

Title of the study “*Understanding the Evolving
Intercultural Exchanges Between India and South
Korea*”

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University of Westminster
Priyal Yadav
18619067

Abstract

Intercultural exchanges have forever shaped the way that two nations interact. They can have repercussions on the economic, commercial, and strategic cooperations of two countries, and can also shape the way that the policy approaches of a nation. This dissertation aims to understand the evolution of such intercultural exchanges between India and South Korea, but conducting a thematic analysis on data gathered from the Instagram and YouTube channels that are popular within these contexts of intercultural exchange and diasporic exchanges between India and South Korea. The paper will then discuss the economic, commercial and policy implications of such exchange.

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Introduction

This chapter will provide an introduction to the dissertation by providing a contextual background to the study. It will lay down the research problem and its aims and objectives, followed by a discussion of the significance and scope of the study and then its limitations. The chapter will also provide a general overview of the structure of the dissertation.

Starting in September 2022, the Victoria and Albert Museum in London hosted an exhibition on Korean popular culture. Titled, Hallyu! The Korean Wave, the exhibition “explores the makings of the Korean Wave through cinema, drama, music and fandoms, and underlines its cultural impact on the beauty and fashion industries,” (The Victoria and Albert Museum, 2022).

In showcasing the dynamics and growth of Korean cultural and creative economy, the exhibition explored how the Korean wave had developed and what it had developed into – laying emphasis on the pioneers of change and growth in the cultural economy of culture. The film section of the exhibition featured several iconic Korean films like Parasite, The Handmaiden and Minari. It also featured the 2001 film, My Sassy Girl, one of the highest grossing films of the year (Box Office Mojo, 2002).

However, while the discussion around most films was regarding their cultural and cinematic impact, My Sassy Girl’s feature also included a section about a 2008 Bollywood movie, Ugly aur Pagli. The Bollywood movie was an uncredited remake of the film and is one of the many, many Korean films that have been remade by Bollywood. The thriller Ek Villian (2014) is a remake of the Korean film I Saw the Devil (2010). Similarly, An Ode to My Father (2014) became Bharat (2019), The Terror Live (2014) became Dhamaka (2021), and Oldboy (2003) became Zinda (2006).

While *Ugly aur Pagli* may have been an uncredited remake, it is significant in demonstrating the early influence of the Hallyu wave in India. In recent years, Korean popular culture has seen an immense growth in popularity amongst Indians.

This dissertation seeks to understand and analyse what this growth can mean in the long run and what has caused the evolution of the exchanges of intercultural media products between India and South Korea. It wants to place the growth within the relevant theoretical framework to understand the impact of such growth on economic and commercial cooperation, as well as its implications for policy considerations.

This study aims to understand the development of intercultural exchanges between India and South Korea in the recent years and the role popular culture has played in the evolution of such exchanges. Through a study of user generated content from both countries relating to the other country, the paper will establish the ways in which Indian and Korean media products have been successful in benefitting the country's image in the other country, and what the implications of the heightened intercultural exchanges are for each nation.

The research aims to answer the main question of how the exchanges of intercultural media products have evolved over the past few years, particularly since the pandemic. It then wants to analyse how the popularity of media and cultural products can be used as a metric to analyse economic and commercial cooperation. The paper will also try and answer how this increased exchange can positively impact the economic and commercial cooperation and what, if any, the implications of such exchange could be on the policy considerations between India and South Korea.

The dissertation will begin with an introduction to intercultural exchanges between India and South Korea. The chapter will contextualise the history of cultural exchanges and

relations between the two countries. It will also provide an overview of their diplomatic and bilateral relationship since its inception 50 years ago.

This will be followed by a comprehensive literature review of the global growth, popularity and economy of each country's popular cultures. and then the key theoretical considerations that inform the study of intercultural exchanges and their relation to economic, political, and social development. This includes globalisation, hybridisation, and the global culture economy.

Next, the research and methodology chapter will discuss the details of the methods of data collection and analysis. The chapter will lay down the aims and objectives of the study, and then will discuss in detail the methods of data collection and analysis, as well as the reliability and ethical implications of the study. This will be followed by the findings chapter will lays down the key findings and trends form the quantitative study. The analysis chapter provides a comprehensive overview of the main themes that were identified during the thematic content analysis. It looks into the depths of each theme and discusses its meanings using examples and the main theoretical concepts stated in the literature review.

Finally, the conclusions and recommendations chapter will discuss the effect of increased exchange of cultural capital on economic and commercial cooperation, and the policy implications it can have on India and South Korea.

Historical Overview for the Study

Introduction

Before conducting any study that aims to understand the growth of intercultural relations and their impact on strategic, political, and economic cooperation, it is important to gather a background of the history of these relations and cooperation. Culture and cultural relations do not emerge in a vacuum – history places a central role in the evolution of cultural standards, beliefs and relations, even stereotypes. A historical overview helps in contextualizing the reactions that a culture can have to another culture, while also providing an approach to understanding any mutual appreciation that the cultures share currently.

This chapter provides a brief historical overview of the intercultural relations that India and Korea have shared throughout history. It elaborates on the timeline and nature of their bilateral relationship, and sheds light on governmental efforts to promote cultural exchange.

Historical Overview of Intercultural Relations

In March 2001, the Indian city of Ayodhya witnessed the inauguration of a memorial stone dedicated to a Korean Queen. She was Queen Ho Hwang-ok, or Princess Suriratna, an Indian princess who travelled at age 16 to Geumgwan Gaya (an ancient capital city in Korea dating back to the Three Kingdoms period). Queen Ho, finds mention in the Samguk Yusa (Memorabilia of the Three Kingdoms), a chronicle dating back to 1281 CE. The chronicle is a compilation of “matter that were not covered by existing literary works,” (National Museum of Korea 2023) and was compiled by the Buddhist monk Ilyeon.

Karak-Kuk, the 58th passage in Book 2 of the Samguk Yusa, recounts the arrival of a Princess via sea vessel who claims to be from “Ayuta” in India in 48 CE (Ministry of External Affairs 2020) and her subsequent marriage to Kim Suro, the King of Kaya-Guk (Ilyon 2006). They are believed to be the ancestors of the modern-day Gimhae Kim, Gimhae Ho and the Incheon Yi clans, with nearly six million descendants (The Korea Times 2010). The association with Ayodhya comes from the phonetic similarity the name shares with Ayuta. However, there are diverging beliefs over whether Queen Ho was from Ayodhya, the South Indian Kingdom of Pandya (E. Srinivas 2022) or from Ayuthia, Thailand (Ilyon 2006, 126).

Nevertheless, this legend is largely accepted as the first instance of diplomatic relations between the two countries.

Queen Ho is not the only Indian who finds mention in the Samguk Yusa. The book makes several references to India in terms of locations, people, and culture. Specifically in terms of the spread of Buddhism. The Samguk Yusa is an excellent set of documents to ascertain the religious relations between the two countries – it mentions different legends, names and accounts of the intercultural exchanges that led to the spread of Buddhism across the Korean Peninsula.

Indian delegations visited Korea to trade and to enable the spread of Buddhism, while Korean monks travelled to the country to learn more about the religion and culture. The Samguk Yusa mentions Marananta and Mukhoja, who travelled to the different Korean kingdoms to promote Buddhism. Marananta (a possible transliteration of Malananda (K. Lee 1993, 702)), travelled to Baekjae from China in 384 CE, while Mukhoja travelled to both Koguryo and Silla, preaching the teachings of the Buddha between 374 CE. Kwangsu Lee maintains that India’s early relations with East and Southeast Asia were more related to

commercial and trade interests, with merchants being the “first conveyor of Buddhism and other aspects of Indian culture” (K. Lee 1993).

This can be validated by the presence of carnelian and agate beads produced using diamond drills in the artefacts uncovered from Korea’s Three Kingdom’s period. The beads can be taken to represent a long distance commercial and trade relations with South Asia, because “they were manufactured using distinctive South Asian technology by craftspeople in South Asia or Southeast Asia” (Glover and Kenoyer 2019). Thus, cultural exchange between the two countries was thriving, and was so influential that “Korean culture cannot be interpreted without Indian elements,” (K. Lee 1993, 706)

Another important document that depicts the depth of cultural exchange is the Wang ocheonchukguk jeon, literally, The Memoir of Pilgrimage to the Five Kingdoms of India. Composed by Hyecho, a Korean monk, who travelled as far as Persia. Hyecho travelled to India at least as early as 724 CE via the South China Sea, and he travelled all over the country from the states of modern-day Kashmir to Karnataka (University of Michigan College of Literature, Science and the Arts 2018). His travelogue is important because it serves to provide insight into the earliest recorded experience of someone experiencing an intercultural exchange between the two nations.

Direct relations and trade after this began to dwindle, taking place through Arab and Chinese traders from at least the 8th century CE. Korea did not find widespread mention in Indian culture and vice versa, until the early 20th century.

India and Korea both share a history of colonial trauma, India having been colonized by the British and Korea by Japan. While India’s colonization lasted a lot longer, their periods of colonization overlapped, so much so, that both India and South Korea celebrate the Independence Day and the National Liberation Day (respectively) on August 15.

Particularly, it was Rabindranath Tagore whose transimperial encounters depicted how most Indians felt about Japanese imperialism in Korea. He penned “The Song of Defeated” and “The Lamp of the East,” after having interacted with Koreans during his visits to Japan in 1916, 1924, and 1929. Both poems were translated and published in Korean and Tagore referenced the “ill-treatment of Koreans” during a speech he made in Japan in 1929 (Mizutani 2022). The Korean liberation movement also found mention in a letter Jawaharlal Nehru composed to his daughter Indira Gandhi, with Nehru praising the people of Korea for their sacrifice (The Steering Committee 2019). “For many years the struggle for independence continued and there were many outbreaks, the most important one being in 1919. The people of Korea, and especially young men and women, struggled gallantly against tremendous odds,” (Nehru 1934, 466).

This letter was then published in the *Glimpses of World History*, which is a compilation of Nehru’s letters to his daughter from prison. The book mentions various detailed accounts of Korean History and its relationship with Japan and China. Nehru’s solidarity and admiration for the Korean Liberation movement ended in India positively affecting Korean affairs, when Mr KPS Menon chaired the 1947 UN Commission to successfully hold general elections in Korea in 1948 (Ministry of External Affairs 2020). In 1950, India sent the Indian Parachute Field Ambulance Unit to the UN peacekeeping force in Korea (Ministry of External Affairs 2014) (Thussu 2013, 70).

