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MASTERARBEIT / MASTER'S THESIS

Titel der Masterarbeit / Title of the Master's Thesis

“The Influence of Korean Culture in the Ethiopian Entertainment Industry: A Case Study of MOM Entertainment”

verfasst von / submitted by

Minji Kwag

angestrebter akademischer Grad / in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Master (MA)

Wien, 2018 / Vienna, 2018

Studienkennzahl lt. Studienblatt /
degree programme code as it appears on
the student record sheet:

A 067 805

Studienrichtung lt. Studienblatt /
degree programme as it appears on
the student record sheet:

Individuelles Masterstudium:
Global Studies – a European Perspective

Betreut von / Supervisor:

Ass.-Prof. Mag. Dr. Birgit Englert



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Abstract

The overseas ‘wave’ of South Korean culture, so called *hallyu*, was initiated by entertainment companies, also known as talent management agencies, for young aspiring artists. The *hallyu* syndrome has also become the Korean government’s most effective public diplomacy tool and has largely contributed not only to the empowerment of the youth but also to the development of the entertainment industry along with an overall growth of the country in relevant industries. Recognizing the impact of *hallyu*, the Korean government has provided “*hallyu* cultural ODA” to developing countries. This paper examines how such a developing mechanism can be best adopted in Ethiopia. For research, a year-long participatory case study was done on a company called MOM Entertainment established by Ethiopian *hallyu* fans, who benchmarked Korean entertainment companies and applied their talent incubating system to a new development mechanism for Ethiopia. The research methods used in this paper are interviews, questionnaires and statistical analysis of the survey results, as well as the participatory observation. From the research findings, the author analyzes the new mechanism and the movement observed in Ethiopia that answers the main research question of how empowering the youth and females could result in the sustainable development of the entertainment industry in Ethiopia along with the spread of their own wave of culture.

Abstract in German

Die "Welle" der südkoreanischen Kultur im Ausland wird als *Hallyu* bezeichnet und wurde anfangs von Unternehmen in der Unterhaltungsbranche initiiert, die auch als Talentmanagement-Agentur für junge, aufstrebende Künstler agieren. Das *Hallyu*-Syndrom ist auch zu einem effektiven Instrument der öffentlichen Diplomatie von der koreanischen Regierung geworden und hat nicht nur zur Stärkung der Jugend, sondern auch zur Entwicklung der Unterhaltungsindustrie und zum allgemeinen Wachstum des Landes anderer relevanter Industrien beigetragen. Die koreanische Regierung kennt den Nutzen von *Hallyu* und hat Entwicklungsländer mit einer sogenannten "*Hallyu* Kulturelle ODA" versorgt. In dieser Klausurarbeit wird untersucht, wie solche Entwicklungsmechanismen in Äthiopien am besten eingesetzt werden können. Für die Forschung wurde eine einjährige, partizipative Fallstudie an einer von einigen äthiopischen *Hallyu*-Fans gegründeten Firma namens MOM Entertainment durchgeführt. Diese Firma setzte als Richtwert, die Werte von anderen koreanischen Unternehmen in der Unterhaltungsbranche und wandte das Talent-Inkubationssystemen dieser Firmen in Äthiopien an, wobei sie ihren eigenen Entwicklungsmechanismus dabei nutzten. Die in dieser Arbeit verwendeten Forschungsmethoden beinhalten unter anderem Interviews, Fragebögen und statistische Analysen der Umfrageergebnisse, sowie die partizipative Beobachtung. Aus den Forschungsergebnissen analysiert der Autor, den neuen Mechanismus und die beobachtete Entwicklung in Äthiopien und beantwortet damit die Hauptforschungsfrage, wie die Stärkung der Jugend und die Emanzipation der Frauen in Äthiopien zu einer nachhaltigen Entwicklung der Unterhaltungsindustrie und zur Verbreitung ihrer eigenen "Kultur-Welle" führen könnte.

Acknowledgements

I send my sincere appreciation to all my family and friends, especially to my parents Mooyoung Kwag and Jinja Kang who have given me the trust and inspiration to conduct a long-term research project in Ethiopia. I appreciate their limitless support for my life journey all around the world, to help me get out of my comfort zone and to enlarge my perspectives. I also extend my thanks to the Erasmus Mundus Global Studies program for facilitating my education and personal growth.

To everyone who has supported and has been part of my research, I gratefully acknowledge their huge assistance. Special thanks goes to Rahel Girma Debele, Kedir Nure-din Tuha, Lina Mehasin, and Nuha Awol who have been active in all projects of MOM Entertainment. Rahel Solomon Shenkute has also been an amazing research assistant, conducting an interview in Amharic on my behalf. I also appreciate Researcher Sanghyun Nam from KOFICE for his helpful cooperation and input for my study.

I express my deepest gratitude to my supervisor Professor Birgit Englert who valued my research and instilled me with confidence. I could only finish my thesis thanks to her guidance and advice. Finally, but not least, I want to thank my workplace, which I joined while still in the process of writing this thesis. I cannot thank enough my employer and my colleagues at the Ban Ki-moon Centre for Global Citizens for being supportive and accommodating to my situation.

I recall my time in Ethiopia as meaningful and fruitful thanks to all the great support and care I received from the people I have met. Although my thesis research has come to an end, I will continue to support the passionate young people in Ethiopia. Thanks to the unforgettable experiences I have had in Ethiopia, I grew to be more enthusiastic about achieving many more dreams. The conclusion of this thesis is a new start of my—and hopefully many others’—bright future.

Author

Minji Kwag

Table of Contents

Abstract	i
Abstract in German.....	ii
Acknowledgements.....	iii
Table of Contents.....	iv
List of Abbreviations.....	vii
List of Figures/Table	viii
1. Introduction	1
1.1 Background of the Study	1
1.2 Necessity of the Research.....	3
1.3 Research Focus and Questions	5
1.4 Methodology.....	6
1.5 Difficulties in the Research	7
1.5.1 Situational Difficulties	7
1.5.2 Possible Misinterpretation	8
2. What is <i>Hallyu</i>?	10
2.1 Definition of Culture	10
2.2 History and Spread of Korean Culture	11
2.3 The Beginning of <i>Hallyu</i>	12
2.3.1 K-pop	12
2.3.2 K-drama	15
2.3.3 Dissemination through Media.....	17
2.3.4 Fusion of K-pop and K-drama	18
2.4 The Korean Government's <i>Hallyu</i> Diplomacy.....	18
2.4.1 Public Events	19
2.4.2 Expansion of the Concept of <i>Hallyu</i>	21
3. The <i>Hallyu</i> Mechanism	24
3.1 The Mechanism of Talent Management.....	24
3.1.1 Audition	24
3.1.2 Talent Incubation	26
3.2 Challenges of "Manufactured" Artists	27
3.2.1 Training Exploitation	28
3.2.2 Misguided Beauty Standard.....	28
3.2.3 Sexualization and Objectification	29
3.3 Positive Aspects of the Talent Incubating System	31
3.3.1 Improvements Made	31
3.3.2 The Korean Government's Regulations.....	32
3.3.3 Discovering Potential Talents	32
3.3.4 Inclusion of Foreign Artists	34
3.4 Expansion of the Business.....	35
3.4.1 Profits.....	35
3.4.2 <i>Hallyu</i> Influence in Expanded Areas	36

4. Entertainment Industry in Ethiopia.....	39
4.1 Trends of Popular Culture	39
4.1.1 Ethio Music	40
4.1.2 Ethio Dance.....	41
4.1.3 Fusion of Foreign Influences	41
4.2 Youth and Female Representation in the Entertainment Industry	42
4.2.1 Exclusion of Youth in the Mainstream	43
4.2.2 Female Disempowerment in the Industry	44
5. <i>Hallyu</i> Influence in Ethiopia	46
5.1 How <i>Hallyu</i> Landed in Ethiopia.....	46
5.1.1 The Korean Media and Social Media	46
5.1.2 The Ethiopian Media.....	49
5.2 The Korean Fan Club in Ethiopia.....	50
5.2.1 How Members Became K-Fans	51
5.2.2 Age and Gender Groups of the KFCE	52
5.2.3 Fan Activities and Interests.....	54
5.3 Expansion to Youth Empowerment.....	58
6. Participatory Case Study of MOM Entertainment	60
6.1 Background and Objectives	60
6.2 Adopting the <i>Hallyu</i> Mechanism.....	63
6.2.1 Successful Aspects.....	63
6.2.2 Combating Negative Aspects.....	64
6.2.3 Integration of Ethiopian Culture	65
6.3 Projects and Achievements.....	66
6.3.1 Art Production and Event Organization.....	66
6.3.2 Media and Marketing	67
6.4 Difficulties and Limitations.....	68
6.4.1 Breach of the Agreement	69
6.4.2 Lack of Supported Platform.....	70
7. New Paradigm of Cultural ODA.....	71
7.1 <i>Hallyu</i> Cultural ODA.....	71
7.1.1 About KOFICE	71
7.1.2 Cultural ODA in Africa.....	72
7.2 Execution Model of <i>Hallyu</i> Cultural ODA.....	73
7.3 Relevance of the <i>Hallyu</i> Cultural ODA to Ethiopia	74
7.4 The Role of MOM Entertainment	75
8. Conclusion.....	77
Appendix A.....	80
Appendix B.....	85
Appendix C.....	92
Appendix D.....	96
Appendix E.....	99
Appendix F	105

References	111
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List of Abbreviations

AEI – American Enterprise Institute
 AfDB – African Development Bank
 CHANG FE –Changwon K-pop World Festival (former K-pop World Festival, aka KWF)
 CT – Culture Technology
 CSR – Corporate Social Responsibility
 CSV – Creating Shared Value
 DAC – Development Assistance Committee
 EBC – Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation
 ETB – Ethiopian Birr (currency)
 GDP – Gross Domestic Product
 GNI – Gross National Income
 ICT – Information and Communications Technology
 KBS – Korean Broadcasting System
 KF – Korea Foundation
 KFCE – Korean Fan Club in Ethiopia (former Ethio K-pop Fans, aka EKF)
 KIBF – Korea International Broadcasting Foundation
 KOCCA – Korea Creative Content Agency
 KOFICE – Korean Foundation for International Cultural Exchange
 KOICA – Korea International Cooperation Agency
 KOTRA – Korea Trade-Investment Promotion Agency
 KRW – Korean Won
 MCST – Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism
 MOFA – Ministry of Foreign Affairs
 MOM – Moment of Music Entertainment
 ODA – Official Development Assistance
 OECD – Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
 OOF – Other Official Flows
 SMU – Saemaul Undong; Saemaul Movement
 SDGs – Sustainable Development Goals
 UN – United Nations
 USD – United States Dollars

List of Figures/Table

Figure 1. Net ODA by the Percentage of GNI	4
Figure 2. Operating Profits of the Big 3 and Big Hit (2016-2017)	354
Figure 3. Medium of Encountering <i>Hallyu</i> by the Most Active Members of Korean Fan Club in Ethiopia	486
Figure 4. The Year of Becoming A Fan by the Most Active Members of Korean Fan Club in Ethiopia.....	519
Figure 5. Initial Encounter of <i>Hallyu</i> by the Most Active Members of Korean Fan Club in Ethiopia	60
Figure 6. The Member Ratio of the Korean Fan Club in Ethiopia per Gender and Age Group	61
Figure 7. Age of the Most Active Members of the Korean Fan Club in Ethiopia	62
Figure 8. Gender Division of the Most Active Members of Korean Fan Club in Ethiopia (April 2018).....	62
Figure 9. Top 5 Korean Cultures that Ethiopian K-Fans Like (April 2018)	64
Figure 10. Similarities between Korean and Ethiopian Culture Seen by Ethiopian K-Fans	61
Figure 11. Execution Model of the <i>Hallyu</i> Cultural ODA of Public-Private Partnership. 82	
Figure 12. Execution Model of the <i>Hallyu</i> Cultural ODA of Public-Private Partnership in Ethiopia.....	83
Table 1. What Ethiopian K-Fans Hope (April 2018)	575

1. Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

Ethiopia and South Korea have long been in a strong relationship, as Ethiopia sent Korea its invincible *Kagnew* Battalions¹ during the Korean War from 1951 to 1965. Since then, Korea has gone through a rapid transformation from being one of the poorest countries in the world—receiving foreign aid from developed countries—to a donor country within a remarkably short period of time in the world’s developmental history. Taking 11th place in World Bank’s world GDP ranking list in 2016,² Korea has been repaying Ethiopia, in 66th place, through various ODA³ projects. The Korean government has suggested a new approach to the ODA that can be combined with cultural exchanges through *hallyu* influence. Referring to the spread of Korean popular culture overseas, *hallyu* literally means “Korean wave” or “flow of Korea” in Korean language. Starting with the influx of Korean pop music, so-called K-pop, and Korean television soap operas, so-called K-drama, various other aspects of Korean culture have spread overseas through empowering youth artists. *Hallyu* has largely contributed to the development of the entertainment industry that improved the country’s image and position in international affairs alongside with its remarkable economic boost. Acknowledging the ripple effect of this syndrome, *hallyu* has been utilized as Korea’s most effective public diplomacy tool, adding to the country’s compelling soft power. It has brought “excitement and a trendy look to the country’s efforts in diplomacy and international relations,” and since 2012, Korea has targeted its ODA “at communities in Asia and Africa” with “incorporated elements of pop culture.”⁴

Compared to other countries, countries in Africa have not been targeted as the subject of Korea’s public diplomacy through cultural exchanges. Ethiopia also has not been considered to be a main recipient of Korea’s cultural ODA due to the purported lack of demands for *hallyu* content in the African region. Sociologist Chua Beng Huat, an expert in cultural studies in Asia, points out that the wave of Korean culture is constrained from expanding globally due to the restrictions in geography and differences in culture outside the East Asian region.⁵ While the author lived in Ethiopia from September 2016 to August 2017, however, an inter-

¹ *Kagnew* Battalions were the Ethiopian emperor’s military troops, sent to South Korean during the Korean War, during which *Kagnew* won all the battles. Source: David H. Shinn and Thomas P. Ofcansky, *Historical Dictionary of Ethiopia*, Scarecrow Press, 2013, 241.

² World Bank, *Gross Domestic Product 2016*, Microsoft Excel, World Bank, 2017.

³ Official Development Assistance.

⁴ Hye-Kyung Lee, *Cultural Policy in South Korea: Making a New Patron State*, Abingdon: Routledge, 2019.

⁵ Chua Beng Huat, “Korean Pop Culture,” *Malaysian Journal of Media Studies*, Vol. 12, No. 1, 2010, 15-24.

esting trend was discovered: there was a striking desire and demand for *hallyu* among Ethiopian youth in Addis Ababa. The number of members of a comprehensive *hallyu* fan club in Ethiopia reached around 12,000.⁶ This club is highly gender- and age-specific, with female youngsters aging from 18 to 24 taking up the biggest group division.⁷ Interestingly, people who fall in the category of young adult and female are observed to belong to the minority in the entertainment industry in Ethiopia in terms of their appearance and influence in the industry. Young and/or female Ethiopian artists are less present in Ethiopia's mainstream media, whereas senior artists predominantly consisting of middle-aged men are exclusively given opportunities to present themselves to the public and to visualize and commercialize their cultural, artistic competence. In many African countries, including Ethiopia, young people are “a generation of people who have been born into social environments in which their possibilities of living decent lives are negligible and in which they may have found themselves stuck in positions of inadequate life changes and bleak prospects” according to Christiansen, Utas and Vigh, and the circumstances of the entertainment industry of Ethiopia are no different.⁸ The gap between the opportunities for aspiring talented youth and their demand is where the author found correlation with their desire for Korean culture and the *hallyu* system. Throughout this paper, the author argues that advocating youth and women is key to the success of the entertainment industry, along with the spread of the culture of a country that strengthens its global standing and national brand. For this, the author found the importance of the establishment of a new paradigm and mechanism in accordance with that of *hallyu* in Ethiopia.

In May 2016, some of the leading figures among the Ethiopian K-fans—referring to the fans of Korean culture, including but not limited to the fans of K-pop and K-drama—established a company called MOM Entertainment which was the first of its kind in East Africa. The company mainly functions as a talent incubating agency, music and film production company, and also as an event management organizer, to name a few of its roles. Such mechanisms of the company and its operating system are benchmarked from Korea's entertainment companies and/or talent agencies that have been playing the lead role in the *hallyu* syndrome. The primary objectives of MOM Entertainment lie in 1) the empowerment of young talented artists regardless of gender by providing necessary platforms and services; 2) the advance-

⁶ Korean Fan Club in Ethiopia, Facebook page, accessed December 13, 2017, https://www.facebook.com/groups/304878296219652/?ref=br_rs.

⁷ See Figure 6 in Chapter 5.2.2.

⁸ Catrine Christiansen, Mats Utas, and Henrik Vigh, *Navigating Youth, Generating Adulthood: Social Becoming in an African Context*, Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 2006, 9-30.

ment of Ethiopia's entertainment industry through accepting a new mechanism and development method; and 3) the spread of Ethiopian cultural traits, as well as the popular culture of youth. The company intends to have its young and aspiring artists create their own 'wave' while achieving these goals. Just as Korea has become successful with the wave of its own culture through the efforts of its talent agencies, the author saw the possibility of the sustainable development of the Ethiopian entertainment industry and the overall growth of the country that such *hayllu* mechanisms may bring.

1.2 Necessity of the Research

Discussing the direction of the Korean government's cultural ODA, Professor Jeongsook Jung of the Global Cultural Contents Department at Hankuk University of Foreign Studies stresses the importance of supporting the formation of the cultural wave of the aid recipient country by using the "methodology" from which *hallyu* arose.⁹¹⁰ Professor Jung states that in consideration of the cultural ODA as a type of business, it should allow the recipient to represent their own cultural area and should support them in utilizing their distinct cultural elements in order to produce and distribute relevant cultural goods or attractions. Korea's popular culture has been formed by talent development and by the popularity of young performing artists such as singers and actors, alongside with the spread of their music, performance, dramas, and movies through entertainment companies in cooperation with media and support from the government. Ethiopia is also a culturally rich country with its own traditional music and dance as well as other unique customs, for which the author analyzed an adoption and adaptation of the *hallyu* mechanism into the creation of Ethiopia's own methodology to develop the relevant fields and to diffuse the cultural values of the country.

ODA has been a key measure of resource flows to countries listed as ODA recipients on the list created by OECD DAC¹¹ since 1961, and the DAC defines ODA as a measure "used in practically all aid targets and assessments of aid performance."¹² From 2010 to 2015, Korea's average increase rate of the ODA was recorded at 10.2%, which is the highest among

⁹ Jeongsook Jung 정정숙, "Munhwa ODA-wa Geudeul-eui Ryu, geurigo hallyu" 문화 ODA 와 그들의 류, 그리고 한류 [Cultural ODA and Their Wave, and Korean Wave], *Jeonbuk Ilbo*, August 1, 2016. accessed January 30, 2018.

¹⁰ Jeongsook Jung is the Chairperson of Jeonju Cultural Foundation and the Professor of the Global Cultural Contents Department at the Hankuk University of Foreign Studies.

¹¹ Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee.

¹² OECD, "Official development assistance – definition and coverage," Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, accessed April 17, 2018.

the OECD DAC member countries. As a rising donor in the field of foreign aid, the Korean government has put efforts into incorporating its cultural diplomacy tools into the mechanism of foreign aid.

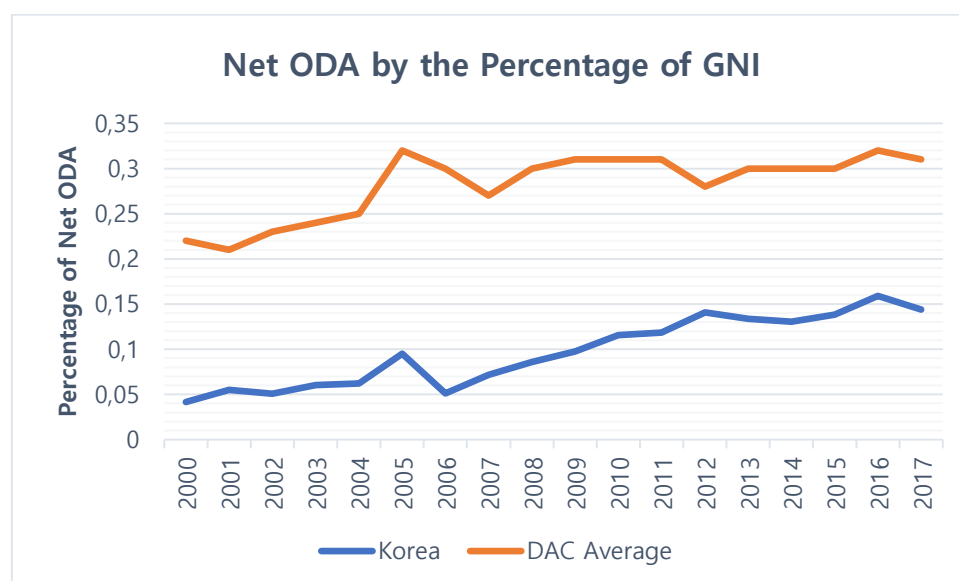


Figure 1. Net ODA by the Percentage of GNI. Note: The chart is recreated by the author with the data given on the website of the OECD. Source: Detailed aid statistics: Official and private flows, OECD.

Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) is a government agency of Korea in charge of carrying out various ODA projects in developing countries. KOICA holds knowledge, openness, innovation, collaboration, and accountability as its core values by enhancing Korea's capability to achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs),¹³ improving developing countries' abilities to be self-reliant, increasing the number of development cooperation partners, and accomplishing efficiency and customer-oriented management.¹⁴ Among the recipient countries, Ethiopia receives 14,373,000 USD of bilateral aid, which is the most amount given by the Korean government in the African region, and which places Ethiopia in the ranks of the top 20 recipients of the Korean ODA.¹⁵ However, evidence of the preparatory process and execution of Korea's foreign aid projects in cultural fields such as the entertainment industry has shown that they have not yet reached the core values. The Korean government's ODA in Ethiopia has also lacked efforts to enhance the locals' self-reliant competence and to make an approach from the recipient-oriented perspective. The problem is derived

¹³ SDGs stands for the Sustainable Development Goals that consist of 17 global goals set by the United Nations to achieve by 2030, replacing the past Millennium Development Goals that ended in 2015.

¹⁴ KOICA, "Mission & Vision," Korea International Cooperation Agency, website, accessed February 28, 2018, <http://www.koica.go.kr>.

