude towards ordinary lives, which could remind audiences of love and warmth, and that are the things most Chinese are pursuing [3]. Thus, Korean drama influences Chinese culture by satisfying most Chinese audiences' humanistic feelings. Secondly, China and South Korea belong to Asia with similarities in appearance, body, and skin colour. The similarity in hair colour, skin colour, and body shape laid the foundation for Korean apparel to enter the Chinese market. The popularity of the Korean Wave in China is one of the achievements of the exchanges between the two countries. It is precise because of the "geographical advantage" on the outside, the "people and" cultures that share the same origin, and the "time" of the current political and economic exchanges between the two countries, making it easier for China to accept Korean style clothing [12].

3. CULTURE

Culture means the ideas, customs, and social behavior of a particular people or society, which is a very broad concept. The authors will only focus on the spiritual ideas represented in Korean dramas that influenced Chinese female audiences, especially on morality and love.

3.1. The impact on moral value

3.1.1. Filial piety in Korean culture

Same as other Asian countries, there is a strong concept of filial piety in Korean society. In a Korean family, young people are expected to be very deferential to their elders. There are even laws in Korea requiring young people to treat their elders well. The current Income Tax Law, Inheritance Law, Civil Law, and Criminal Law all have explicit provisions to guarantee filial respect for the elderly [13]. As a result, it is obvious that Korean society regards filial piety as a very important thing. These are also represented in Korean dramas. Even if the siblings are only a few years apart, the younger child still has to show their respect to their older brothers or sisters, and elders should also take good care of young siblings [14].

3.1.2. Filial piety in Chinese culture

The culture of Filial piety and fraternal duty has been an important part of China for a very long time. The famous ideologist Confucius raised Confucianism, an idea that is crucial to China's development, and respect elders and took care of the younger generation is one idea of Confucianism [15]. The ruling class even regards filial piety as an important standard for managing the country. People who show disrespect to their parents will be looked down upon in society, which is the same as in ancient Korea.

3.1.3. The impact of Korean dramas on Chinese audiences

Korean dramas that contain family affection are very popular among the Chinese audience. For example, Reply 1988 is one of them. Reply 1988 has more than 700,000 viewership and gets 9.3/10 in the Douban ranking, a very convincing film and television evaluation platform in China. A viewer wrote a comment about it and got a lot of supports from the comment. He stated that the story touched his heart and reminded him of the memory of childhood and family affection, especially the love from his mother.

3.1.4. The reason of the impact

Nowadays, the idea of respecting the old and caring for the young is still deep in young people's hearts. Korean and Chinese have the same concept of moral value, so they can easily understand the characters' behavior in the Korean drama and be touched by them. On the other hand, The Korean drama could also inspire the idea about family in young people's hearts, and thus young people can find a sense of belonging from the family from Korean dramas.

3.2. *The impact on love value*

3.2.1. *Concept of love in Korean drama*

In China, the most popular Korean dramas tend to be about perfect love, which always contains a “Cinderella plot”. “Cinderella plot” means the plot of a heroine who is not so outstanding and beautiful just like Cinderella but can still fall in love with a handsome “prince” [16]. That is a very common plot in Korean romantic dramas. As a result, the audience of Korean drama in Korea also tends to have this concept of love, that an ordinary girl can meet Mr. Right, and the man will love her because of her kindness and optimism without considering her appearance.

3.2.2. *Traditional concept of love in China*

The traditional concept of love of Chinese women always connected with the male. They have to attach themselves to men, devote themselves to the one they love, and belong to the family [17]. That is because of traditional customs in ancient China society since thousands of years ago. Women were regarded as attached to men and were expected only to take care of the family. Although this situation is already improved a lot in modern society, there are remains of these ideas.

3.2.3. *The impact of Korean drama has on love to Chinese female audience*

Research shows that women who often watch Korean dramas are more dedicated to love, and they also tend to make up to make them look good and make the first move in love as well to meet perfect love [18]. However, there is also a negative influence of Korean dramas on the audiences. They tend to regard love as the most important thing in their lives. Some female audiences pursue the sumptuous scenes in Korean dramas and expect to improve their economic situation by meeting a “prince” that is the same as the drama. They will also set a standard for mate selection that is too high for them and will lead to frustration in real life and a negative psychological impact [18].

3.2.4. *The reason of the impact*

According to the traditional concept of love in China for females, it is normal for them to be dissatisfied with such a situation. The heroines of Korean dramas are ordinary, but the hero loves her with all his heart and can do anything for her, which is very uncommon in real society, but most women are pursuing for. This kind of drama can satisfy their mental desire to be loved and not devote themselves to the family. As a result, they will be attracted to Korean dramas and thus imitate the heroines to obtain the same lives.

4. CONCLUSION

According to the previous research, we know that the Chinese fashion style evolved from exaggerated clothing and heavy makeup to Korea’s pure and refreshing style of oversizing clothing during the period between the 19th century to present.

The obvious transformation of aesthetic tendency and fashion trend is because of the similar culture and value between two countries and attributes to almost the same physical characteristics. On the other hand, Korean dramas have also influenced Chinese audiences in terms of culture, especially the value of morality and love. They can resonate emotionally through arousing women.

Additionally, the Chinese consumption market characters may also affect people’s consumption behavior in Chinese society.

Consumers in first-tier cities pay attention to high-cost performance and high brand power, which means people who live at a high level of the standard have massive extract money to buy clothes which resonates with people by similar aesthetics. Moreover, it is obvious that people in less-developed cities pay more attention to their everyday dressing, which means they prefer to study culture and dress style. Last but not least, clothing with distinct cultural characteristics is favored, and that this influences the economy. For instance, the oversize style from Korea these days hit the Chinese market because it’s getting so popular among young people.

In summary, through our systematic review, it is suggested that Korean drama influences Chinese culture by satisfying most Chinese audiences’ humanistic feelings. Due to the popularity of Korean drama and the love of Chinese audience as well as the similarity of culture between two countries and the influence of the big Chinese market, the thousand years of historical background and the similar body feature as well, the products that appeared in Korean drama sell well in China. By providing a nuanced analysis of the impact of Korean drama on Chinese women’s clothing style, this review article would provide practical ideas for China’s fashion industry to grow and to achieve large-scale, market-oriented, and international development.

This study aims to explore the impact of the Korean wave shortly and let the public know how Korean drama is used as a carrier to lead fashion and achieve cultural output. China will be aware of the sample of foreign clothing industry from a large-scale production country to famous brand power and provide a reference for the development of China’s clothing industry. This research is of great significance because China can learn from the experience accumulated in the development of South Korea, accelerate the export of high-quality cultural products and services with Chinese characteristics through Chinese TV dramas, and constantly realize the

development of the scale, marketization, and internationalization. In this process, if we have a clear brand positioning, the use of brand strategy, and improve our innovation ability, then our competitive advantage will be extended

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