After this, however bilateral and cultural exchanges dwindled between the two countries, until 1973, when diplomatic relations were established between the two countries. The countries signed a Cultural Agreement on August 12, 1974 to strengthen the people-to-people connections and to deepen the cultural relations between the two countries. The 1990s saw a growth in mutual trade and commercial interests as a result of the liberalization of the

Indian economy in 1991. Several visits were made by high-ranking delegations of both countries regarding bilateral, military, and cultural summits.

In recent years, India-Korea bilateral trade grew by 40% in 2021 (India Brand Equity Foundation 2023) and reached US\$ 27.8B in 2022 (Press Trust of India 2023). Korea is also responsible for a lot of Foreign Direct Investment in India, being the 13th largest investor (India Brand Equity Foundation 2023). Also in 2022, “exports from India stood at \$8.9 billion while exports from South Korea stood at \$18.9 billion, marking the highest total trade volume between the two nations,” (Hitkari 2023).

Strategic efforts to increase modern cultural relations between the two countries began with the establishment of the Indian Cultural Centre in Seoul in 2011 and the Korean Cultural Centre in New Delhi in 2012. Before the establishment of the official government centres, two privately owned centres already existed in India in Kolkata and Chennai. Each centre organizes several cultural events in their host country. The Indian cultural centre focusses on the promotion of Yoga, Indian classical dance forms and the Hindi language (Ministry of External Affairs 2020). They also have an outreach program that involves schools and universities, and hold Sarang, an annual festival of India in Korea (Embassy of India, Seoul n.d.).

Likewise, the Korean cultural centre promotes the Korean language and Hallyu through collaborative projects, events and festivals (Delhipedia 2022). They hold the annual K-pop India Contest, and several other exhibitions and classes on Korean art, martial arts and culture. On the Institutional level, several International University partnerships have also been established between Indian and Korean universities to encourage student engagement and further intercultural exchanges between the two nations (Ministry of External Affairs 2020).

Today, both the Indian and the Korean media and culture industries have become central to the increase in cultural exchanges between the two countries. Since the beginning of the pandemic in 2020, the Hallyu wave has seen an immense rise in popularity in India. According to Netflix's What India Watched in 2020 (Maheshwari 2020), "The viewing for K-dramas on Netflix in India increased more than 370% in 2020 over 2019." In 2022, Korean was among the most watched languages on Netflix (Netflix 2022). Owing to the popularity of Korean culture, Korean is not only the fastest growing language in India (Blanco 2021), it was also included as a foreign language at the secondary education level offered to students (Ahuja 2020).

Similarly, Bollywood films such as 3 Idiots, My Name is Khan, RRR, Bahubali and Taare Zameen Par have seen massive box office success in South Korea. A growing number of Korean celebrities and K-pop Idols have mentioned their admiration and love for Bollywood and Indian culture— K-pop band BTS' member Jungkook recently revealed his playlist, featuring the song Naatu-Naatu from the Telugu film RRR (Times of India 2023). Likewise, other bands and idols like Ateez, Mamamoo's Solar (Kay 2019), BTS' Jimin (Bhagchandani 2020), and RM (Chakraborty 2017), and EXO's Lay have also mentioned their admiration and love for Indian Culture.

The current situation of cultural exchange will be further discussed and developed upon in the analysis of this dissertation.

Literature Review

Introduction:

This chapter will provide an overview of all the literature reviewed for the purpose of this study.

The chapter will first discuss the two countries in question: i.e., India and South Korea by analysing and discussing the historical context of cultural exchanges in each country. This will be followed by the government approaches to public diplomacy and culture, as well as the role of diasporic audiences in the growth of the media industry. The sections on India and Korea will also discuss the transnational appeal of each country's culture and their global growth.

Next, the chapter will discuss the main theoretical foundations upon which this dissertation has conducted the analysis. First it will discuss globalisation theory and cultural hybridity. This will be followed by a discussion on intercultural exchange and communication, and a brief discussion of popular culture and International Relations.

India:

In his book, *Communicating India's Soft Power*, Daya Kishan Thussu, describes the rise of India as one of the fastest growing economies in the world through the metrics of economic growth, foreign direct investment, and military power (Thussu 2013, 7-8). The World Bank predicts that by 2047, the centenary of Indian independence, the country will have reached middle income status (The World Bank 2023). Since the liberalization of its economy in

1991, India has developed into a pluralist society with diplomatic and geo-political aspirations and a potential for growth.

“India enunciated the idea of a ‘global village’ centuries ago through trade routes identified by cultural offerings,” (Sridhar 2021). It has always been involved in both, exporting culture, and assimilating foreign cultures into its civilizational fabric (Thussu 2013). As such, the country has a history of public diplomacy through intercultural relations, with religion and spirituality having played a significant role in facilitating exchanges.

The presence of all major religions, from Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, and Sikhism to Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam (Vishwanathan 2019), has aided India in the transnational exchange of culture and ideology (Thussu 2013, 45). It was the Silk Route that made them possible, connecting India to major Asian powers and to the Greeks and the Romans, and “becoming a major channel for cultural and religious exchange,” (Behera 2002). While Buddhism connected India to the East, Islam connected India to the West.

From Sufi influences on branches of Hinduism, to the creation of modern Indian languages like Hindi and Urdu, Islamic influence helped shape modern Indian culture (Behera, 2002; Thussu, 2013). Mughal India (1526-1857) was a central player in the early modern global economy, creating a cosmopolitan atmosphere for cultural exchange within the country (O'Hanlon 2023). Persianization was a central theme in Mughal court culture, encouraging Indio-Persian culture to thrive through literature, Sufism, and the migration of artists to the country (Soucek 1987).

Under British colonialism, Indian cultural exports became more focused on ideologies like that of Gandhi's Ahimsa (Non-violence) and Rabindranath Tagore's Globalism (Thussu 2013). India's first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru continued this trend of exporting the

peace-aligned ideology through his Non-Aligned approach to the Cold War, promoting Asian solidarity and peaceful progression.

Thus, in alignment with the historical patterns, the Government of India's approach to public diplomacy and cross-cultural connections has been the promotion of Indian traditional culture and crafts through state-owned ventures. This was achieved through official patronage of traditional Indian arts, through organisations like the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (Mukherjee 2019). Musicians like Pandit Ravi Shankar and Ustad Zakir Hussain have received universal acclaim for their work, with Shankar's music influencing bands like The Beatles, the Rolling Stones, and The Doors (Cherry Red Records 2020).

Indian cinema, too, has left its indelible mark on the cultural fabric of the world. Arguably the most famous out of modern Indian culture, cinema has long been an essential export from India. "India produces various kinds of culture, notably including the films of Bollywood, now reaching ever wider international audiences. The triumph of *Slumdog Millionaire* at the 2009 Oscars both reflects and reinforces this trend," (Tharoor 2013, 198). Satyajit Ray's *Pather Panchali* (1955) is an early example of the successful outputs of the Indian cinema industry, alongside the impact of Indian cinema on Soviet filmmaking (Thussu 2013, 132). "Between 1954 and 1991, more than 200 Indian films were imported into the Soviet Union," (Wright 2019). Indian popular cinema, or Bollywood, as it is known colloquially, has only continued to grow since then.

The Indian Media and Entertainment (M&E) industry grew by 16.4% in 2021, to nearly US \$21.5 B, with the film segment, growing by 28%, with over 750 films released in 2021 (Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry; Ernst & Young 2022).

At the heart of the overseas popularity of Indian films is the role of the diaspora. Successive Indian governments since the 1990s have tried to engage the Indian diaspora,

encouraging them to engage with the culture and economy of the homeland. Between 2014 and 2017, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi made 49 international trips to engage with Diasporic communities, and the current foreign policy integrates diasporic communities within the fabric of public diplomacy (J. Srinivas 2019).

Bollywood, since the 1990s, has consistently leveraged diasporic communities and lived experiences to appeal “to the imaginations of its transnational audiences,” (O'Neill 2012). The films serve the purpose of providing diasporic audiences with a connection to their imagined communities, furthering their own globalisation through deterritorialisation (Appadurai 1990). Lorenzen and Mudambi (Clusters, Connectivity and Catch-up: Bollywood and Bangalore in the Global Economy 2013) state that the global linkages with diasporic audiences have been benefitting Bollywood by facilitating knowledge of global trends, upgrades in value creation, and global flow of capital.

“Through allowing knowledge and capital to flow into Bollywood, connectivity in the form of decentralized personal relationships has set a self-reinforcing process of upgrading in motion: the export revenues from the new, upgraded masala formula are being strategically reinvested in building a global value chain that is boosting exports further within both filmed entertainment and related industries,” (Lorenzen and Mudambi 2013).

The global value of Bollywood cinema, as a result, is reflected through the large number of Hollywood studios and streaming giants who have heavily invested in the country – 20th Century Fox, Warner Bros, Disney, Netflix, and Amazon Prime Video (Thussu, 2016; Economic Diplomacy Division, 2018). Since the pandemic, international streaming platforms such as Netflix, Disney+ Hotstar, and Amazon Prime Video, have provided the opportunity to showcase Indian content digitally, introducing it to diverse audiences across the world (Vaid

2022). “According to Amazon Prime, 20% of viewers of their original Indian content are now from outside India,” (Ellis-Peterson 2021).

All Indian content nominated for the International Emmy Awards, for example, was produced either by Netflix, Amazon Prime Video or Disney+ Hotstar, with Netflix’s Delhi Crime becoming the first ever Indian series to win an Emmy in 2020. Another Netflix India feature, The White Tiger, was nominated for both the Academy Awards and the British Academy Film and Television Awards in 2021 (Olsen 2021). What is interesting to note is that Netflix, much like Bollywood, has also heavily invested in portraying the stories of Indian diasporic communities – Never Have I Ever (2020-2023), Master of None (2015-2021), Wedding Season (2021), and Indian Matchmaking (2020).

Digital streaming companies have also helped in skyrocketing the popularity and viewership of Indian films across the world. Take for example, the 2022 Telugu feature, RRR. The film was released on Netflix in Hindi, after it completed an immensely successful theatre run across the world, having collected US \$146.5M globally (BBC News 2023). Its Netflix release led to the movie trending in the Number 10 spot across the world for weeks.

South Korea:

In recent years, South Korea has emerged as a center for de-westernized global popular culture. Since the late 1990s, the Korean entertainment industry has slowly yet steadily continued to increase its consumption and popularity overseas (Huh and Wu 2017). Dubbed the Korean Wave, this phenomenon has been linked to the facilitation of Korean cultural consumption and exchange globally. While the Korean Wave may have begun in the late 1990s, but the Korean peninsula had been involved in transnational cultural exchanges throughout its history.

Its strategic placement on the Silk Road, played an important role in expanding cultural exchange and relations through land and maritime routes (UNESCO 2023). Religion, ideology and art have played a central role in the transnational cultural exchanges and experiences that were at the forefront of the ancient Korean public diplomacy programs.