¹⁵ KOICA, "Top 20 Recipients," *2016 KOICA Annual Statistical Report*, Seongnam: Korea International Cooperation Agency, October 2017, 4.

from the top-down approach decided at the governmental level and the one-way approach directed from the donor to the recipient. This brings with it the notion of “neo-colonization” that China’s ODA in Africa has recently been criticized of, making the recipient rely on the aid and thus fall into the mire of needing continuous assistance that results in “de-democratization.”¹⁶ Korea’s ODA projects, including the cultural aid projects of the past few years, have been executed without meeting the consent of the people who are the actual recipients of the aid and without appropriate cultural exchanges that could provide a space for mutual understanding of both countries and between people.

It has often been observed that the volunteers and staff members dispatched to Ethiopia by the Korean government, as well as other foreigners living in Ethiopia, receive a negative greeting, or sometimes even physical or verbal assaults, from the local people. Through multiple personal conversations with the volunteers of KOICA dispatched to Ethiopia’s rural areas from 2016 to 2017, the author was constantly told that male Koreans are occasionally randomly spit upon or even have rocks hurled at them while passing by local people on the street. Even in Addis Ababa, the author herself was attacked by an individual who threw a rock at her, hitting her in the head, on October 22nd, 2016. The case was reported to the Korean Embassy and submitted to the supreme court. On October 4th, 2016, American researcher Sharon Gray was fatally injured by rocks hurled at her by “unknown individuals” when in a car driving in the outskirts of Addis Ababa.¹⁷ She was a promising scholar in climate change studies as a post-doctoral student at the University of California. Gray’s sudden and regrettable death at the age of 31 partially supports the hypothesis the local hatred of the foreign community metastasized as indiscriminate, donor-oriented assistance poured into Ethiopia. From the research analysis, this thesis suggests that a paradigm shift is needed in order to adopt a new development mechanism in Ethiopia to help spread its culture through the development of its entertainment industry, which will bring a strong soft power to the country.

1.3 Research Focus and Questions

This research paper intends to analyze the existing local movement along with the establishment of the MOM Entertainment company in Ethiopia influenced by Korea’s *hallyu* syndrome. The analysis will demonstrate how supporting such a movement can cause a win-

¹⁶ Mark Langan, *Neo-Colonialism and the Poverty of ‘Development’ in Africa*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2018, 97-100.

¹⁷ Calif Davis, “Shock and grief as Calif. Woman killed in Ethiopia is mourned,” CBS, October 7, 2016.

win scenario for both countries and become an effective cultural ODA model by making sustainable development possible. The research is conducted in an effort to reach three main objectives that support the author's argument: 1) examining the mechanism of *hallyu*; 2) analyzing the role of MOM Entertainment; and 3) finding a desirable *hallyu* cultural ODA model. The objectives will be met by answering the research questions below:

- What is *hallyu* and who is the main actor?
- Why is the *hallyu* mechanism so successful?
- What is the status quo of the entertainment industry in Ethiopia?
- How does *hallyu* have an influence among Ethiopian youth?
- What role does MOM Entertainment play?
- How can the *hallyu* cultural ODA be best practiced in Ethiopia?

The research findings will eventually answer fundamental questions derived from the above questions: how Ethiopia can create its own wave of culture and how the empowerment of the youth and of women can contribute to the development of the entertainment industry in Ethiopia.

1.4 Methodology

Framing the above research questions requires qualitative and quantitative approaches, so the research method modules are taken based on the combination of both throughout a case study on the *hallyu* influence and the youth movement in Ethiopia. To have an insight from the internal view of the phenomenon for the case study, the author became an administrative member of the biggest online community of K-fans in Ethiopia, the Korean Fan Club in Ethiopia (KFCE). Question investigation proceeded as a qualitative methodology to examine the *hallyu* influence and trends among the Ethiopian K-fans, mainly residing in Addis Ababa. The questionnaire contained eight questions, and the survey participants were directed to answer in a descriptive manner for the purpose of avoiding setting limitations on their opinions.¹⁸ The questionnaire was designed to deduce descriptive reasons of the *hallyu* phenomenon, and a purposive, selective sampling method was used in order to increase validity of the survey results by setting prerequisites for the survey participants. The prerequisites were that they are Ethiopian nationals, members of the KFCE, and currently engaged in the activities of the club. To help readers have a better understanding and comparison of the results of the survey, the

¹⁸ Refer to the Appendix F.

compiled answers are re-constructed into quantitative data analysis and visually presented in the form of figures and tables in this paper.

Moreover, the author conducted deeper participatory observation research on the MOM Entertainment company for over a year. As the first researcher of this specific case study, the author obtained primary resources by closely observing the company as a third person and later by directly involving herself in the business administration and projects as a Co-CEO and an investor. The case study on MOM is conducted by using an analytical study method with in-depth interviews of the company's founders and its prominent artists. The author's participatory observation took place in both Ethiopia and Korea as some of the company members developed projects in both countries. The duality of the research conducted in both countries brings further objectivity and validity to the author's analysis. In Korea, a further interview was conducted with a researcher of KOFICE¹⁹ to view the perspective of the Korean government regarding its *hallyu* ODA policy and its insight on the local movement influenced by *hallyu* in Ethiopia.²⁰

1.5 Difficulties in the Research

1.5.1 Situational Difficulties

While conducting the research, some situational difficulties were derived from the circumstance of the state of emergency in Ethiopia declared by its government from October 2016 to August 2017. The period overlapped with the research period, and the research was indirectly interrupted by the Ethiopian government's restrictions on the internet connection, freedom of speech and publication, access to information, and gathering of crowds. During this time, the government had cut off the internet connection throughout the entire nation. Even when Wi-Fi usage was temporarily available, access to social media platforms such as YouTube and Facebook, which youngsters use to obtain information including *hallyu* content, as well as to communicate with each other, was blocked. The government also set a curfew and prohibited gatherings of any group of people, as well as events both indoor and outdoor. Therefore, it was hardly possible for the author to get in touch with or to speak with groups of people who were relevant to the study, or to do any research on the internet during the emer-

¹⁹ KOFICE is a government entity of the Republic of Korea's government in charge of international projects in the field of cultural exchange.

²⁰ KOICA is a government entity in charge of the ODA under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea.

gency period. A number of relevant events to the research topic had also been cancelled due to the Ethiopian government's oppression.

The other situational limitation was seen in the way of data collection due to the absence of a standardized rating system of broadcasting in Ethiopia. Without a proper counting measurement, the viewership or the audience of local programs that covered *hallyu* content on TV or radio remained an unknown quantity. This had a negative impact on the research process when intending to make a statistical analysis or comparison of the popularity of Korean dramas, movies and/or music shows consumed by Ethiopian households. The author's attempt to find out Ethiopia's national trends or tendencies of the entertainment industry also faced difficulty, as the government did not provide any nation-wide quantitative research data on the matter at the time. Thus, the research analysis is mostly conducted based on the data provided by outside sources and by the author's own observations.

Another issue observed during the research is that Ethiopia has relatively less comprehensive culture due to its vast diversity of cultural traits throughout the nation, which makes it hard to define what would be the country's "own" culture. In Ethiopia, there are more than 80 ethnic groups or tribes listed by the Ethiopian national census, each of which inherits their own unique customs and traditions.²¹ Furthermore, officially around 90 individual languages have been recognized in the country, 88 of which are still spoken.²² Therefore, the research was intentionally conducted within a target group in a target region. Since Addis Ababa is the mecca of interchange between different cultures, the hub of youth, and the region most exposed to foreign influences in Ethiopia, the city was selected as the research base. The research target group mostly consisted of the people who reside in Addis Ababa, have access to the internet and media and also a good command of English. Thus, the words "Ethiopia" and "Ethiopians" used throughout this paper do not necessarily represent the whole country or the nationals.

1.5.2 Possible Misinterpretation

The above stated restricted circumstances and the situational difficulties may also cause some minor misunderstandings in the interpretation of the study or the methodology

²¹ Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Population Census Commission, *Summary and Statistical Report of the 2008 Population and Housing Census: Population Size by Age and Sex*, UNFPA, December 2008.

²² Ethnologue, "Ethiopia," Ethnologue: Languages of the World, website, accessed March 8, 2018, <https://www.ethnologue.com/country/ET>.

used. The first possible error is misinterpretation of the research findings. Since the majority of the case study and observation was done during a state of emergency in Ethiopia, the author's interpretation and the analysis made accordingly may not be the most adequate for a discussion of other occasions. Also, all the interviews for this study were conducted or directed by the author in unofficial, personal settings for the purpose of getting personal insights from different perspectives. Therefore, any response or opinion given by the interviewees shall not be used for generalization of any sort of matter, nor be taken as an official, academic, and/or professional statement.

Another point to tackle in the research method is the data collection process for the online survey conducted within the Ethiopian K-fan club community. Since the online platform ensures anonymity or change of the users' identity, the personal information or any other sort of data provided by the survey participants may also be proven wrong or false. This includes information such as the respondent's gender, age, and nationality written on their profile. Therefore, the author asked the participants to re-provide their personal information and on a limited-time basis provided the survey participation to those who were the most active within the community and acknowledged in person by other members. On the other hand, the positive aspect of conducting the survey online is that it allows individuals to be more frank with their answers and to take time to respond in detail in comparison to a face-to-face survey format.

2. What is *Hallyu*?

2.1 Definition of Culture

In order to understand the *hallyu* phenomenon in Ethiopia, this chapter invites the reader to gain a deeper insight into what *hallyu* is and how Korean culture has been spread overseas. Before examining the dissemination of Korean culture, one should first have a comprehensive understanding of what culture signifies and how it is defined. Culture is rather a vague concept that includes varied elements that affect people's lives. Every dictionary and scholar has a different definition of culture, as it does not fit into one category. Perhaps, the method of defining the concept of culture itself may also be affected by one's culture and thus will differ between individuals. A scholar of cultural studies, Colin Sparks, points out that it is simply impossible "to draw a sharp line and say that on one side of it we can find the proper province of cultural studies."²³ According to Sparks and many other scholars, it is difficult to characterize or to theorize the concept without placing limits on it. From a narrow point of view, culture may be the way individuals dress, eat, speak, and present expressions. From a broader perspective, culture can be associated with defining boundaries or unifying a group of people, a community, or a country. Regarding its origin, culture may possess hereditary traits that have been practiced and valued over a long period of time, which may be called traditional culture, and is generally accepted by older generations. On the other hand, culture may also be newly invented or brought in from the outside and spread or generalized through mass media, which may be called popular culture, seemingly accepted by new generations.

This thesis limits the meaning of culture as what is generally accepted within the boundary of a country and includes both so-called "traditional" and "popular" traits of culture. Since both traditional and popular culture are found to be inevitably compatible in today's modernizing and globalizing world, the author intentionally rules out superfluous discourse of culture's ethnicity, rather focusing on the internal view of culture: what has been predominantly appreciated by people within a national boundary. As every new generation eventually becomes the old generation, a mutually agreed upon conveyance of the old and acceptance of the new must go hand in hand. Absence of understanding or communications may result in conflicts between the old and new generations, or, even worse, an extinction of part of either side's culture. It is not a discourse of which aspect of culture is superior to the other, but of

²³ Colin Sparks, "The Evolution of cultural studies," *What Is Cultural Studies?: A Reader*, edited by John Storey, Bloomsbury, March 29, 1996, 14.

how to reach mutual understanding that will lead to possible preservation and even development and further spread of culture. *Hallyu* is an exemplary case of this, as it has spread not only the newly developed culture of youth but also the traditional culture of the old. A number of *hallyu* fans, according to Colette Balmain, signal “the importance of traditional values and cultural heritage as a determining factor in their engagement with and appreciation of Korean popular culture.”²⁴ The combination of the old, the new, and the mixed culture of modern Korea is what leads to an extensive promotion of its culture with both uniqueness and familiarity and the development of the country’s entertainment industry.