“Buddhism was transmitted via the Silk Road from China to Korea and then to Japan. Its transmission was a byproduct of diplomatic activities among the three countries,” (The Korea Society 2006). The religious endeavors of Buddhist monks further facilitated cultural and ideological exchange – the monks travelled for study, practice, and diplomacy all over Asia, from Persia to Japan. “Koreans not only lived and worked in China as students and teachers but also played a fundamental role in the transmission of continental culture in general and Buddhism in particular to Japan,” (The Korea Society 2006, 134).

As in case of India, Buddhism connected Korea to the East, and Islamic connections were made with the West. Commercial relations established through land and sea routes strengthened and proliferated, with Muslims traders immigrating to Korea and settling permanently as early as the 9th century CE (H. S. Lee 2018). “They settled down and intermarried with the local Korean community, building a community that would last for the next few centuries.” The two communities coexisted peacefully, with Korea assimilating the Muslim calendar, and even Soju into their culture (Korean Economic Institute of America 2015).

Confucianism and Christianity followed similar trajectories – Korean students and scholars who travelled to China learned the philosophies and introduced them to their country (Clark, 2006; Yang & Henderson, 1958). The country in turn, absorbed the new introductions into the traditional, then passing these on to Japan in diplomatic, cultural, and societal capacities (Yang and Henderson 1958).

Thus, throughout history the Korean peninsula has maintained the status of a globalized society participating in transnational intercultural exchanges to support cultural, ideological, and economic needs. Korean public diplomacy, after Liberation in 1945, focused on cultural exhibitions and exchanges, cultural and sports delegations and the setting up of the Social Culture Center of the Asian and Pacific Council in Seoul in 1968 (Kwang-Jin 2019, 12).

With the democratization of the more authoritarian government in 1988, South Korea saw a liberalized economy, and became a part of the United Nations in 1991. This became a turning point in the modern history of Korean cultural economy and relations. Until the late 1980s, Korea followed a protectionist model of film distribution which was scrapped to allow Hollywood to directly distribute films in Korea (J. Choi 2010, 16-17). This led to a decline in the Korean film industry, with American cultural important holding 83.1% of the market and domestic films and television holding only 15.9% (Joo 2011).

“Liberalisation, in conjunction with direct distribution by the U.S. majors, restructured the Korean film industry,” (J. Choi 2010, 25) by standardizing film production and encouraging conglomerate and venture capitalist funding. The Korean government’s globalisation and cultural promotion policies can be attributed to the immense growth that Korean popular culture has seen as a global media industry in the past two decades (Shin 2005, 52). The government set out plans to categorize and support the media and cultural industries as strategic. One of their first plans of action was to establish a film promotion fund and to reduce control on foreign collaboration (Shin 2005, 54).

The Korean diasporic effect on Korean culture industries is important to study in terms of cultural practices and approaches to national culture (Yoon 2020). Korean Diasporic TV in America, was largely based on government propaganda models, until the Hallyu Wave

took over in the early 2010s. Thus, diasporic impact was limited to the development of internet networks like DramaFever and other fan websites (Lee and Nornes 2015).

Today, South Korean cinema is immensely popular all over the world, with films like Joint Security Area (2000), I Saw the Devil (2010), Train to Busan (2016), and, Parasite (2019), garnering international acclaim (Balmont, Semlyen and Singer 2023). The Korean Popular Music (K-pop) Industry, too, has seen a trajectory similar to film. The term, Hallyu or Hanryu, “was first coined by Chinese journalists to describe a sudden influx of South Korean pop culture... and its fast-growing popularity with Chinese teenagers,” (Shin 2005, 58).

Using digital media, cultural cosmopolitanism and transnational valence, K-pop has become seminal to the development and future of cultural industries in Korea (Choi and Maliangkey 2015). The industry hinges on efficient usage of digital and social media, augmented reality and the rise of fandom in order to gain popularity across the world. The Idol is central to K-pop, for they have the power to connect all the aspects of the Korean cultural industries, bridging the gap between K-pop and other media products.

“It can even be argued that K-pop is a meta-commodity that can commodify a host of other cultural goods as pseudo avatars of K-pop idols,” (Choi and Maliangkey 2015, 8).

The digital media usage in K-pop has also helped bring more Korean content to streaming services. With Netflix having entered the market in 2016, it became the largest streaming service in Korea. It also contributed to the globalized Korean media atmosphere, by promising to invest US \$2.5 Billion to create more original media content in Korea (Wan 2023).

Netflix’s Squid Game, is the streaming giant’s highest rated K-drama, and its highest watched show ever, with “1.6 billion hours viewed,” (Gallagher 2021). However, Squid

Game is not the only popular Netflix Korea show, “with over 60 percent of all Netflix members watching Korean titles last year” (Cho 2023). In South Korea, Netflix produces shows that are originals, and created in collaboration with local Television channels like TvN. As a result, shows like Vincenzo (2020), Hospital Playlist (2020), Crash Course in Romance (2020), all become immensely popular by being simultaneously available to international audiences as Korean ones watching the shows being broadcast on TV.

Theoretical Foundations:

Modern society lives in a constant state of interaction be it with other nations, with the media, their acquaintances, or even with themselves on the internet. Today’s world is a world of networks, communication, and exchange. These networks, communications and exchanges shape all interactions that occur, from the ones that ordinary people have with each other to political and diplomatic dialogue that nation-states engage in. What is central, however, for the interactions to occur is culture, and as an extension its globalisation and hybridisation. This discussion focuses on culture and will discuss the various theories and concepts that affect both culture and cultural exchange in today’s world.

Globalisation as a theorized concept has evolved into a central feature of any discussions of cultures, media, and connectivity. Anthony Giddens (1990) defines globalisation as “the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa.”

This suggests that globalisation helps create links between two worlds. How these connections are made is through the new network society – a society characterized by the extensive use of modern information and communication technologies in everyday life (Castells 2000). The network society, Castells states, is a part of the shifting economic ideals

that increasingly place more importance in the industries that are employed in the production and processing of knowledge, and symbolic communication. This results in an “information technology paradigm,” where culture, society, economics, and politics are all impacted by the growing interconnectivity, networks, and flexibility (Flew 2018). Being global, is one of the main features of this paradigm, as is being information and networked.

Networks shaping modern life, and hence globalisation, Tomlinson states, are made up of interconnectedness and interdependencies (Tomlinson 1999, 4). Here, connectivity and proximity are interconnected – it is through globalisation that people from different places can feel connected to each other, emotionally, culturally, or otherwise. It is these connections that then enable the people to feel mental and social proximity to each other, despite the physical distance between their locations (Tomlinson 1999, 4).

Using Malcolm Waters’ ‘guiding theorem, it is possible to understand this interconnectedness and thus, globalisation.

Waters postulates that globalisation, can be traced through three domains of social life, i.e., economy, polity, and culture. For each of these domains, exchanges are possible to determine and dominate social relationships (Waters 1995). The domain of economy can refer to material exchanges that occur through trade and commercial activities. Polity refers to the exchanges of power, i.e., legislation, coercion, or international relations. The third domain, culture, refers to the symbolic exchanges in social relationships. These can include communication, performance, entertainment, and “the exchange of tokens, exhibitions and spectacle,” (Waters 1995).

Cultures, then, are related to and affected by the communication technologies and techniques of their time of existence. Modern technologies and techniques, and as a result, culture, allow for a shift in power from mass media culture to new media cultures, where the

production of content and culture are both in the hands of the user (Castells 2000). Thus, it can be inferred that media is at the heart of both globalisation and modern culture. It enables the development of global cultures that are characterized by the networks of their dissemination rather than their producers.

In his book *Ideology and Modern Culture*, John Thompson theorizes a symbolic conception of culture as “the pattern of meanings embodied in symbolic forms, including actions, utterances, and meaningful objects of various kinds, by virtue of which individuals communicate with one another and share their experiences, conceptions and beliefs,” (Thompson 1990).

This conception allows us to understand the global economy and its dependence on what Arjun Appadurai calls the fundamental disjunctures between economy, culture, and politics (Appadurai 1996).

He states that understanding disjunctures is only possible through the study of the five dimensions of global cultural flow. These are the landscapes of people (ethnoscapes), media products and information (mediascapes), technology (technoscapes), financial and commercial capital (finanscapes), and finally, political ideologies and counter-ideologies (ideoscapes). All global flows, then, occur as a result of disjunctures between these five dimensions through the processes of deterritorialisation and re-territorialisation (Appadurai 1996). Countries are pressed to allow the flow and influx of global cultural exchange through the proliferation of these “scapes”: deterritorialized landscapes create new arenas for the exchange and development of media, technology, and ideas as a result of their need for connection and contact. (Appadurai 1996).

The disjunctures, thus become central to the politics of global culture. Appadurai makes the differentiation between the “homogenization and the heterogenization of culture,” (Appadurai 1996).

The homogenization of culture can be understood as the debate surrounding cultural imperialism, while the heterogenization of culture largely refers to the newer theories of cultural globalisation or cultural hybridisation.

The case for cultural imperialism was argued for by scholars such as Herbert Schiller (1976), Jeremy Tunstall (1977) and Armand Mattelart (1979). Schiller defined cultural imperialism as the “sum of the process by which a society is brought into the modern world system and how the dominating stratum is attracted, pressure, forced and sometimes bribed into shaping social institutions to correspond to, or even promote, the values and structures of the dominating centre of the system” (Schiller, 1976).

Mattelart (1979) describes how multinational corporations, specifically American ones, appropriate foreign markets through interventions in businesses of education and culture in order to popularize what they think is progress. Similarly, Tunstall (1977), suggests that while the major forms of communication may have developed in Europe, it is America that controls the ebb and flow of global cultural economy. The idea is that through their employment of culture in their hegemonic practices, America has appropriated global culture to mean American culture.

While popular in the 1970s, this theory was soon replaced by the theory of cultural globalisation. In contrast to cultural imperialism, cultural hybridisation hinges on the idea of the development of a global culture. can be understood as the exchange of cultures, through interethnic contact as a result of the deterritorialized landscapes of media, ideology, people, finance, and technology. Here, a global culture refers to one that has already engaged in the

symbolic exchange of social relationships, characterized by the mutual need of nation states and societies to appear at one same and different from their peers.

It is important to note that cultural globalisation must be viewed separately from the polity and the economy, but they must not be disregarded while studying it either. Appadurai makes the connection between the homogenization and heterogenization of culture here, by stating that the heterogenization of culture makes use of the instruments of the former that already exist within the political and cultural economies, only to transform them into depicting the stance of nation state on global flows (Appadurai 1996).

Then, it goes without saying that since cultural hybridity as a concept requires fusing two different cultures, cross-cultural contact, and intercultural exchanges between two nations are a prerequisite for it. This contact, then, is usually as a result of exchanges and disjunctures between international media, cultural, and financial capital (Appadurai 1996; Kraidy 2005).

From analysis, two major landscapes emerge as central to understanding and mapping cultural globalisation and its impact on societies. These are the mediascapes and the ethnoscapes.

Mediascapes are central to both cultural imperialism and globalisation. “Both... regard transnational media, especially audiovisual media like television and film, as active shapers of contemporary culture,” (Kraidy 2005). The media’s role stems from its promotion of deterritorialisation, or the displacement of culture, people, ideas, or practices from their original sources. Nestor Garcia Canclini defines deterritorialisation as “the loss of the natural relation of culture to geographical and social territories,” (Canclini 1995, 229). This again, places global media at the centre of deterritorialisation - they encourage and proliferate the

detritorialisation of cultures, peoples and ideas, media, by enhancing “awareness of the impact of distant global events on local circumstances,” (Flew 2018, 90).

Similarly, ethnoscapes or diasporic, tourist and migrant populations also play an important role in propagation of cultural hybridisation. Diasporic populations as well as tourists can be viewed as the main link between transnational global cultural flows and the central figures in the social relations that bring together faraway places.

Tsagarousianou (2007) argues that emigration as a process has always helped in the intercultural exchange – in the case of India and Korea, the migration of Queen Ho Hwang-ok, as well as the Buddhist monks aiming to spread the word of Buddha both contributed to the cultural exchanges that set the stage for modern cultural hybridisation. She states that modern migration enables cultural exchange further by involving all the other landscapes—money, ideas, technology, and media. Thus, “In this new conceptual setting, diaspora can refer to constellations of economic, technological, cultural, ideological and communication flows and networks,” (Tsagarousianou 2007, 45).

This view of placing diaspora at the centre of global media and cultural exchanges also allows the idea that detritorialisation creates space for new markets of culture, media and migration specifically designed to cater to diasporic, migrant and tourist needs (Appadurai 1996, 49). Thus, as Tomlinson (1999, 149) describes it, detritorialisation does not refer to the end of locality and the rise of global existence, rather it refers to how the local transforms into a complex cultural space where the exchange of ideas, media, politics, and economy can occur within the larger context of global modernity.

This cultural space of exchange, can be understood using Homi Bhabha’s third space of enunciation. In *The Location of Culture*, Bhabha (1994, 172) first describes how culture is “transnational and translational.” Transnationality here, refers to the idea of cultural

displacement as rooted in postcolonial discourses. One can think of the Indian diasporic populations in Fiji and the Caribbean, where they were taken as indentured labourers by British colonial officers. The idea of India, there, exists as an imagined community which they can connect to through participation in the hybridised culture of their ancestors.

Thus, culture becomes “translational because such spatial histories of displacement – now accompanied by the territorial ambitions of ‘global’ media technologies – make the question of how culture signifies, or what is signified by culture, a rather complex issue.” (Bhabha 1994, 172). It becomes a practice of survival and supplementarity, owing to its production of pleasure and liberation (Bhabha 1994, 175). This can be understood using the example of Zainichi Koreans, those who continued to live in Japan after Japanese imperial rule in Korea ended. One of the ways of survival for the Zainichi community was the establishment of Korean schools (affiliated with either the North or South Korean governments). These schools helped them connected with their Korean roots, not losing their language or customs, while still being assimilated into modern Japanese society.

The third space of enunciation, is an ambivalent space where all modern cultural identity occurs, while challenging the concept of the historical identities of culture (Bhabha 1994). This is where the subaltern can experience their modern experiences and identity without needing to worry about the identity that was historically assigned – the ambivalence allows the dominant cultural flows to be dissected and hybridised. Here, cultural hybridisation, cross-cultural contact and intercultural exchanges can occur without the interference from any puritanical and historical ideas.

Research Methodology

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce the research methodology employed for this content and thematic analysis study about the role of popular culture in increased intercultural exchanges between India and South Korea, and its implications on economic and strategic developments between the two nations in the future. These approaches will help us chart and establish the increased cultural exchanges between the two nations and will then allow us to understand how increased people-to-people connections can help in forming stronger economic and strategic partnerships.

The chapter will present the research questions the study seeks to answer. Then, it will elaborate on the research plan and methodology of data collection. Next, the chapter seeks to provide an overview of the main methods of analysis that have been employed and discuss the reliability and validity of the study. Lastly, it will discuss the limitations of the study, and, also address any ethical concerns.

Aims and Objectives:

The study was aimed at exploring the evolution of the exchanges of intercultural media products between India and South Korea over the past few years, particularly since the beginning of the pandemic in 2020.

The study was conducted to analyse how the popularity of media products can be used as a metric to analyse economic and commercial cooperation. The researcher wanted to understand how the increased exchange of cultural capital affects economic and commercial cooperation between two countries. Finally, they also wanted to analyse what, if any, the implications of such intercultural exchange could be on the policy considerations between India and South Korea.

Methodology:

Considering both the scope and the main objectives of this research study, the researcher decided to use a combination of qualitative and quantitative content analysis to conduct the research.

Quantitative content analysis refers to a deductive approach of collecting data points from a sample of media or user-generated content to represent the presence, intensity, or frequency of characteristics (May and Perry 2022) (Popping 2017). The method aims to categorize data for comparison and inference based on a preset code to assign meaning to the data (Denscombe 2007). Thus, based on the above definition, this study aimed to ascertain the popularity of intercultural exchange between India and South Korea using hashtags and content generated by accounts on social media platforms.

Instagram and YouTube were the chosen social networking sites (SNS) to gather data. Instagram is the most popular SNS in India with nearly 516.92 million active users (Wong and Jain 2023). In South Korea, Instagram is the second most popular SNS with 21.18 million active users in January 2023 (Oosga 2023). Similarly, YouTube's largest audience is in India, with nearly 467 million active users, while South Korea boasts of 46 million active users (Ceci 2023).

This makes the two platforms the best place to gather data related to user-led exchanges of media and cultural products. Data was collected for both quantitative and qualitative analysis. For quantitative analysis, the data gathered was about the most popular hashtags that post and categorize content relevant to this study – hybridised depictions of media, intercultural exchanges between Indians and South Koreans, and discourse on popular culture from the other country.

Now, qualitative content analysis approaches the study of data from by focusing on inductive reasoning of emergent themes through examination and comparison (Bryman, et al. 2021, 272). This method is beneficial for it reduces the amount of data that needs to be studied, while still being flexible and reliable. The use of documents, or preexisting content available in the public sphere, makes the approach taken in this study unobtrusive and unreactive.

For the qualitative study, the data was gathered from the YouTube and Instagram accounts of Shivani Singh, @IndianUnnie10, and those of Min and Hoon, @KoreanDost. The data was gathered for thematic and comparative analysis of the qualitative content between the two accounts. The @NamasteKorea account was used to gather data related to the immediate intercultural exchanges of media products and cultural capital. This data was then analysed for the central overarching themes that were identified during the thematic analysis of the YouTube channels of @IndianUnnie10 and @KoreanDost.

Content from other Instagram and YouTube accounts was also employed to supplement the research and provide more context to the processes and instances of exchanges of cultural and media products between the two countries. These channels include @Sakshma_Shrivastava, @jhunjhunastic and @jangtan on Instagram and YouTube.

The next sections will elaborate upon the methods of data collection and analysis for quantitative and qualitative analysis.

Quantitative Data:

The study aims to establish the popularity of Indian/Korean cultural and media products in the other country. The research also aims at understanding how increasing exchanges of cultural capital affects economic and strategic cooperation between the two countries. To chart and study the evolution of exchanges of intercultural media products

between India and South Korea, the researcher conducted a quantitative content analysis study on hashtags and accounts related to each country's culture and presence in the other country. It is important to note that the quantitative study was conducted to provide numerical context for the popularity of Indian/Korean content.

Hashtags used on Instagram were chosen as the unit of analysis. Each unit had to depict media and cultural content, as well as the country. This means that the units or hashtags were chosen based on whether they had at least one relational identifier for India or South Korea or both. For example, the hashtag #인도춤 was used to identify Korean content about Indian (인도) Dance (춤). Similarly, relevant dance related Indian content about Korean Dancing was depicted by the #kpopdancecoverindia.

The researcher decided to not limit themselves to English hashtags and to include hashtags in the Korean language. This was because, social media users in India tend to use English as the main language for communication on the internet. However, Korean users use their native language written in its native script, Hangeul. Thus, to effectively measure the popularity of Indian content amongst Koreans, it was important to include hashtags in Korean.

A total of 25 hashtags, matching requirements, were evaluated, 12 in Korean and 13 in English.

Martyn Denscombe (The Good Research Guide for Small-Scale Social Research Projects 2007), describes that for a researcher to obtain any meaning from the hashtags, coding the data in terms of "subjects and themes" (Bryman, et al. 2021, 277) is necessary.

In order to gather meaningful inferences relating to popularity from a social media hashtag, it is important to study six different metrics. These are the volume of usage of each

hashtag, the reach, the engagement, and the average numbers of posts (daily), likes and comments that are associated with the hashtag.

The volume of each hashtag refers to the total number of times it has been used. Reach refers to the total number of people who see the hashtag on a social media website (Sprout Social 2020). Similarly, engagement refers to the total number of people who have interacted with content through a hashtag (Keyhole 2023). Both reach and engagement play a central role in gauging the popularity of hashtags on social media.

They are the mathematical measures of how well a brand or specifically targeted content is doing on social media. It can then be accepted that these measures come to be representative of the popularity of a particular topic on social media – they can help researchers understand what content resonates with an audience, as well as identify the common patterns in the posts (Traphagen 2015).

Thus, the coding schedule (see Appendix one) for categorization and study, was divided into seven categories: Total Volume of Usage, Total Engagement, Potential Reach, Average Number of Daily Posts, Average Number of Likes, Average Number of Comments. The first column was dedicated to the hashtags themselves. In order to gather information regarding the Total Volume of Usage of the Hashtags, the Total Engagement, the researcher manually collected the data. While, IQ Hashtags was used to collect the data regarding the Potential Reach, Average Number of Posts (daily), Likes and Comments.

The software calculated reach in terms of the following metric: Low, Medium, High. The calculation for engagement was done using the following formula: $(\text{average number of likes} + \text{comments} / \text{total number of posts}) * 100$.