2.2 History and Spread of Korean Culture

Looking back at the history of the country, Korea’s culture is directly linked to its national consciousness and peoplehood. When the country was under Japanese colonization (1910-1945), Korean nationals suffered from Japan’s policy to obliterate the Korean language, the Korean government’s interpretation of its national history, and other nationally accepted customs that had formed Koreans’ national identity and interconnectedness. Some scholars define such identity to be “based on shared bloodline and ancestry” and/or “racial nationalism.”²⁵ Korean nationalists fought against the Japanese occupational policy because they strongly believed losing their individuality would mean the merging of their country with Japan’s. The nationalists and independent activists continued to fight against colonialism until the country announced its independence from Japan. Although the land of the country was never taken from its people from a surface perspective, what the nation fought for was recovering their peoplehood, derived from their own culture, and differentiated from that of Japan. The author sees correlation between such historical experiences of the Korean nation’s efforts to preserve their culture for posterity and modern Korea’s prosperity with its renowned cultural diplomacy.

Preserving a nation’s culture, however, does not necessarily mean maintaining it as it is, but rather developing an adaptive mechanism to keep pace with constant changes within and outside the country. In this globalized era, developing culture in such a sense is thus not losing people’s individuality, but rather making it sustainable and distinguishable. Korean

²⁴ Colette Balmain, “Chapter Eight: Pop Goes Korean Popular Culture: An Investigation into the Popularity of Hallyu Culture in the UK” in *The Global Impact of South Korean Popular Culture: Hallyu Unbound*, edited by Valentina Marinescu, London: Lexington Books, 2014, 86.

²⁵ Gi-Wook Shin, *Ethnic Nationalism in Korea: Genealogy, Politics, and Legacy*, Stanford University Press, 2006, 223.

popular culture shows how “Koreans manage to keep traditional values while incorporating Western elements into their culture,” says Jian Cai, the Executive Director of the Center for Korean Studies at Fudan University.²⁶ Cai states that “Korean pop culture has borrowed the best of Western popular culture and recreated it according to Korean tastes,” and such a mixture of old and modern taste with a combination of Western and Eastern characteristics in Korea’s popular culture has added to its attractiveness to others.²⁷ Thus, the attractiveness of Korean culture comes from both its familiarity and uniqueness to others.

2.3 The Beginning of *Hallyu*

2.3.1 K-pop

According to KOFICE, K-pop was selected as the most associated image with Korea by K-fans overseas in November 2017.²⁸ K-pop is a comprehensive word that includes an extensive range of different genres and cultural features of Korean music. To overseas fans, K-pop is mostly known for its addictive refrains and rhythms, and consists of three components: music, choreography, and performance. Typical K-pop artists belong to a group in which each member is assigned a role related to different elements of music: vocal, rap, dance, and sometimes musical instruments. Renowned K-pop groups are often acknowledged for their perfectly synchronized and precise group dances, and the choreography brings a unique ingenuity to each group. Along with the choreography, the way K-pop stars express themselves and perform on stage also adds to their fame and popularity. This includes a so-called idol image comprised of attractive facial expressions, hair styles, make-up, fashion style, stage manner, and anything else performers show to the public besides their music and dance. It is reasonable to say that K-pop artists have created new forms of culture beyond the boundary of music, which now represents a big part of the overall Korean culture.

The first-generation idol group that led K-pop was Seo Taiji and Boys, who brought a nation-wide influence among the Korean youth in the 1990s. The group consisted of a vocalist and two rappers, who were 20 to 25 years old at the time, one of whom later became the CEO

²⁶ Jian Cai, “The First Taste of Korean Wave in China,” *Journey to the EAST*, Morgantown: Mountaineer Undergraduate Research Review (MURR), 2011.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ KOFICE, *2018 Haewea-hallyu-siltae-josa* 2018 해외한류실태조사 [2018 Research on the Real Condition of Hallyu Overseas], Seoul: KOFICE, March 2018, 35.

of YG Entertainment,²⁹ Hyunseok Yang. Showing different Western music genres as well as fashion and style, they gained fame with their debut song *난 알아요* [Nan Arayo, “I Know”] produced with new jack-swing-inspired beats with upbeat rap in 1992. This song won the group a Golden Disc Award.^{30,31} Their second Golden Disc Award song *하야가* [Hayeoga, “Anyway”] had heavy rock elements combined with a Korean classical music melody and was named after a traditional three-verse Korean poem composed by a king of the Joseon dynasty. Seo Taiji and Boys then earned their third Golden Disc Award with their song called *발해를 꿈꾸며* [Balhaereul Ggumggumyeo, “Dreaming of Balhae”]. Balhae is the name of an ancient country that existed in the northern part of the Korean peninsula, and the alternative rock song was dedicated to a hope for the reunification of the two Koreas. The leader of the group, Seo Taiji, purposely decided to film a music video for this song at the Labor Party Office in Cheol-won, which had been used by North Korea before the Korean War broke out. Moreover, Seo Taiji included images of children left alone after the Korean War in the music video, through which he clearly portrayed the sadness and desire that the young generation of Korea had at the time. By mixing various foreign music genres while adding Korea’s unique historical and cultural elements to their music, Seo Taiji and Boys developed their own form of art and culture through which they expressed their desires, thoughts, ideology, and hopes. This new mechanism and movement empowered the youth and contributed to the development of the music industry of Korea, creating a new regime of popular culture.

Following the success of Seo Taiji and Boys, other K-pop idol groups started forming. Many were grouped with members of the same sex and in similar age groups between mid-teens and mid-twenties, which has now become a trademark of K-pop. Today, it is hard to find an internationally famous K-pop star that does not belong to this category, except in the special case of Psy.³² In 1995, a talent incubating company called S.M. Entertainment was established to provide young aspiring artists with a platform where they could be trained and

²⁹ YG Entertainment is one of the top 3 entertainment companies along with SM Entertainment and JYP Entertainment in South Korea.

³⁰ Golden Disc Awards is an annual music ceremony that has been held by multiple press and broadcasters in Korea to give awards to artists that earned achievements in domestic music industry. Since the beginning of its ceremony in 1986, Golden Disc Awards has been regarded as a representative music ceremony of Korea.

³¹ Ilgansports & JTBC Plus, “Golden Disc Previous Winners,” accessed March 10, 2018.

³² Psy is an individual singer who gained international fame through the spread of his music video “Gangnam Style” on YouTube, which broke the world’s record for number of views. See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9bZkp7q19f0>.

featured to the public with their talents.³³ Following the footsteps of S.M. Entertainment, YG Entertainment was established in 1996 and JYP Entertainment in 1997. In February 2000, S.M. Entertainment's representative idol group H.O.T. opened the first page of the book of *hallyu* syndrome by giving the first “overseas performance with a sold-out concert in Beijing.”³⁴ Then, BoA’s album *Listen to My Heart* became the first album by a Korean musician to sell a million copies in Japan.³⁵ More idol groups such as TVXQ, Super Junior, and Girls’ Generation from S.M. Entertainment continued the trend in the 2000s. As Pawel Kida says, “it is impossible to name them all,” but to name some, BIGBANG and 2NE1 from YG Entertainment and Rain and Wonder Girls from JYP Entertainment also jumped into the pool of *hallyu* and expanded the influence of K-pop internationally.³⁶

One of the leading boy band groups of K-pop, BIGBANG made their way to two world concert tours on top of other large and small international tours: one titled “Alive World Tour” from March 2012 to January 2013 and the other “MADE World Tour” from April 2015 to March 2016. Alive World Tour attracted over 800,000 fans,³⁷ and MADE World Tour reached 1.5 million fans in 32 cities of 13 countries across Asia, North America, South America, and Oceania.³⁸ In 2015, BIGBANG landed 54th in Forbes’ list of the world’s highest-paid celebrities including actors, singers, athletes, magicians, comedians, and other relevant occupations in the field of entertainment.³⁹ BIGBANG’s gross revenue was recorded at 44 million USD, over that of the world’s popular rapper and music producer Dr. Dre (41 million USD) and “today’s highest-paid American all-male arena pop group” Maroon 5 (33.5 million USD).⁴⁰ In the next chapter, the mechanism and functions of the Korean entertainment companies that made K-pop artists will be explained.

³³ S.M. Entertainment is a company established in 1995 by Soo-man Lee who was a singer and a music producer at the time. The company led *hallyu* by primarily functioning as a talent incubating agency, music production company, and an event and concert management organization.

³⁴ Hyung-eun Kim, “Hallyu bridges gap, but rift with China remains,” *Korea JoongAng Daily*, August 27, 2012, accessed February 21, 2018.

³⁵ RIAJ, “List of million sellers in 2002,” RIAJ, accessed February 21, 2018.

³⁶ Pawel Kida, “Chapter Six: Wind of Change: Poland Is One Step Away from the Korean wave,” in *The Global Impact of South Korean Popular Culture: Hallyu Unbound*, edited by Valentina Marinescu, London: Lexington Books, 2014, 69.

³⁷ YG Entertainment, “BIGBANG,” YG Family, website, accessed February 22, 2018, <http://www.ygfamily.com/artist/Concert2.asp?LANGDIV=E&ATYPE=2&PTYPE=&ARTIDX=3&PROIDX=&IDX=&page=>.

³⁸ Yunjung Noh, “[BIGBANG 10th Anniversary ①] From “real documentary” to “MADE” series... The history of BIGBANG’s past 10 years,” *YG Life*, YG Entertainment, August 19, 2016.

³⁹ Zack O’Malley Greenburg, “Bigbang Theory: How K-Pop’s Top Act Earned \$44 Million In A Year,” *Forbes*, July 26, 2016.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

2.3.2 K-drama

Following K-pop, K-drama is selected by overseas *hallyu* fans as the second most associated image with Korea in the field of entertainment according to the research report of KOFICE.⁴¹ The report shows that the global popularity of K-drama is largely influenced by Korean actors' and actresses' attractive appearances, followed by these programs' well-organized storylines and the chance they provide for the viewers to indirectly experience Korean culture.⁴² Especially in the Asian psyche, the predominant sense of Korean beauty is presented by "good-looking" celebrities with their up-to-trend fashion styles, make-up, and hair-styles.⁴³ Typical storylines of K-dramas reflect the Korean society in a cultural context and present social norms that include youth and women empowerment, family values, respect for elders, plutocratic despotism, the didacticism of good triumphing over evil, and so on. K-dramas typically show a young female protagonist as the main lead of the story, who is often depicted as poor and physically unattractive, and who then meets rich, handsome men with whom she becomes invariably entangled in a triangular love relationship. This is a deliberate ploy to capture susceptible female viewership willing to fall for the age-old Cinderella trope. However, the story then unfolds by having the protagonist overcome hardships and troubles in her life through her passion, potential, and abilities; the female character shows how she can handle the difficulties she faces by herself and motivates people around her.

Korean television soap operas initially gained fame in China and Japan in the late 1990s and were gradually spread to other countries in the 2000s. Some of the past TV series that initiated K-drama's world-wide popularity include but are not limited to *Winter Sonata* (2002), *Full House* (2004), and *Boys over Flowers* (2009). Sales of DVD sets and novels of *Winter Sonata* in Japan surpassed 3.5 million USD.⁴⁴ *Full House* was aired in more than 15 Asian countries, in all of which the drama received the highest viewership during its broadcasting.⁴⁵ *Boys over Flowers* was broadcast in over 25 countries from 2009 to 2014, and more countries have re-aired the drama since. For example, Malaysia re-aired *Boys over Flowers* on Jeepney TV in 2016 and the Philippines on NTV7 in 2017. In the 2010s, since the online streaming of K-drama became widely available with subtitles in multiple languages, the major viewership has moved from TV to social media and online platforms, contributing to further

⁴¹ KOFICE, 2018 *Haewea-hallyu-siltae-josa*, 35.