The researcher chose to use social media monitoring and hashtag analytics software to gather this information for accuracy. Considering the large volume of posts on 25 different

hashtags on Instagram, the accuracy of the calculations could have been called into question for calculating the average posts, comments and likes. Hence, the choice to use software was made.

The definitions for each column in the coding schedule were laid down in the coding manual (see Appendix 2) and each metric was gathered accordingly.

Next, quantitative data analysis was also conducted on the Instagram and YouTube accounts which were used to source data for thematic and comparative analysis. All the accounts were selected on account of the following criteria:

- a) Verified account or at least had 20K followers/subscribers
- b) High audience demographic from either country
- c) Content focused on Indian/Korean culture/media or a hybridity of both
- d) Indian/Korean Creators living in either country

The chosen accounts for quantitative analysis had to fit at least two of the above set criteria besides meeting the first criterion of being verified or having at least 20K followers. The criteria set has several characteristics.

Verification on Instagram and YouTube provides a certain level of authenticity and credibility to an account. For Instagram, verification is “a way for people to know which accounts are authentic and notable,” (Lancaster 2021). The Google policy on verification is similar, stating that “if a channel is verified, it's the official channel of a creator, artist, company or public figure,” (YouTube Help 2023). To be verified on YouTube, a channel must have at least 100,000 subscribers, while Instagram sets out a list of criteria, which includes representing the unique presence of a well-known and notable real person, registered business, or entity, on a public account (Lancaster 2021).

While verification is possible for the real people, content that includes hybridised depictions of media products, such as fan generated content about popular television shows and films, celebrities, and musical icons, does not fit the verification criteria set by YouTube or Instagram. Therefore, to circumvent any issues or bias this might cause in data collection and analysis, the researcher decided to also include content from accounts that had at least 20,000 followers/subscribers on Instagram or YouTube or both.

The data gathered from these accounts was used to establish both their popularity, and hence, their reliability and reflexivity (to an extent). Like in the case of hashtags, through high level of engagement demonstrated by the account based on content, it is possible to infer that the account and the content must both be popular. Engagement for accounts is calculated using the same method as the hashtags.

To infer the popularity of these accounts and their chosen topics, and hence, to validate their usage for the qualitative analysis, it is important to gather data relating to seven major categories. Thus, the coding schedule (see Appendix 4) for the accounts was divided into the following eight categories: date of account creation, country of hosting, social media platform (SNS), total number of posts, total number of followers, average number of likes, frequency of engagement, and the main topic of posting. The first column of the schedule was dedicated to the account's name. The researchers used the software HypeAuditor to gather the data related to the engagement, and the average number of likes.

The definitions for each column were laid down in the coding manual (see Appendix 3) and the data was categorized accordingly. In this case, the accounts were also categorized based on the main topic of posting, which helped set the overtones of the themes that were studied and analysed through qualitative study.

Qualitative Data:

As mentioned before, the study aims to establish the popularity of Indian/Korean cultural and media products in the other country, and to try and understand how increasing exchanges of cultural capital affect economic and strategic cooperation between the two countries. To answer these questions, it is important to analyse qualitative data gathered from user generated cultural and media products from the two countries. The researcher conducted a thematic and comparative analysis on the content from the YouTube and Instagram accounts of @IndianUnnie10 and @KoreanDost. Their Instagram accounts are @sanjh_singh_rajput and @Korean_Dosts respectively. The analysis also included insights from the YouTube channel @NamasteKorea, as well as inferences, instances and examples from other channels that were mentioned above.

@IndianUnnie10 and @KoreanDost were chosen for three main reasons.

First, the channels document the experiences of an Indian, Shivani Singh, and two Koreans, Min and Hoon. Singh is an Indian student currently studying in South Korea, who documents her experiences of moving to South Korea and interacting with Korean culture, media, and people on her YouTube channel. Min and Hoon's channel documents their journey of their growing curiosity and exploration of Indian culture. "We are very excited to bring you our positive outlook of India, and thus becoming the cultural bridge that unclogs any misunderstandings between us," (@KoreanDost 2019). This fulfills the criteria of depicting intercultural and media exchanges between the two countries.

Second, each channel has a large base of subscribers on YouTube and followers on Instagram. @KoreanDost boast 1.43M subscribers on YouTube (@KoreanDost 2019), while @IndianUnnie10 has 213K subscribers (@IndianUnnie10 2015). On Instagram, the Korean

creators have 566K followers, while Singh has 81K followers. Both channels are also verified on YouTube.

The last reason is the commonality in the diversity of the showcased content on both channels. The channels focus on the same topics, but from opposite perspectives. One channel seeks to document the interactions, exchanges and experiences of Indians with Korean life, culture, systems, and media, while the other documents the same for Koreans. This allowed the researcher to codify and analyse the main themes of cultural exchanges between the two countries. It is also important to note that the content creators have also collaborated with each other to produce a series of videos together.

With similar content being posted on the two channels, albeit from opposite perspectives, it was possible to comparatively analyse the depth and impact of the exchange on the creators. It helped in validating the findings of the quantitative study for the popularity of intercultural exchanges, and, also in establishing that the interest and growing popularity was mutual. However, the differences in their content are also important to understanding how the two cultures approach each other and how they interact with each other. For example, while Korean content tends to be focused on interactions with media products and travelogues of trips through India, Indian content is focused more on creating hybridised versions of Korean media products through fan edits as well as the documentation of everyday life as Indians in Korea.

The distinction is also central because it allowed the viewers to analyse the different ways that media content from was hybridised to fit different approaches to intercultural exchange. The discussions presented in the content, along with the discourse that emerges from those distinct discussions helped in establishing what the creators were aiming to present in their message.

The channel @NamasteKorea was chosen for the same reasons as the ones above. The channel has 255K subscribers on YouTube and features an amalgamation of the content presented by @IndianUnnie10 and @KoreanDost.

The chosen method for analysis of this data was thematic content analysis through comparative study. The process for thematic analysis is simple. According to Braun and Clarke's (Successful Qualitative Research: A Practical Guide for Beginners 2013) six stage process for thematic analysis, researchers first need to familiarize themselves with the data – in the case of this study, it involved watching content from three main selected channels as well as any other supplemental accounts that were chosen.

Followed by this, the researcher is advised to begin coding their data, “capturing the emergent properties and then do more theoretical coding of concepts,” (Bryman, et al. 2021, 538). The next stages in the process then involve identifying the main themes within the data, reviewing those themes, defining them and then finally evidencing the themes. Johnny Saldana describes a theme as “an extended phrase or sentence that identifies what a unit of data is about and/or what it means,” (Saldaña 2016, 199).

Thus, themes are identified during the data collection and coding process, and then they are analysed to form a coherent narrative from the collected data. These are then analysed to become explanations, causes, consequences and conclusions, through the process of analysis and study ((Rubin and Rubin 2012) as quoted in (Saldaña 2016)). The themes are used to construct a theoretical narrative that helps in summarizing and concluding the study (Auerbach and Silverstein 2003, 75). The comparative study is used as a method to supplement the development of themes and aid analysis. As stated above, the reasons for choosing to study the two YouTube channels, separately and compositely, while also

including supplemental supportive proof from other eligible accounts, helps in taking a pluralist approach to this thematic study.

With the increased interactivity and exchanges as a result of developing information and communications technologies, it is possible to assume that the searching for commonalities is affecting by the impact of globalized economic, social, political, and cultural relations (May and Perry 2022, 228). In such a situation, comparative research, specifically cross-national research can provide perspectives on both the local and the general experiences of a particular phenomenon (Heynen, Kaika and Swyngedouw 2006) as quoted in (Bryman, et al. 2021)).

The research approaches the hashtags, channels, and accounts as a case study to develop the main themes of to construct a theoretical analysis and subsequently discuss and answer the research questions that the study aims to answer. This allows for “generalizable conclusions” through theoretical reasoning and narratives. The combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods helps transcend traditional dichotomies, by focusing on linking techniques and the real-world context of the research (May and Perry 2022, 211).

Reliability:

The validity of a study is dependent on the methods employed in data collection and analysis. Since this researcher made use of mixed methodology to gather their data and conduct their analysis, the validity of the study can be evaluated on two fronts.

On the quantitative front, the method of content analysis ensures validity and reliability. It places an emphasis on frequency, replicability, and flexibility, by being objective and systematic (Bryman, et al. 2021). The objectivity stems from the categorization of content into numerical points for analysis (Denscombe 2007, 254). Through the systemic

categorization and numerical objectivity, the replicability of a study can be enhanced, making the study more reliable overall.

The transparency of data collection also makes this study more reliable – all the data is collected from the public domain, where it is easily accessible for everyone to view and analyse in the same manner. Moreover, the coding schedules and manuals that were used in the categorization are clearly described and flexible (Bryman, et al. 2021, 290) – it is possible to both conduct follow-up studies to make this particular study more longitudinal, and to apply the same codes to other similar hashtags and accounts to replicate the study in other geographical regions in the world.

For the qualitative study, the main ways to assess the validity of a case study include assessing it for the quality of its theoretical reasoning and for its generalizability. Here, the approach of using multiple cases helps in ensuring validity and reliability: “The single case has value in its own right. Yet when placed against the rich insights from multiple cases, a route from particularization to generalization can be traced, leading to both theory development and comparative learning,” (May and Perry 2022). Another metric introduced by Lincoln and Guba (Naturalistic Inquiry 1985) includes assessing the trustworthiness and authenticity of a study.

Trustworthiness involves ensuring and depicting credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Credibility can be established using the triangulation of data and analysis – as has been done here. The triangulation of data refers to using different methods of data collection and analysis to conduct a study (Patton 1999). Here, the data is collected from hashtags and Social Media channels, while it is analysed using thematic analysis and quantitative content analysis to answer the research questions.

As for transferability, it is possible to conduct this study for any number of intercultural exchanges between different cultures, merely by changing the countries in focus. The same study can be conducted for Japan and the United States, for example, by gathering data from Japan/US centric accounts using the simple set criteria for hashtag and account selection.

Ethical Considerations Limitations:

Considering that this study makes use of data obtained from social media accounts, pages and channels, a unique set of ethical considerations need to be accounted for: informed consent, anonymity, copyright issues, as well as sharing of data sets.

For both the qualitative and quantitative study, the data was gathered from the public domain, and the data gathered was not of the sensitive kind, i.e., it did not include any information regarding ethnicity, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union memberships, or genetic or biometric data (Erwin 2020). The data was scraped from public Instagram and YouTube pages and accounts to represent and support findings for non-sensitive subject matters (LSE Research Ethics Committee 2022).

While the data will not be anonymized for publication, copyright issues do not affect the study, as the channel contents are studied for purposes of fair dealings, i.e., text and data mining for non-commercial research in terms of quantitative analysis, and for research and private study for the qualitative analysis (Intellectual Property Office 2021).

The researcher faced a few limitations while undertaking the study. The first was the language barrier while conducting qualitative research. The researcher speaks English and

Hindi (most popular languages on the Indian Internet) with native proficiency; however, they only speak conversational Korean. It can be argued that the qualitative content studied for the Korean approach to intercultural exchange is intended for Indian audiences rather than Korean. Studying purely Korean language channels would prove beneficial to understanding how Koreans react to Korean content about India. However, it can also be argued that to understand the immersion of intercultural exchange, studying channels that use English as a primary language to connect with more international audiences is more beneficial to this particular study.

Another limitation was the small account sample size. A larger account sample size, and one without the restrictions of verification and/or at least 20K followers could help further understand the niches of intercultural exchange. Verified accounts or those with a large following are not always representative of popular opinion. However, this is why all the examples from the accounts were used to supplement the main qualitative thematic analysis of the contents.

The next chapter will list the main findings and patterns from the quantitative study conducted on the hashtags and accounts. The analysis chapter will present the findings and analysis of the qualitative study.

Findings of the Quantitative Analysis

This chapter presents the finds of the quantitative content analysis study conducted on the 25 hashtags and nine social media accounts. The appendices 1 - 4 at the end of the dissertation provide the complete coding schedules and manuals for the quantitative analysis.

- 1) The most popular topics for posting on Instagram were #인도 (India), #kpopindia, #인도여행 (#indianholiday), #인도음식 (#indianfood), #인도요리 (#indiancooking) and #kdramaindia.
- 2) Despite having high total usage, #kpopindia, #인도음식 (#indianfood), #인도요리 (#indiancooking), all had low engagement rates, below 1%.
- 3) #인도인 had the highest engagement rate of all hashtags at 319.58%. This was followed by #kpopdancecoverindia (266.45%), and #인도배우 (257.6%).
- 4) 10 out of 23 hashtags had a medium engagement rate.
- 5) @SakshmaSrivastavEnow had the lowest number of posts on YouTube, on Instagram, it was @sanjh_singh_rajput.
- 6) Similarly, @KoreanDost had the highest number of videos and posts on both Instagram and YouTube.
- 7) @jhunjhunastic had the highest engagement rate at 112.09%.

Analysis

This chapter will focus on providing an in-depth analysis of the themes and patterns that were uncovered during the study. It will first look at the common themes that were uncovered while studying the channels. Then, it will look at the themes that were present but the content categorized under these themes was not given the same treatment under the content. Next, the analysis will look at the miscellaneous themes and topics that were necessary to note, but not necessarily present in the context of the main channels studied.

Identified themes:

During the analysis, this researcher discovered that the depth, range, and manner of intercultural exchange between the two countries was vast. Exchanges involved commodities, ideas, financial collaborations, music, and food. The themes were identified by thoroughly going through each YouTube channel to identify the common topics of the posted videos. These common topics were group together by proximity and similarity to form the four main themes. Then the videos were viewed to see whether the identified topics received the same treatment by both channels. If not, the treatment was analysed for its differences and the possible reasons for the same were also postulated. The analysis will first discuss themes that whose treatment shared commonality. Then it will look at the themes that were treated differently by the content produced.

Food:

Food related content on both channels is abundant. @IndianUnnie10 features eight (out of 181) food related videos on her channel, while @KoreanDosts features a total of 64 (out of 637) food related videos on their channel. Food and content featuring the reactions of people reacting to foreign food are two of the most common forms of content that are posted on the

internet. The Koreans even have a name for it, Meokbang. The word is a portmanteau of the Korean words 먹다 (Meokda) which means to eat and 방송 (Bangsong) which means broadcast. So, Meokbang then means to eat live on a broadcast.

The videos on the channels depict @IndianUnnie10, and @KoreanDost interacting with and experiencing the local cuisine of each country. The only difference is that while Singh exclusively does this in South Korea, Min and Hoon have reacted to Indian snacks in South Korea, they have tried Indian food all around Seoul, and have also tried Indian food when they travelled to India. They have even reacted to videos of Indian food being made on the internet.

What makes food so important is that food is often used as a means to retain one's cultural identity, especially after it has been taken away or one has had to move (Sibal 2018). According to Roland Barthes, food can be understood as a sign that communicates something beyond just itself – it is not just the food, but a whole set of meanings that is being conveyed and exchanged that are being consumed (Barthes 2012). He states that “food is an organic system, organically integrated into its specific type of civilization. (Barthes 2012, 26)”

All cultures have different mannerisms, etiquettes, and rules that they expect to be followed when food is involved in a social setting. For example, in India, if out with a group of people, it is considered common etiquette to wait for everyone to be present and served before the meal begins. Similarly, in Korea, it is considered polite to wait for everyone to be served and for the eldest person at the table to begin eating before everyone else can commence. Such subtle differences can only be noticed and studied when the exchanges surrounding the culture of food take place. For example, the very first meeting that Singh has with Hoon and Min, involves roaming around the city of Busan and then sharing a Korean meal in the city. It gives Singh the chance to experience the native food and compare this new

commodity with her lived experiences of food in India, while also giving Hoon and Min the chance to enable an exchange of culture and knowledge through the experience of introducing their foreign friend to a new food.

Thus, food becomes one of the very first experiences that humans seek when exploring a new domain or culture – it allows people to gauge whether they will be compatible with a culture or not. The more similarities and pleasantries that a person finds in the other culture’s food, the more likely they are to enjoy and wish to experience the other aspects of culture too. In the case of Singh and Hoon and Min, their experiences within their cultures allow for a positive reaction to the exchange in systems that occurs when they the other country’s food. Both Indian and Korean traditional foods are characterized by hot, spicy stews featuring a lot of flavour packed into one meal. The food is usually tangy and zesty with just the right amount of heat and a hearty carbohydrate such as rice or bread to make for a well-balanced and pleasurable meal.

This commonality allows for the exchange of cultural food to be a pleasant experience. Here, too, the content creators engage food in different ways to build intrigue and to create hybridities in the food that they are familiar with. The introduction of the hybridities facilitates the process of positive cultural exchange. @IndianUnnie10’s expeditions with food are representative of her first introduction to Korean food – Korean Television dramas (k-drama). In a series of videos on Korean street foods, she indulges in Drama staple street foods like dumplings, fried chicken, tteokbeokki (Korean Rice Cakes), Japchae (Korean glass noodles) and Fish Cakes. In a video titled “Ate Korean Street Food for 2 days just for k-drama vibes 🍜,” Singh tells the street vendor that she is trying the fish cakes, just like she witnessed characters in k-dramas do (@IndianUnnie10 2023).

Food, in this case, becomes the commodity that is used to try and bridge the gap between the imagined expectation of the cultural exchange and the actual outcome of the experience. She tries the food to try and connect what she has in the mediatized depictions of the country with her actual experience of living in Korea – it matches up for the most part. She enjoys the food and the experience, but always relates it back to her own culture. For example, while trying Yachae (a type of vegetable fritter), Singh relates the experience back to eating Pakode (Indian fried fritters) along with hot tea on a rainy afternoon.

Her counterparts in this study, Hoon and Min, do this as well. In a several videos, they try and mix traditional Korean Ramyeon with Indian spice mixes or Indian noodles with Korean Kimchi. This mixed set of noodles then come to represent how cultural exchanges facilitate hybridity within the two cultures and allow for experimentation to find the pleasant common ground between the two. In mixing the familiar with the unfamiliar, they create the space for themselves to dissect and hybridize the cultural flows that mark this experience with unfamiliar food.

The eagerness and earnestness of these exchanges is symbolic of the popularity of Indian/Korean food in the other country. As noted during the quantitative analysis of hashtags, #인도음식 (Indian Food), #인도요리 (Indian Cooking), #인도식당 (Indian Restaurant), and #kdramaindia, #kdramaindianfans were some of the most popular hashtags with at least medium reach. This is representative of the inferences made from the qualitative analysis as well – Indians have been introduced to Korean food as a result of the surge in k-drama viewers in the country since the pandemic. This interest is reflected by the fact that the volume of Korean foods being consumed in India saw a surge during the pandemic.

Intercultural cooperation:

The next theme that emerged from the study was that of intercultural cooperation. Here, intercultural cooperation has been used to club several of the emergent themes during analysis. The term, in the context of this study has been used to denote the curiosity about what people of India/Korea think about the other country, the preexisting examples of intercultural exchange and the emergent hybridity from these exchanges and any cross-cultural contact initiated between the two cultures by any one of the two sides.

This theme was studied through the analysis of Vox Populi conducted on the channels to discuss what Indians or Koreans thought about Korea or India, and through the study of any direct indulges into the culture of the second country.

Before discussing this, it is essential to take note of a documentary made by the Korean Broadcasting Service (KBS) in 2015, titled *Fluttering India*. The documentary starred five K-pop idols, namely Super Junior's Kyu-Hyun, SHINee's Min-Ho, EXO's Suho, INFINITE's Kim Sung-Gyu and CNBLUE's Lee Jong-Hyun. The idols arrived in India in 2015, with the aim of creating a news report for KBS morning news show. The aim was to find an interesting show angle that depicted India in a manner that it had never been shown before. The idols engaged with the Korean ambassador in India, interacted with locals, enjoyed and indulged in the local culture and had a great time overall. They even conducted a, rather unsuccessful Vox Populi at the Gateway of India, asking what people knew about Korea and K-pop. The idols themselves, were (naively) ill-informed about the country they were visiting, and the people that they were speaking to seemingly had no interest or clue about the country they were being asked about.

Why this documentary is important is because it was perhaps one of the first well documented "people-to-people" connection ventures between the two nations. But it is more

important because of the questions it was asking at its heart – why wasn't Hallyu (then) popular in India? What more could be done to introduce the two countries to each other and increase contact? And what would a situation where the two cultures were more aware and interconnected look like?

Two of the three studied channels, @NamasteKorea and @KoreanDost have also conducted vox-populi of their own to gauge the depth of intercultural relations between the two countries. Their vox populi were conducted four years after the documentary was released, and the documentary even finds mention in one video by @KoreanDost. The results were not too promising – the @NamasteKorea vox populi focused on asking Koreans what they knew about India and the @KoreanDost vox populi imitated the idols from the documentary.

The @NamasteKorea vox populi featured stereotypical answers about India and what people knew about the country. The most famous person known was Mahatma Gandhi, and the most watched Bollywood movie was 3 Idiots – a film released in 2009 (@NamasteKorea 2019). The @KoreanDost vox populi did not fare much better, but people did know about a few Korean brands like Samsung and Hyundai, and about a little about Korean popular culture (@KoreanDost, Do You Know Korea? K-Pop? | How Much Indians Know About Korea? 2019). While the vox populi themselves did not reveal a pattern of intercultural interest or cooperation, the curiosity that interviewees demonstrated by wishing to know more about the place they were being asked about does.