⁴² KOFICE, 2018 *Haewea-hallyu-siltae-josa*, 54.

⁴³ Tai Wei Lim, Wen Xin Lim, Xiaojuan Ping, and Hui-Yi Tseng, *Globalization, Consumption And Popular Culture In East Asia*, World Scientific Publishing Co., 2016, 149.

⁴⁴ Claire Lee, "Remembering 'Winter Sonata,' the start of hallyu," *The Korea Herald*, December 30, 2011.

⁴⁵ Yasue Kuwahara, *The Korean Wave: Korean Popular Culture in Global Context*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2014.

dissemination and promotion of Korean soap operas and *hallyu*. One Korean TV series *Pinocchio* (2014-2015)'s streaming rights were sold for 280,000 USD per episode to the online video streaming platform Youku Tudou, which proves the strong demand of K-drama fans in China.⁴⁶ *Descendants of the Sun* (2016) was played more than 5.6 billion times in one day on April 7th, 2016, on online video streaming service provider iQiyi alone.⁴⁷ The trend is expanding, and in countries where K-dramas are not broadcast on local TV channels, such online streaming websites are gaining more and more viewership.

One of the unique genres in Korea's soap opera and film industry is 사극 [sageuk, "Historical Drama"], which depicts the history of the past Korean dynasties and shows the traditional cultures inherited from the past. *Sageuk* series also have entertaining elements with a modern sense of humor and twisted stories that are based on true stories. Filming takes place either at artificially-built sites that are equipped with Korean traditional *hanok* buildings or at historical sites where palaces and fortresses remain. Actors and actresses dress up in traditional clothes comprehensively called *hanbok*, which differs in colors and designs per epoch and for different social strata in the era. Changes and development in *hanok*, *hanbok*, and other traditional elements in every corner of people's lives in the past are vividly portrayed in *sageuk* series, which brings diversity and fun to the dramas. *Sageuk* can teach viewers how Korea has developed through accepting changes while at the same time preserving its heritage and values in different ways.

One of the world-wide well-known *sageuk*, at a time when K-drama was gaining international fame, was *Dae Jang Geum* (2003), also known as *Jewel in the Palace*, "which was sold to over 120 countries" (2013).⁴⁸ *Jumong* (2006-2007) has also been beloved in many countries including "Iran, Uzbekistan, and Kazakhstan," countries that do not necessarily share similar cultures with Korea.⁴⁹ Especially in Iran, the series recorded over 80% viewership at the time of its broadcasting.⁵⁰ Other *saeguk* dramas that were a big hit in the 2000s include *Hur Jun* (1999-2000), *Damo* (2003), and *Queen Seondeok* (2009). Recently, the most famous K-dramas also follow a trend of fantasy genre in combination with *sageuk* elements, including *My Love from the Star* (2013-2014), *Moon Lovers: Scarlet Heart Ryeo* (2016), and

⁴⁶ Shelly M, "China Pays \$280,000 per Pinocchio episode," *DramaFever*, November 24, 2014.

⁴⁷ Ji-hyoung Son, "'Descendants of the Sun' exceeds 'My Love from the Star' in iQiyi index," *KpopHerald*, April 10, 2016.

⁴⁸ Youna Kim, *The Korean Wave: Korean Media Go Global*, Routledge, 2013.

⁴⁹ Daniel Tudor, *Korea: The Impossible Country*, Tuttle Publishing, 2012.

⁵⁰ Sang-ho Song, "Korea's mark on an expectation-defying Iran," *The Korea Herald*, August 10, 2011.

Goblin: The Lonely and Great God (2016-2017). In *My Love from the Star*, the male lead is an alien that landed on earth from another star hundreds of years ago and continues to live, seemingly without aging. This plot is similar in *Goblin* where an almost one thousand-year-old immortal goblin is the male lead. In *Moon Lovers*, the female lead living in modern times inadvertently travels back in time and finds herself living in the Goryeo dynasty.

2.3.3 Dissemination through Media

The entertainment industry in Korea has developed along with the improvement of the country's cultural content (mainly K-pop and K-dramas), and KBS and the KIBF have largely contributed to the production, commercialization, promotion, and dissemination of such content. KBS is Korea's representative public broadcaster, with TV channels consisting of dramas, entertainment shows, news, documentaries, and more. Keeping pace with the *hallyu* syndrome, a global satellite channel of KBS called KBS World was launched in 2003. This international channel has since stretched out to global audience and is available in 117 countries, reaching over 65 million viewers.^{51,52} Its programs are provided in foreign languages such as English, Chinese, and Malay, and it provides subtitles in Japanese, Spanish, Vietnamese, Indonesian, and other languages.

Arirang TV is another worldwide broadcaster of Korean content launched by KIBF. After its launch with domestic broadcasting, Arirang TV started embarking on overseas broadcasting such as Arirang World in 1999 and the UN In-house Network in 2015. The channel's major spoken language is English and it operates programs in English, Chinese, Spanish, Arabic, Russian, Vietnamese, and Indonesian. As the viewership rates are increasing, the channel is working on including more languages within the channel's official operational spoken languages. The channel reaches over 140 million households worldwide through 10 overseas satellites in 105 countries.⁵³ By featuring foreign language speakers and *hallyu* stars on its various programs, Arirang TV promotes information on Korea (26.6%), traditional and modern culture (50.6%), and international cooperation (22.8%).⁵⁴ Through these international media sources as well as some other domestic TV channels, the programs of which are also

⁵¹ KBS World, "Channel Profile," KBS World, website, accessed March 22, 2018, http://kbsworld.kbs.co.kr/about/channel_profile.html.

⁵² KBS World Operation Division, Personal Conversation on the Phone, Based on the Inside Data of the Operation Division, May 2, 2018.

⁵³ The Korea International Broadcasting Foundation, "About Arirang," Arirang TV, website, accessed March 22, 2018, http://www.arirang.com/prroom/about_arirangn5.asp?sys_lang=Eng.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

available for online streaming, global viewership of Korean content has risen considerably, with an enlarged interest in Korean people's way of life and different aspects of the so-called K-culture beyond K-pop and K-drama.

2.3.4 Fusion of K-pop and K-drama

In the past two decades, Korea's film industry has shown a tendency to cast famous K-pop stars in movies and dramas. Despite the controversies and criticisms chiding their poor acting ability, casting K-pop stars has become a sort of convention for the purpose of effective marketing and promotion, targeting the huge K-pop fandom to increase overseas viewership. In fact, many K-pop artists are provided with acting training by their agencies, and many of them eventually establish a solid foothold in the film market. One of the highest paid K-pop-turned-K-drama stars is Siwon Choi, who is a member of K-pop group Super Junior and who has been featured in multiple TV series and films as an actor. Rain is also a renowned K-pop star who later made his screen debut in 2003. He portrayed the male lead in *Full House* and has performed in many other Korean dramas and movies, allowing him to earn the role of the main character in the Hollywood movie *Ninja Assassin* (2009). Similarly, Suzy, a former member of disbanded K-pop group Miss A, is now a solo singer and an actress. Suzy has taken multiple lead roles in soap operas and movies. After gaining recognition as an actress from the drama *Dream High* (2011) and the movie *Architecture* (2012), Suzy became one of the top actresses in Korea, often seen in various TV commercials as well. Her recent dramas *Uncontrollably Fond* (2016) and *While You Were Sleeping* (2017) have also gained world-wide fame and great viewership. Conversely, actors and actresses that belong to K-pop groups sometimes get a chance to advertise their group and/or music through a TV series or movie as well. Singers-come-actors often also sing the official soundtrack of the films in which they act, increasing the popularity of both the songs and the films. Repetitive interposition of official soundtracks in soap operas, other TV programs, and movies is set in place in order to resonate with the viewers and emphasize the atmosphere of specific scenes. It is often observed that the background music of a drama gains as much fame as the drama itself.

2.4 The Korean Government's *Hallyu* Diplomacy

Behind the success of the *hallyu* syndrome, the Korean government has actively supported the further spread of Korean pop culture and has also taken the advantage of the phenomenon. The government has made use of the *hallyu* effect as its cultural diplomacy tool,

which has been internationally acknowledged. Cultural diplomacy is a form of public diplomacy that utilizes a country's soft power through attracting foreigners and foreign countries using the cultural values of a country. Joseph Nye defines soft power as "the ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion or payments" and states that a country's soft power is generated based on how attractive its "culture, political ideals and policies" appear to others.⁵⁵ Given the fact that every culturally divided country has different values and traits that its people are familiar with, it is not as easy as it may sound to attract people from other countries or different cultural backgrounds. Unfamiliarity or otherness of a foreign culture can thus result in a cultural shock that sometimes accompanies negative impacts such as rejection, repugnance, and racism. Therefore, the Korean government's foreign policy laying out its own culture to its advantage, so called *hallyu* diplomacy, has been one of the most effective and successful cases of public diplomacy. *Hallyu* diplomacy is focused on improving Korea's cultural diplomacy along with "enhancing national image and national brand."⁵⁶ Overseas dissemination of *hallyu* through broadcasting and public events facilitated and sponsored by the government has contributed to global expansion of Korean culture while enhancing the national image and brand.

2.4.1 Public Events

The Korean government has promoted the concept of *hallyu* by various campaigns and public events that engage *hallyu* fans. Since 2011, the K-POP World Festival has annually taken place by the combined efforts of the government and KBS, not only to provide opportunities for K-pop fans to meet the stars in Korea, but also to let the overseas fans show their talents. Through the festival and using the fame of K-pop, the Korean government also seeks to promote Korean cultural traditions and the region of Changwon internationally, which spreads the meaning of *hallyu*. The festival is derived from the Changwon Festival, which was held in the past for the purpose of paying tribute to the ancestors' spirit and wisdom and of remembering the historic traditions of the region, as Changwon was known for its outstanding ironware culture in the era of the Three Han States. During the festival, overseas fans can compete in a talent-based contest. In the preliminary auditions, the best teams or individuals are chosen nationally, and are then given the chance to compete with other teams from different countries over several more rounds. For the final stage, the finalists get to visit Korea,

⁵⁵ Joseph S. Nye, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*, Perseus Books, 2004, 18.

⁵⁶ Gunjoo Jang and Won K. Paik, "Korean Wave as Tool for Korea's New Cultural Diplomacy," *Scientific Research*, Vol. 2, No. 3, July 8, 2012.

experience the culture, and perform on the same stage with K-pop stars. The performance is then broadcast all over the world on KBS and Arirang TV. The finalists are provided with a tour camp while in Korea before the final round. In 2011, 10 final teams were chosen out of 16 countries, and in 6 years, the festival grew to attract 14,000 participants from 72 countries.⁵⁷ The final round attracted about 20,000 audience members and was held at the Changwon Sports Complex.⁵⁸ The winner was awarded a trophy for the grand prize and 12,000,000 KRW.

Along the same lines, the K-pop Cover Dance Festival has also been held annually, initially accepting applicants' cover dance videos uploaded on YouTube from all over the world and later going through offline rounds. Benefits for finalists include expenses covered for their flights, accommodations, food, transport, training and tour in Korea. The K-pop fans are given opportunities to participate in a photoshoot by a celebrity photographer, receive a dance lesson from a K-pop choreographer, perform on the same stage with K-pop stars, and enjoy a guided sightseeing tour around Seoul.⁵⁹ One of the other annual music award festivals is called the Mnet Asian Music Awards (MAMA). MAMA is hosted by Korea's media conglomerate CJ E&M as one of the biggest music events in Asia. In 2014 and 2015, the 16th and the 17th MAMA festivals were celebrated with support from the former president of Korea, Geun-hye Park who sent out a video message for the audience and attendees of the event. Park mentioned the deeply rooted traditional culture of Korea and encouraged the international K-pop fans to expand their interest to learn about Korea beyond K-pop. "Considering that this event was broadcasted live across 16 countries," the president's speech was more than a celebration of the event but rather a diplomatic approach to show other countries Korea's strength in the entertainment industry and the value of its various aspects of culture.⁶⁰

For the 2018 Winter Olympics held in Pyeongchang, actors Keun-suk Jang and Minho Lee, singer Taeyang from BIGBANG, and K-pop groups Girl's Day and AOA were appointed as honorary ambassadors of the Olympics along with a total of 50 other honorary ambassadors. One hundred days prior to the opening of the Olympics, a K-pop concert was held, with

⁵⁷ KBS World TV, "2017 World Festival in Changwon," YouTube video, *KBS World TV*, October 18, 2017.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ K-POP Cover Dance Festival Organizing Committee, 2018 K-pop Cover Dance Festival, website, accessed April 25, 2018, <http://coverdance.seoul.co.kr/>.

⁶⁰ Tae Young Kim and Dal Young Jin, "Cultural Policy in the Korean Wave: An Analysis of Cultural Diplomacy Embedded in Presidential Speeches," *International Journal of Communication* 10(2016), Simon Fraser University, 2016.

acts by the current most famous K-pop idol groups BTS, TWICE, and other groups in celebration of the start of the torch relay. One of the top boy band groups, EXO, and solo rapper CL from the renowned, but now disbanded, girl group 2NE1, performed at the closing ceremony of the Olympics. Called the “Cultural Olympics,” the journey of the Olympics was led through the Korean government’s organization of cultural programs and festivals with the intention of spreading Korean cultural traits as well as promoting the entertainment industry. With its official slogan of “Culture is added in PyeongChang!”, the cultural Olympics promoted by the Korean government induced the participation of the youth in particular, and has facilitated around 150 cultural and artistic programs. Such active interchange and interactions by the government have largely contributed to the dissemination of Korean culture and the co-development of other relevant industries that have cultivated a positive image of Korea.

2.4.2 Expansion of the Concept of *Hallyu*

According to Joseph Nye, *hallyu* has been a successful public diplomacy tool of the South Korean government, as it has enlarged the country’s soft power by disseminating its culture.⁶¹ Korean government’s involvement in *hallyu* has given further impetus to the spread of Korean culture beyond the boundaries of the entertainment sector, encompassing the country’s “norms, ethics, values, style, policies, and institutions.”⁶² Now the Korean government is putting emphasis on the development and improvement of *hallyu* content. To this aim, the extension KOCCA was established in May 2009. KOCCA has been supporting production of K-content and formats for broadcasting; searching for K-rookies⁶³ as well as supporting domestic or overseas music festivals; providing translation, dubbing, and marketing support for the private sector’s global market entry; and hosting overseas export fairs.⁶⁴ With the government’s efforts and direct engagement in spreading Korean culture, various Korean cultural traits have caught foreigners’ interests, and more than 70 million individuals sought to be followers or supporters of *hallyu* in 2017.⁶⁵ Now international K-fans’ interest lies in a variety of Korean cultural industries, including but not limited to food, fashion, beauty, animation, *man-*

⁶¹ For more details, see Consul of Political Affairs at the Korean Consulate General, Tae-Wan Huh’s article “The Republic of Korea’s Public Diplomacy as A Policy Tool of Soft Power,” *USC Center on Public Diplomacy*, accessed February 27, 2018.

⁶² Roger L. Janelli and Dawnhee Yim, “Soft Power, Korea, and the Politics of Culture,” *Catching the Wave: Connecting East Asia through Soft Power*, Institute of East Asian Studies, Berkeley: University of California, October 5-6, 2007.

⁶³ K-rookie refers to a new, aspiring K-pop musician.

⁶⁴ KOCCA, “Main Business,” Korea Creative Content Agency, website, accessed April 26, 2018, <http://www.kocca.kr/en/contents.do?menuNo=200597>.

⁶⁵ Korea Foundation, “2017 지구촌 한류현황 I” [2017 Global Hallyu Status Quo Analysis I], Seoul: Korea Foundation, February 22, 2017, 23.

hwa [cartoons], and online games. In recent years, whereas the overall export volume of Korea's manufacturing business has decreased, a steady increase has been noted in the export volume relevant to *hallyu* content. From 6.4 billion USD in 2013, *hallyu* exports continuously increased to 7.85 billion USD in 2016 according to KOFICE.⁶⁶

K-fans' enlarged interest in various sectors of Korean culture has led to a remarkable leap in the number of tourists visiting Korea, with numbers reaching 17.4 million in 2016.⁶⁷ The number one reason for this increase was the rise of Korea's fashion and beauty industries. According to the MCST's International Visitor Survey, in which a total of 8,827 individuals participated, 67.3% of them chose Korea as a tourist destination for the purpose of shopping, 44.5% for food, 43.2% for natural scenery, and 25.6% for historical and cultural heritage.⁶⁸ Myeongdong shopping district in Seoul has become a mecca for shopping, as Korea's must-go district is full of Korean-style fashion items that were introduced to the international community through K-drama and *hallyu* stars. Myeongdong was selected as the favorite tourist site by 36.9% of respondents of the International Visitor Survey.⁶⁹ Korea's beauty brands and skincare products that can be found in every corner of the country's shopping districts are also highlights for tourists. Such Korean cosmetic products are branded as K-beauty and are also available in Sephora, which is a French-founded chain of beauty products that have branches throughout the world.

A number of filming sites of K-dramas that introduced natural scenery and historical sites have also attracted tourists. One of the oldest drama sets to become a tourist draw is Munhyeong, where *Taejo Wang Geon*, also known as *Emperor Wang Gun*, was filmed. When the drama series was on air, more than 2.4 million tourists visited the drama set in the year of 2001 alone, which resulted in a positive economic impact of 60 billion KRW.⁷⁰ Later on, many other filming sets introduced in Korean dramas and entertainment shows became popular with foreign tourists. Another example is the Korean Folk Village located in Yong-in, which is often used for filming *sageuk* dramas. These filming locations are often introduced to tourists on brochures or websites of the Korea Tourism Organization. Such active engagement

⁶⁶ KOFICE, *한류노믹스* [Hallyunomics], Seoul: KOFICE, June 8, 2017, 10.

⁶⁷ Korea Immigration Service, "2016 출입국·외국인정책 통계연보 [2016 Immigration · Foreign Policy Statistics Annual Report]," Korea Immigration Service, June 21, 2017, 15.

⁶⁸ Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, *2016 International Visitor Survey*, MCST, February 2017, 293.

⁶⁹ Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, *2016 International Visitor Survey*, 46.

⁷⁰ Jiwon Jung and Juhung Jeon, "(The) Strategy of Tourist Attraction to Wangkeon Studio at Munhyeong Saejae," *旅行學研究*, Vol. 13, 2001.

of the Korean government in promoting tourism using the impact of K-dramas has furthered global popularity of Korean culture and the country's economic growth and prosperity.

The rising popularity of Korean food among foreigners also has a strong correlation with the global popularity of K-dramas. A box-office Korean soap opera *My Love from the Star*, for example, provoked a boom of *chimaek* consumption, which is the female protagonist's favorite combination of food and drink in the drama. *Chimaek* is a newly-coined word that derives from the word chicken and *maekju* [beer]. The *chimaek* syndrome infused life into China's food industry after it had slowed down in early 2014 due to nation-wide fear of H7N9 bird flu, which had negatively affected restaurants that sold chickens and ducks. On Sina Weibo, one of the most popular social media sites in China, "more than 3.7 million posts related to the Chinese term for [*chimaek*]" were published for few weeks in early 2014.⁷¹ This caused a sudden rise in the restaurants and markets that sold chickens in China, which automatically revived businesses out of the recession caused by the bird flu. It was reported that local customers were lining up for "as long as two hours to order" at any chicken restaurant at that period of time.⁷² Also, another scene in the drama where the couple enjoys a bowl of instant noodles has been attributed to the rise in demand for Korean instant noodles in China. Nongshim, a Korean company that produces instant noodle products, is reported to have reached the highest sales recorded in the company's "15-year history of business" in China in the months of January and February of 2014.⁷³ Likewise, demands of Korean food and drinks, which were featured in K-dramas, have tremendously increased by foreigners, proving their impact on the development of other industries influenced by *hallyu*. The next chapter examines how *hallyu* was constructed and spread to have impacts in the sustainable growth of a country.

⁷¹ Lilian Lin, "Korean TV Show Sparks Chicken and Beer Craze in China," *The Wall Street Journal*, February 26, 2014.

⁷² Korea Herald, "'My Love' signals K-drama revival," *The Korea Herald*, March 10, 2014.

⁷³ Ibid.

3. The *Hallyu* Mechanism

During the political and economic upheaval from the time Korea announced independence from Japan in 1945 until the country was excluded from the DAC list of ODA recipients in 2000, Korea had received 25,547.5 million USD of total foreign assistance.⁷⁴ This shows how the international society has largely contributed to Korea's development, which automatically allowed foreign cultures and influences to be poured into the country. Nonetheless, in the flood of foreign cultures and the rapid development process, Korea's cultural power became firmer by adopting changes and developing its own mechanism to sustain its cultural traits and values while also accepting those of other countries. Korea's major entertainment companies have played a key role in such development by actively engaging youth in facilitating and promoting their talents through new approaches to performing arts and cultural activities. In the previous chapters, the background of *hallyu* in Korea and its influence overseas was discussed. As this chapter will investigate the mechanism of *hallyu*, one will be able to learn how effective the mechanism can be in other developing countries to help their entertainment industry become further developed through dissemination of their cultural traits. This will be discussed later with relation to the implementation of the *hallyu* ODA in Ethiopia and will demonstrate how the mechanism can be best adopted and practiced in the country with the demonstration of the establishment of MOM Entertainment.

3.1 The Mechanism of Talent Management

3.1.1 Audition

Entertainment companies in Korea prioritize talent incubation and management as their primary business model in order to foster young artists, to strategize and manage their activities and public appearances, to conduct effective marketing strategies, and to further manage productions of music and film. Through nation-wide auditions and, moreover, on a global scale – both online and offline, the companies select aspiring artists in varied fields of the entertainment industry. The major entertainment companies hold year-round auditions to discover aspiring artists and multi-talented youth, including musicians, dancers, actors, comedians, models, and athletes. Normally, big companies leave the audition open for online applicants at ordinary times and hold weekly public auditions and occasionally global auditions overseas. Casting is open for anyone, but mostly youth aging from early teens to mid-twenties

⁷⁴ OECD Statistics & Ministry of Finance, "Amounts of Assistance South Korea Received (in USD 1,000,000)," Chart created with sources from ODA Korea, "30 Years of Foreign Investment in South Korea," Office for Government Policy Coordination, 1993.

get accepted and become trainees to enhance their competence and aptitude. Many go through years of strict training, during which the trainees are almost completely isolated from the outside world. The auditions, nonetheless, grow to be more and more competitive. It was reported in 2013 that SM Entertainment “receives 300,000 applicants in nine countries every year” and that the company “collaborates with 400 songwriters worldwide and samples some 12,000 songs a year.”⁷⁵ The number of audition applicants as well as partners of such companies increases tremendously every year, and this leads to the expansion of the companies’ business and their support to the prospective trainees and their currently active young artists.