The curiosity can be understood as representative of the growing interest in the two countries – what people know about the two countries is limited, but people were interested in asking questions and finding out more about the other country. For example, while the answers given by Koreans when asked about India may have been stereotypical, they showed

interest in finding out more about the country, its population, the best places to visit and even about the Indian caste system.

It is also possible to say, without reasonable doubt, that the Indian opinion on Korea is a little outdated, since the video was shot in 2019. Since then, as noted earlier, India has seen a humongous growth in the interest in and the popularity of South Korea and its popular culture. This is representative of the growing awareness of the other country and the indigenous attempt at interaction.

The videos also show the importance of cultural proximity in terms of intercultural awareness and exchanges. In the @NamasteKorea vox populi, Gandhi and 3 Idiots were popular answers. Both India and South Korea are collectivist and pacifist cultures that place great importance on competitive and comprehensive education. Thus, the two answers presented are symbolic of what the two main points of initial intercultural cooperation between the two countries can be. With Korea's Confucian values placing respect, non-violence and peace at the centre, it is possible for them to collaborate efficiently and effectively with a country like India easily.

Similarly, with their focus on intensive and competitive academics for children, the popularity of a film like 3 Idiots (one that denounces unnecessary competition and rote education) can help understand the avenues where intercultural exchanges and collaboration would be helpful.

Diasporic Experiences and Deterritorialisation

As comprehensively laid out in the literature review, diasporic experiences and the deterritorialisation of ethnoscapas are both central to the globalisation and hence, the hybridisation and exchange of culture (Appadurai, *Disjuncture and Difference in Global Cultural Economy* 1990). This was also the third theme to emerge from the analysis of the

YouTube channels, as well as the first theme to have differing approaches in the content rather than similar ones.

The content put forth by @IndianUnnie10 and @NamasteKorea (in a particular series) is representative of the diasporic lived experiences of settling in a different country, experiencing your own culture through previously hybridised and deterritorialized forms and contributing to the further hybridisation of your culture. On the other hand, the content put forth by my @KoreanDost focuses more on the temporarily and voluntarily deterritorialized populations that make up the ethnoscares that shape the global flows of culture.

What this constitutes, then, is that the way that Indians and Koreans interact with the culture, and traditions of the other country, is inherently different. Taking the example of @IndianUnnie10 first, several of her videos feature the theme of diasporic yearning and self-nationalistic actualization within a chosen country. This is not to say that she disrespects the host country or her actions are disdainful in any manner. Rather, her choices of content depict the inherent importance of her Indian identity. A lot of her videos feature the idea of what the life of an Indian student looks like in Korea – of course this is truthful because it is indeed her life. Singh shares her life as an Indian in Korea through a series of vlogs that range from depicting her journey as an Indian student getting a prestigious scholarship to the woes of her dating life in a foreign country.

What never fails to make an appearance in her videos about this, is her admiration for the host country. However, the yearning for her own is also never too far. This is a central theme in Singh's video about places in Korea that feel like India. The video is a vlog about her trip to Suwon, South Korea (@IndianUnnie10, Place in KOREA that feels like INDIA.... What??? 🤔 | Indian Unnie | 2022). Amidst all the discussions about the trip and the palaces and places they have visited during the trip, the theme of India is effervescent

from hotel breakfast food, to comparing Korean artefacts to veneration items used during the North Indian celebrations of Chhatt (@IndianUnnie10, Place in KOREA that feels like INDIA in.... What??? 🤖 | Indian Unnie | 2022).

This can also be viewed in her other videos about daily life in Korea as a South Asian person, the videos that focus on the celebrations of South Asian festivals such as Navratri, Diwali and Holi, or about. Similarly, the channel @NamasteKorea also features several videos with similar themes and concepts to that of @IndianUnnie10. Except for @NamasteKorea such themes and concepts are temporary too, since the third space exists between more than just the audience and the creator.

In these cases, the cultural and national identity of the content creator becomes a central theme of the content they create. It codifies their experiences and the assertion of self-identity is done not through outward means, but rather through constant integration in everyday discussions.

However, diasporic experiences are also interesting to note because of the way that they deal with and affect the processes of deterritorialisation and as a result the global flows of culture. Having played a role in the flow of global cultural and intellectual capital, diasporic communities find themselves at the helm of further deterritorialising and then reterritorializing ethnoscapas and mediascapas, thereby causing further and deeper exchanges of cultural, financial, and human capital.

For example, in the case of Singh, she moved to Korea as a result of her education and through the aid of several scholarships. In talking about the processes of her movement and settlement out of her home country, she enables these processes for others well. It can be argued that the online community that Singh is at the head of (her followers and subscribers) is an imagined community in cyberspace, that exists within Bhabha's third space of

enunciation. This space, which includes only Singh and her audience, allows them to express themselves in a relatively “safe atmosphere” where their experiences, questions and issues are validated answered and they are allowed to freely interact with what they might have imagined their situations to look like.

The audience and the creator in such a case, exist not in a vacuum, but in a realm that allows either party the courtesy of liberation and pleasure within the imagined community that they find themselves a part of. Thus, through the stratification and the comprehensive documentation of her experiences as a member of the diaspora, Singh contributes to further deterritorialisation and the development of further imagined communities within the realm of the cyberspace.

This third space, created within the relationship of the creator and the audience, allows either party to postulate, discuss and enjoy, without having to worry about the pressures of “outsiders” (simply someone who no longer identifies woman).

In the case of Hoon and Min, the creation of the third space between the author and audience still occurs. They still even assert their identities as Koreans experiencing new things in India. However, their assertions differ in that the comparison is central to their content. As tourists, they are experiencing the culture, place or media for the first time and when talking about it, comparisons to one’s own previous experiences are important. The main difference between the two cases is that Singh’s experience is about uprooting her life in one country and creating content about rebuilding her identity in another.

In the case of @KoreanDost, Hoon and Min their goals are short-term tourism and finally as a result, cultural immersion within a place that they are experiencing temporarily and one that will constantly allow temporary cultural exchanges through immersion. The aim here is to experience cultural immersion rather than a deeper level of cultural exchange.

Pop Culture and Related Exchanges:

In the case of the last theme identified, the main channels studied, as well as supplemental content studied presents the idea that the manner of interactions of the two countries with formally produced popular culture are fundamentally different from each other. Before the discussion moves further, it is important to bring back the discussion about the *Fluttering India* documentary. As mentioned earlier, the documentary was produced by KBS and featured several South Korean pop icons. The documentary postulated several questions regarding the lack of Hallyu awareness in India. In one of the final episodes of the documentary, the idols went to visit Oh Seyeong, a South Korean stuntman working in Bollywood films, as well as a Bollywood producer.

It was the discussion with the Bollywood producer that revealed the answer to their question about how it might be possible to increase the popularity of Hallyu in India. The discussion revealed that while the general public might not be too aware of South Korean popular culture (in 2015), the Indian media and entertainment industry had taken notice of its South Korean counterpart. The producer was aware of influential Korean industry moguls and also informed the idols of how many Korean films such as *Oldboy*, *My Sassy Girl*, and *I Saw the Devil* had been unofficially remade into Bollywood films, adapted for the local culture and audience.

This adaptation of Korean content is done not just for Bollywood films. In general, Indians tend to interact with Korean content by consumption and then creating hybridities and hybridised versions of the content featuring local influences, music and sensibilities. This creation of hybridities, is officially called the creating a fan-edit of a media. They can essentially be understood as a love language for the internet, with fans spending time slicing together moments from TV shows, films and other content to create narratives and express their fandom (Cavender 2022).

In the Indian case, these edits come to represent the generation of a cultural connection with a new tv show, film or a favourite celebrity. These edits are important not only because they are hybridised, but also because of the way they are hybridised. A lot of times, the final product is a mixture of a Korean TV show, film or celebrity's clips spliced together with music that comes from a Bollywood movie. The songs are meticulously chosen and then the clips are chosen to fit the narrative of the songs, or the song is chosen in relation to the video of the celebrity. This can be understood using the @Jangtan channel on YouTube. While a lot of the videos on the channel are just edits of K-pop dances, "iconic moments" from K-dramas and K-pop, they also feature a compilation of "Hindi" TikToks and reels featuring Korean artists and content (@Jangtan 2022).

These reels allow the establishment of a cultural connection between the two industries and allow the Indian fans an opportunity to place their idols in a cultural context they are familiar with. Choi and Maliangkay (2015), identify the importance of fandom in the rise of K-pop across the world. K-pop can be understood as augmented entertainment that is of the fan, by the fan and for the fan (Choi and Maliangkey 2015). What this means is that K-pop is designed and disseminated in a manner that allows for an almost meta-commodity that can commodify other cultural processes and artefacts than just the Idols who represent the genre.

What this means is that by creating the fan-edits and sharing them across social media platforms, Indian fans interact with this cultural product in the exact manner that is intended. By making such fan edits they commodify and codify their favourite idols/shows/celebrities into a code specifically designed for Indian audiences and by Indian audiences. For example, the account @jhunjunastic on Instagram creates several reels of the K-pop band BTS dancing to Bollywood music. It began with a video of BTS' dance practice for their song Boy With Luv being edited and set to the Bollywood song "Chunari Chunari," (@Jhunjunastic

2022) The edited version fit so well, that now it has become a running joke within BTS' fandom in India.

Similarly, the fandom, after multiple fan edits, has also adopted the idea that the band's member Kim Tae-hyung or V, shares a likeness with Bollywood superstar Shah Rukh Khan and must be depicted as such.

The creation of such hybridities is representative of how deeply effective the Korean mediascapes have been in promoting their cultural products to India. It can be understood that fandoms themselves are imagined communities that proliferate on the internet, utilizing the cyberspace for their activities (Morimoto and Chin 2017). As such, fans proliferate their interactions with the media and with the hybridised media throughout their time in the fandom.

It is important to note, that fan edits are not the only way Indians interact with popular culture. The other mode of preference as observed on @IndianUnnie10's channel, as per the results of this study, is the visiting of famous locations visited by their favourite idols and celebrities, and perhaps even dressing up in outfits inspired by them. Several videos feature the places Singh has visited that have been visited by members of BTS, and one video is dedicated to the day she spent dressing as Korean singer and actress IU.