Utilizing the influence of the world-wide famous talent competition show *America’s Got Talent* on the NBC Channel in the US, Korean entertainment companies have used media and broadcasting as a platform to excavate talent and to promote their companies. For example, the judges’ panel for the 6th season of the TV competition show *K-pop Star* airing from 2016 to 2017 on SBS, a public broadcaster in Korea, consisted of the presidents of YG Entertainment, JYP Entertainment, and Antenna company. As more and more competition shows gained fame, an unprecedented program came out under the name of *Produce 101* in 2016. The show intended to turn viewers into producers themselves to judge and vote for their favorite out of 101 young female artists that participated in the program as competitors. The show quickly gained national attention, and whether winners or not, many of the cast members became known and their talents were acknowledged by the public. Following the success of season one, the second season of the program also gained popularity in 2017, this time with 101 boys. According to the Korea Reputation Center, which researches and calculates big data of brands of entities and individuals, Kang Daniel, the winner of *Produce 101* Season 2, was immovable in his position of highest brand value as an individual for eight months in a row after the program ended.⁷⁶ The Korea Reputation Center analyzed the brand reputation index of 395 K-pop boy group members based on 164,132,165 numerical values on big data extracted from the indexes of participation, media, communications, and community, according to consumers’ behavioral analysis from February 15, 2018 to March 16, 2018.⁷⁷ This serves as evidence for the fact that audition and competition programs are effective for entertainment companies to select the most adequate candidate(s) as their trainees. By using this method, the

⁷⁵ Andrew Salmon, “Korea/s S.M. Entertainment: The Company That Created K-pop,” *Forbes*, July 31, 2013.

⁷⁶ Korea Reputation Center, “[브랜드평판] 보이그룹 개인 브랜드 2018 년 3 월 빅데이터 분석...” [[Brand Reputation] Boy Group Individual Brand March 2018 Big Data Analysis...], Korea Reputation Center, March 17, 2018.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

entertainment companies successfully market and familiarize their aspiring artists to broader audiences, fans, partners, and potential supporters.

3.1.2 Talent Incubation

One of the common features of Korean entertainment companies is that they are established by well-known, successful artists. Taking lessons learned from the hardships and experiences they have gone through as performers, these artists-turned-businesspersons have initially established a platform where new talents can be discovered and in which the young generation is empowered to develop the entertainment industry. The companies train young artists, provide them with stages and other opportunities to be introduced to the public, produce music or let the artists develop their own, and manage the artists' activities and sponsorship. The companies provide a bootcamp-style training with different subjects of lessons for vocals, choreography, acting, stage manners, and foreign language proficiency, to name a few. Once the aspiring artists get accepted to be part of the company as trainees, they have to abide by strict regulations and intensive trainings. Many trainees spend an average of "five or more years training to be a K-pop star."⁷⁸ A representative K-pop idol group that has been active in the industry for over 10 years, Girls' Generation, aka SNSD, could debut only after four of the nine group members had spent six years in training. This is the case for many other young artists because most of them are in their teens and they have to attend training abreast with their school curriculum. When they are not at school, trainees "spend up to twelve or more hours every day in group and individual lessons," which explains why the entertainment companies get the nickname of a "factory" that manufactures talents.⁷⁹ Even after they debut, K-pop idol groups have to fight in fierce battles to survive in the flood of existent and new-coming K-pop artists; many do not get featured on mainstream media for years; and some groups even have their members replaced. In the 2010s alone, more than 200 idol groups have debuted in Korea, which explains the status quo of the competitive battlefield for to-be *hallyu* stars.

Companies offer accommodations and meals for their trainees on top of covering all the necessary training costs. From an administrative perspective, automatic expenses for the management of business, marketing, advertisements, and production of music, music videos,

⁷⁸ John Lie, *K-pop: Popular Music, Cultural Amnesia, and Economic Innovation in South Korea*, University of California Press, 2015, 125.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

and dramas cannot be ignored. It takes about “2-3 years to get one’s foot in the market,” and a number of small and medium entertainment companies have gone bankrupt after failure to debut their artists within a short period of time. Putting an idol group on Korea’s prominent music TV programs like *Music Bank* may cost a company “about 100 million won” for a month-long promotion.⁸⁰ According to a representative of an entertainment company, “even when it feels like they are doing nothing but breathing, trainees cost [a company] about 30 million won per month.”⁸¹ As this information is from a secondary source available online, however, it is uncertain who provided the information and when. After a number of trials of direct inquiry to major entertainment companies to get detailed information on the exact number of applicants and the exact cost of the training process, the author was unsuccessful as such information is not officially disseminated to the public due to its confidential nature. Asking further questions on any relevant matters to the companies’ mechanisms was discouraged by the persons in charge. It is understandable that such information is an asset for a company and may become the company’s own arms and ammunition to survive in the pool of emerging entertainment companies that keep putting out new faces into the already competitive *hallyu* market.

3.2 Challenges of “Manufactured” Artists

Since the new mechanism of talent incubating in Korea’s entertainment industry was unprecedented, the entertainment companies underwent trial and error that has allowed them to improve their systems over time. With betterment and upgrades in the *hallyu* mechanism, the main players of the *hallyu* syndrome – the entertainment companies, have now become conglomerates that have influences in different industries and fields domestically and internationally. Before discussing how the mechanism of the Korean entertainment corporations can be adopted in the field of artists and cultural development in Ethiopia, it is crucial to point out the past and the current shortcomings within the system and to seek ways to improve them. Despite the huge success of the *hallyu* syndrome, the selection process of *hallyu* stars and the training mechanism of the agencies have been highly criticized for producing homogenous contents and prioritizing looks over content.⁸² At the emergence of the major entertainment companies in Korea in the 1990s, the companies’ executives and casting directors took to the

⁸⁰ Seunghee Go, “[신인전쟁②] 아이돌, 연습생부터 데뷔까지 돈과의 전쟁...평균 20억원의 배팅” [[Rookie War ②] Idol, the War with Money from Trainee until Debut... Average 2 billion KRW betting], *Heraldbiz*, August 4, 2016.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Heather Willoughby, “Image is Everything: The Marketing of Femininity in South Korean Popular Music.” *Korean Pop Music: Riding the Wave*, ed. Keith Howard, Folkestone: Global Oriental, 2006, 99-108.

streets to cast merely visually attractive youngsters. Under the justification of looking for talented artists, they randomly walked up to so-called good-looking persons—in their personal standards, which later become nationally accepted beauty standards for Korean youngsters—and handed them their business cards.

3.2.1 Training Exploitation

Stella Kim, one of the former trainees of K-pop group Girls' Generation, was also invited to a private audition by a senior executive of S.M. Entertainment, whom she accidentally ran into on an airplane from Korea to the United States. Without plans, she sang and danced in front of cameras and was selected to be a trainee at the company. While attending a school in the U.S., Kim managed to participate in the training in Korea during vacations, which “started at 10 a.m. every day and lasted up to 13 hours.”⁸³ The training sessions included “classes on public speaking and obviously vocal training, and acting for anybody that’s going into acting and all types of dancing—like jazz, ballet and hip hop.”⁸⁴ This shows how the Korean entertainment companies used to focus on the artists’ appearance more than their talents, which proves why the companies had to spend much time and effort in fostering the aspiring artists’ abilities. Kevin Woo, who debuted as a member of the boy group U-Kiss, and who later dropped out of the team, recalls his training experience: “You have a curfew; you have a schedule planned out for the whole week. And you live in a dorm... So you’ve got vocal lessons for this hour, and then dance lessons, and then also acting lessons, and then for foreigners, you get Korean lessons, or vice versa.”⁸⁵ Living in a dorm isolates the trainees from the outside world, which means they can barely see their parents and friends during the training period, not to mention once they debut they further lose their private life.

3.2.2 Misguided Beauty Standard

While aspiring *hallyu* stars are trained for singing, acting, and dancing, they are also required to be on a strict diet and follow a stringent exercise plan as well as consenting to plastic surgeries to change their appearances. Among the brutal schedule of a number of mandatory sessions, the worst that S.M.’s former trainee Kim pointed out was when the trainees had to “stand in line and go on the scale” to be called out and shamed if their “weight had not

⁸³ Benny Luo, “Former SNSD Trainee Reveals the Distorted Reality of Beauty in K-pop,” *NextShark*, 2016.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ Heeseung Kim, “What It Takes to Become a K-Pop Star: U-KISS Idol Kevin Woo Explains,” *Cosmopolitan*, Hearst Communications, July 7, 2017.

gone down from the week prior.”⁸⁶ This used to be the case for almost every trainee in the past, even if they were already thin. For this reason, many trainees suffered from sudden weight loss that caused them severe health problems. Nonetheless, the number of applicants to be an entertainment company’s trainee has only increased, as outsiders do not see the dark side behind the scenes. As these “manufactured” idols gain fame and get featured often on media, the way they look has become a Korean beauty standard.

In association with the popularity of Korean celebrities, the plastic surgery syndrome has settled over Asia. Korean celebrities contributed to a nation-wide and later Asia-wide thirst for having a skinny body as well as a Western facial structure including a pointy nose, double eyelids, and a narrow jaw-line—the so-called V-line—with a brighter, lighter skin color. It is undeniable that Seoul has become a global capital of plastic surgery, with 60% of young Korean women undergoing surgery on their faces or bodies in their twenties.⁸⁷ Surprisingly, or perhaps not so surprisingly, getting “either a nose job or a blepharoplasty” has been considered as a “high-school graduation gift” among Korean teenagers.⁸⁸ Plastic surgery has become a custom among not only Koreans, but also among foreigners influenced by *hallyu*, which has made Korea the world’s leader in plastic surgery operations per capita. In 2016, around 270 billion KRW was spent by foreigners in Korea on “plastic surgeries and dermatology treatments.”⁸⁹ There has been a new trend of “cosmetic surgery” or “plastic surgery” tourism observed in Korea’s tourism industry by the massive number of Chinese tourists, as the percentage of their visits to Korea for plastic surgery exceeds half of all visits according to the Ministry of Health and Welfare.⁹⁰ Among the Chinese female patient tourists who intended to receive or who have received plastic surgery by a Korean surgeon, namely “double eyelid surgery” has been regarded as a must-do.⁹¹

3.2.3 Sexualization and Objectification

Another negative aspect of the entertainment companies’ marketing strategy for their artists is sexualization. Female stars often perform on stage in short pants and tight clothes

⁸⁶ Luo.

⁸⁷ BBC, “On having cosmetic surgery to get a better job,” *BBC Minute*, April 2, 2018.

⁸⁸ Patricia Marx, “About Face: Why is South Korea the world’s plastic-surgery capital?” *The New Yorker*, March 23, 2015.