Korean interaction with popular India media differs greatly in this sense. Korean interactions with Indian popular culture are characterized by their propensity to generate video reactions and offer commentary on the films/videos/songs/trailers that they are reacting. @KoreanDost features a long list of "Indian Song Reactions" that culminate into commentary regarding the choice of costumes, the music, the energy, and the vibe of the song. Sometimes, this can also result in comparisons between the two culture industries.

The focus is on providing an authentic reaction to the media product rather than creating a hybridisation of culture. It is more about what emotions, reactions and therefore discussions the interaction with the media product produces rather than the development of a cultural connection or exchange between the two. However, this is not to say that the Koreans do not interact with the media to create culturally hybridised versions at all. @NamasteKorea features a playlist of Korean artists singing songs in Hindi and interacting in a more proactive than reactive manner in fandom.

Conclusions and Recommendations

From the above presented quantitative and qualitative analysis, several conclusions emerge.

The first of these is that based on the analysis conducted on the hashtags, it is possible to say that Indian and Korean culture, cultural products, food, and media products are all popular on social media, thereby suggesting, by some proximity popularity in the physical world as well.

It is also possible to state conclusively based on the quantitative content analysis conducted on the social media accounts used in the study, that the content related to India, Korea, their cultures, cultural exchanges and hybridities is popular, searched and very much followed. This specific kind of content product has led to high engagement and therefore, more impressions for the accounts that post it.

The next conclusion to be drawn from this study is one that will answer the research question of what the popularity of intercultural exchanges means for the economic and commercial relations between India and South Korea. This researcher believes that based on the analyses, this popularity means a positive-growth and acceleration for the economic and commercial relations between the two countries.

To understand and evidence this, the first theme of food is taken into consideration first.

“According to the Indian Ministry of Commerce and Industry, after the 2020 shutdown, there has been a significant rise in the consumption of Korean food in India. The volume of just Korean noodles increased by 162% in 2020 and by 178.0% in 2021. The popularity of Korean cuisine in India is being fueled by the growth of Korean freestanding restaurants in places like Chennai, New Delhi, Pune, Bengaluru, and Mumbai,” (Sinha 2023).

On the Korean side of things, Indian cuisine is gaining popularity among Koreans as well (Min-Young and Kang-Min 2021). Many K-pop stars like BTS' Jungkook (etimes.in 2023) and Jimin (Zoom TV Digital 2022) have mentioned their love for Indian foods like naan, Biryani and Chicken Makhani. While it may not seem like much in terms of popularity, the mention of liking Indian foods from idols, especially BTS can be incredibly influential to the view of the future popularity of these foods. Their remarks have previously sold-out multiple products, such as TEAZEN's Lemon Kombucha, Downy Fabric Softener, and even brought back an out-of-print book, *Earthly Death* (Tan 2022; Gray 2021).

This popularity of interethnic food between the two countries, and its growth can be used as evidence to suggest that there is a possibility in the expansion of the food businesses in each country. With India eating more Korean foods, Korean food conglomerates have started to enter the Indian markets and can expect to earn profits (Jae-heun 2023). Similarly, for Indian food companies, the stage has been set for a long time. Koreans adore "curry" as evidenced by its constant mention in the vox populi conducted by @NamasteKorea.

Based on this, it is possible to say the Indian and Korean markets can turn out to be profitable economic ventures in terms of food.

The next conclusion to be drawn is that there exists a vast market, in both countries, for the proliferation and development of cultural and media products. As evidenced by the study of pop cultural and related exchanges, it is possible to analyse the popularity of pop cultural products from each country in the other country's society. Another layer for analysis could be added by offering some insight into the mediatized and media led exchanges of culture rather than user led ones. Media led exchanges can be representative of the growing interest that the media and culture industry have in expanding business in the other country.

The following developments can be used as a basis for the understanding of avenues of economic and commercial growth for the media and culture industries.

First, collaborations between the Indian and Korean culture industries are increasing. Perhaps the most famous collaboration between the two industries is that of Bollywood singer Armaan Malik with K-pop band TRI.BE for Coke Studio India (Malik, Arjun and TRI.BE 2022). The song was released in 2022, and has 87 million views on YouTube. Another famous collaboration was between Armaan Malik, Korean-American singer Eric Nam, and music producer KSHMR (Malik, Nam and KSHMR, Echo (Official Music Video) - Armaan Malik, Eric Nam with KSHMR 2022). Besides the collaborations, an increasing number of artists from either industry have regularly expressed admiration for the other side, and have also stated how much they enjoy the other media products.

As mentioned earlier, Korean celebrities like Mamamoo's Solar, BTS' RM, Jimin and Jungkook, GOT7's Jackson Wang and others have expressed their love for Indian content, while Indian celebrities like actresses Alia Bhatt and Disha Patani, and musicians AR Rahman, Diljit Dosanjh, and Armaan Malik, are among quite a few Bollywood celebrities who have stated that they enjoy listening to K-pop music (Times of India 2022).

Media led exchanges of culture are also an important indicator of the growing awareness regarding capitalizing on this new boom in intercultural exchanges between India and South Korea. Indian entertainment news network Zoom started a program with host Sakshma Srivastav (@sakshma_srivastav), which was aimed at interviewing Korean celebrities. Titled K-Pop, Bollywood & Global Celebs with Sakshma Srivastav, the program is quite popular, with Srivastav having interviewed the likes of BTS, EXO's Kai, Rain, SEVENTEEN, Aespa and Tomorrow X Together. Similarly, K-pop channel Hello82 has featured lots of K-pop artists reacting to Bollywood songs and music videos.

Similarly, in terms of the film industries, Indian films have long been inspired by Korean films with lots of remakes being released over the years. Now, the Indian blockbuster franchise *Drishyam* is set to get a Korean remake – with the Indian Panorama studios having partnered with the Korean Anthology studios to remake the film as suited for Korean audiences (Variety 2023). Having witnessed the rise in uncredited remakes by Bollywood, Korean studio Kross Pictures set up offices in India, and has remade several Korean movies into regional and Bollywood cinema.

Therefore, with the industries taking notice, it is possible to say that economic and commercial avenues for development for Indian and Korean culture and media production industries look strong.

Considering the economic and commercial impact, it can be inferred that these intercultural exchanges could potentially have some implications on government policy and the government led cultural exchange program between the two countries. At the moment, the countries lay emphasis on the exchange of traditional art forms, archival and public data, museum exchanges, mutual collaborative research, anthropology and financial provisions for the ease of cultural exchanges between the two countries and governments (Government of India 2018).

While the governmental agreement between the two countries makes mention of mass media, the approach lacks any luster. Based on the above stated developments, it is possible for this Indian/Korean films and popular culture to do much better in the context and market of the other country. What is then needed are policy interventions that take this impact of popular culture into consideration while formulating the governmental approach to each country's media industry. This is important, because both governments consider the media

and entertainment industries strategic and important monetary and cultural assets to the economic fabric of society.

Thus, by taking into account the economic and commercial assets that collaborations and partnerships between these two media industries can usher in, it is important the governments of the two countries formulate friendlier policies that accommodate innovation, partnership and collaboration between the culture industries.

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Hashtag Analysis Table						
Hashtag	Total Usage	Engagement Rate	Reach	Posts Daily	Likes	Comments
#인도	348882	0.54%	Medium	113	1800	116
#kpopindia	272064	0.11%	Low	58	296	5
#인도여행	106661	1.60%	Medium	49	1,600	115
#인도음식	78511	0.57%	Low	17	416	37
#인도요리	50711	0.70%	Low	10	332	25
#kdramaindia	45551	1.60%	Medium	12	721	11
#kbeautyindia	24035	3.09%	Medium	3	691	54
#kpopindianfans	20457	5.89%	Medium	1	1,200	5
#indianinkorea	12899	2.06%	Low	12	259	7
#indiakorea	10100	3.27%	Medium	61	321	10
#koreaindia	7257	27.76%	Medium	2	2,000	15
#인도생활	5572	15.9%	Low	4	872	14
#kdramaindianfans	5561	23.75%	Medium	2	1,300	21
#인도식당	4520	0.59%	Low	1	26	1
#kpopdancecoverindia	3947	266.45%	High	0	10,200	320
#인도인	3344	319.58%	High	1	10,600	87
#발리우드	2895	56.51%	Medium	0	1,500	136
#인도춤	2256	3.05%	Low	0	67	2
#indianinseoul	1824	9.4%	Low	2	169	3
#koreaninindia	1419	676.05%	Medium	1	10,000	80
#인도문화	1251	28.93%	Low	0	330	32
#인도음악	767	20.20%	Low	0	151	4
#인도배우	479	257.62%	High	0	1,200	34

Appendix 4 – Social Media Account Analysis Table

Appendix 2 – Coding Manual for Hashtags

Hashtag	Refers to the name of the hashtag
Total Usage	Refers to the number of times each hashtag has been used
Engagement Rate	Refers to engagement calculated based on $((\text{Like} + \text{Comments}) / \text{Total Usage}) * 100$
Reach	Refers to the value of the number of people reached based on engagement
Posts Daily	The number of posts added daily to the hashtag
Likes	The average number of likes per posts
Comments	The average number of likes per posts

Appendix 3 – Coding Manual for Social Media Accounts

Account Name	Username of the account on the channel
Country	The country of hosting of the account
Social Media Channel	Which social media channel is it hosted on: YouTube or Instagram
Date Joined	In which year was the account created on the platform
Total Followers	Total number of followers or subscribers on Instagram/YouTube
Total Posts/videos	Total number of posts/videos posted on the channels
Average Likes per post	The average number of likes per posts
Frequency of Engagement	Refers to engagement calculated based on $((\text{Like} + \text{Comments}) / \text{Total Usage}) * 100$
Topic	What is the main theme that the channel posts on

Account	Country	Social Media Channel	Date joined	Total Followers	Total Posts/videos	Likes per post	Frequency of Engagement	Topic of posting
@sakshmasrivastav	India	Instagram	2019	700K	439	66K	9.48%	Media Led Exchanges
@SakshmaSrivastavENow	India	YouTube	2021	210.1K	98	644.5	1.64%	
@sanjh_singh_rajput	Korea	Instagram	2017	82K	161	10.4K	12.95%	Diasporic Experiences
@IndianUnnie10	Korea	YouTube	2015	214K	181	2.4K	6%	
@korean_dosts	Korea	Instagram	2019	566K	489	4.3K	0.77%	Cultural Immersion
@KoreanDost	Korea	YouTube	2019	1.43M	637	1.1K	5.81%	
@NamasteKorea	Korea	YouTube	2019	255K	259	2.9K	3.74%	Cultural Immersion
@jhunjhunastic	India	Instagram	2022	56.1K	297	56.1K	112.09%	Popular Culture
@jangtan	India	YouTube	2022	43.6K	298	500	2.3%	Popular Culture

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