⁸⁹ Kyung-don Nam, “[Graphic News] China dominates cosmetic surgery tourism,” *The Korea Herald*, Herald Corporation, October 8, 2017.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Laurie Essig, “People are Starting to Regret Their Nose Jobs. Are Regular Noses Back in Fashion?” *Newsweek*, April 7, 2018.

and also with heavy make-up that makes them look more mature than their age. Male idols are often asked to show their body parts such as abs to their female fans on mainstream media, at concerts, or during fan meetings. Because such sexual elements and expressions open an easy getaway of catching the attention of the public, the number of artists performing sexualized choreography and adding lascivious words or implicative meanings to their lyrics has increased remarkably. In the case of a girl group called EXID, they were suddenly elevated to stardom two years post-debut due to a fan's video specifically focused on one of the group members, Hani, during a stage performance of their signature song "Up and Down." The video went viral because Hani was "rocking her pelvis back and forth" in a specific movement analogous to that of sexual intercourse, at the same time having a sexualized facial expression.⁹² The video also captured her showing her bottom to the audience while she was "wearing body-hugging micro shorts."⁹³ Later the group's signature choreography was banned from being performed on Korea's major public broadcasters, KBS, SBS, and MBC. Much other choreography from K-pop songs has also been banned from being performed on major TV stations, such as "Wiggle Wiggle" by Hello Venus, "Move" by 4L, "Miniskirt" by AOA, and "Paradise Lost" by Gain.

Moreover, lyrics and music videos have also been used to increase sexualization and objectification of idols. Such installations are evident in numerous K-pop songs. In the music video of world-wide famous K-pop singer Psy's biggest hit song "Gangnam Style," one cannot miss some scenes that are obviously intended to sexualize women's bodies. For example, one of the scenes zooms in some ladies' hips as they are doing yoga in a public place and shows how Psy takes an explicit look at them. In the music video of "Who's your mama?" by J.Y. Park, the lyrics explicitly describe women's bodies and sizes, and repeat that a woman has to have big buttocks. The music video also includes close-ups of sensitive body parts of women who are working out at a gym. Considering the fact that most K-pop fans are underage and that many K-pop stars themselves are also teenagers, such a trend in the K-pop industry has brought negative impacts. In observation of the outcomes of the entertainment companies' talent development system, sometimes criticized as a doll-manufacturing mechanism, the discussed problems have negatively affected youth. The talent incubating system has not only distorted the young artists and standardized them into patterned behavior, but has also made *hallyu* fans fall for a damaging perception about beauty. Regardless of gender, Korean

⁹² Dong-jin Um, "EXID recounts rocky rise," *Korea JoongAng Daily*, October 19, 2015.

⁹³ Ibid.

artists have been victims of sexualization, and especially female artists have easily been victims of objectification and commercialization of their appearance.

3.3 Positive Aspects of the Talent Incubating System

Despite the negative impacts, the Korean entertainment industry has sustainably developed due to improvements made and due to the positive aspects of its mechanism. Out of the positive aspects, one can focus on the outcomes of the entertainment companies' talent incubating system that has allowed for youth and female empowerment. It may seem paradoxical to argue that young female artists are empowered within the system after discussing the above issues that brought the opposite impact. This part of the paper brings answers to the paradox by sharing what improvements have been made and what positive outcomes of the talent incubating system have been observed. The answers will then be discussed in the later chapter on how they can be mirrored and integrated into the case of the Ethiopian entertainment industry and MOM Entertainment that creates a place for youth to "do what they are talented for or they are given to do and also to help and enable them to gain what they dream of."⁹⁴

3.3.1 Improvements Made

The issues mentioned above have been considerably improved upon as the entertainment companies gain respect for the unique characteristics of each artist and their different forms of arts. For example, a Korean TV competition program, "Show Me the Money" has gained both domestic and international popularity since 2012 by featuring underground rappers, each of whom has a strong personality that does not fit into standardized K-pop stars' characteristics. Even though the rappers do not show a standardized fashion style, skinny look, pale skin, Westernized eyes and nose, or the manner that aspiring celebrities are taught by their agencies, they have quickly gained fame with their own charms and the unique presentation of their raps. Among the K-pop stars, some have been also recognized for their healthier look rather than a typical idol's appearance. For example, girl group Sistar's members are known for their darker, healthier-looking skin with rather masculine body types, and were regarded as Korea's top girl group until their disbanding in 2017. Akdong Musician (AKMU), the winning team of *K-pop Star Season 2*, has maintained their popularity with their unique music genre since their debut in 2014, despite their conventionally-regarded Asian look with

⁹⁴ Tuha, Personal Interview, Appendix C.

sharp eyes and small noses that do not fit into the beauty standard of the majority of *hallyu* stars. AKMU has even signed a contract with YG Entertainment under the stipulation that they will not operate any plastic surgery to change their look, in order to be recognized solely for their music.

3.3.2 The Korean Government's Regulations

Since the flow of Korean culture through K-pop and K-drama has largely contributed to the overall exports of Korea's cultural content and values that added to the image branding of the country, the Korean government has also taken the lead in correcting the faults of the *hallyu* system. First, the government acknowledged the problems coming from a considerable number of teenage trainees and debuted idols being abused, forced to work overtime, and being coerced into sexualized portrayals of themselves. The government has since decided on regulations and made laws regarding minors' rights. Starting from July 29, 2014, the law has been active to protect underage celebrities' basic rights that include learning, resting, and sleeping.⁹⁵ The new regulation insists on a maximum 35 hours of working time per week for children under the age of 15 and a limitation of 40 hours for minors aged from 15 to 18. They are also not allowed to "work between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m. unless their guardians give consent," which changed the unhealthy routine of the trainees and K-pop stars who had been seemingly forced to practice overnight in the past.⁹⁶ Entertainment companies coercing the young artists to "wearing revealing stage costumes or dancing sexually suggestive choreography routines" has also become illegal for minors.⁹⁷ K-pop groups that consist of minors thus have been protected from having any sexual elements in their music or performance.

3.3.3 Discovering Potential Talents

Aspiring Korean artists or foreigners who wish to become K-stars are recruited by their agencies at a young age and debut when young because Korean entertainment companies invest in their potential talents. For this reason, compared to the world's most popular celebrities, the average age of the most famous Korean celebrities tends to be significantly younger. As many aspiring artists become trainees in their early teens, by the time they debut, even after spending years in training, they are still in their late teens or early twenties. As Korean entertainment companies open their doors widely to young artists, trainees who are accepted

⁹⁵ Hyo-won Lee, "South Korean Law to Protect Young K-Pop Stars From Sexualization, Overwork," *The Hollywood Reporter*, July 8, 2014.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

do not necessarily have to be perfect in their presentation of their art and talents before their debut; rather, those who have potential are chosen and given various opportunities to improve their abilities and competence in multi-entertainment fields. Once their potential talents are recognized by the experts, even newly debuted artists are given a chance to perform on stage or to be featured on TV shows and/or dramas. For instance, among the recently debuted groups in 2017 is Hi Cutie, consisting of five girls whose average age is 12.6 years old. They initially debuted as child actresses but have since gone through training sessions for singing and dancing, to prepare them to be the next K-pop idols. Following this model, Seungri of BIGBANG, Jungkook of BTS, solo artist BoA, Minzy of 2NE1, Suzy of Miss A, Seohyun of Girls' Generation, Max Changmin of TVXQ, and others have become multi-talent artists and leaders of *hallyu*. Looking at the success of these *hallyu* stars who debuted in their mid-teens, the Korean entertainment companies see youth and their potential power as their biggest assets.

For artists to become multi-talented, they are fully sponsored by their companies. Once they sign a contract with a company, the aspiring stars receive every necessary assistance at the company's expense, up to two billion KRW per K-pop idol group.⁹⁸ The expense is estimated according to the calculation of everything needed to build an idol group and to release one album. The cost includes accommodation, a fully equipped studio, and other facilities, such as a gym, on top of various training lessons. When a K-pop group is ready to debut, the company must also bear the production costs for music and music videos, as well as advertisement and marketing costs, including paying for entry to the most-watched music programs on TV and also to the most-listened to radio shows. In the case of actors, comedians, models, or television show hosts, the cost is relatively low, as they are trained individually, unlike K-pop idol groups. In addition, whether they are trainees or debuted stars, celebrities that belong to these categories often have free time to invest in other activities or sometimes to have part-time jobs.⁹⁹ As cultural elements in modern entertainment society are highly interchangeable, varied opportunities are given to *hallyu* celebrities without distinctive lines drawn between careers, which means those who are multi-talented and have better public recognition receive the best opportunities of all. For example, both IU and Suzy debuted as singers, but now they also perform as lead actresses of K-dramas or K-movies. Another ex-

⁹⁸ Go.

⁹⁹ A person in charge at YG KPlus, Interview with Minji Kwag, Personal Conversation via Phone Call, March 28, 2018.

ample is that of Kangta of H.O.T and BoA, who belong to the first generation to lead the *hallyu* syndrome, and are now appointed as creative directors at S.M. Entertainment, where they were trained, debuted, and where they grew as stars. Likewise, once one becomes a *hallyu* star, doors are open for them to further their talents in varied fields of interest.

3.3.4 Inclusion of Foreign Artists

Recently there has been a trend of including non-Korean nationals in K-pop groups in response to the spread in popularity of K-pop overseas. This trend has two positive sides: one is that such groups enjoy wider global acknowledgement and a better chance to perform abroad, and the other is that mutual cultural exchanges are facilitated. A number of K-pop groups—GOT7, IOI, Seventeen, TWICE, Super Junior, f(x), and Miss A to name a few—include foreign members from various countries, such as the U.S., China, Japan, Thailand, Canada, Taiwan, and so on. The leader of the latest *hallyu* syndrome, a boy band group called EXO, originally consisted of four Chinese members out of a total 12 members, which is not a coincidence, for the group's immediate popularity was gained in China at their debut in 2012. To many youngsters interested in K-pop, the name of EXO itself represents K-pop, as its official fan club reaches more than 4.3 million international fans.¹⁰⁰ Their first album sold over one million physical copies within six months and the second album over one million copies in three months, the third again in two months, and the legendary album sales continued. Having a record of over one million album sales for all four albums in a row, EXO ascended to the throne of quadruple million-seller in 2017. On the Comprehensive Album Chart from iTunes, EXO's fourth album "The War" has been ranked as number one in 42 countries, and the album has also maintained the top position on the Billboard World Album Chart for two successive weeks. Whereas other non-international K-pop groups must grasp one or more foreign languages before and after their debut in order to actively perform overseas and interact with their global fans, it is not necessary for groups like EXO with mixed-nationalities to spend extra time on learning languages. Having foreign members within a K-pop group has also allowed the possibility of cultural exchanges from both directions instead of the old *hallyu* mechanism of merely introducing and pouring Korean culture into other markets. 2PM member Nichkhun, whose nationality is Thai, for example, showed his house in Thailand and introduced cultural traits of Thailand to K-pop fans on two of Korea's most famous entertainment TV shows, *Running Man* and *We Got Married*.

¹⁰⁰ SM Entertainment, "We Are One," Official Global Fan Club Website of EXO, accessed May 6, 2018, <https://exo-l.smtown.com/>.

3.4 Expansion of the Business

3.4.1 Profits

In 2017, the total assets of YG were worth 452.9 billion KRW, S.M. 436.1 billion KRW, and JYP 118.0 billion KRW, rounding off according to the business reports collected and made public on Retrieval and Transfer System (DART) by Financial Supervisory Service of the Korean government.¹⁰¹ In 2016, the operating profit of YG Entertainment beat the other two major entertainment companies, S.M. and JYP, with a total of 31.9 billion KRW over S.M.'s 20.7 billion KRW and JYP Entertainment's 13.8 billion KRW (see Figure 2). The operating profit is calculated based on revenue deducted by operating expenses such as production fees, management expenses, sales, and so on. YG taking over the lead was a big change in the mainstream Korean entertainment industry, as S.M. had previously held the position of unchallenged leader. Big Hit Entertainment is another game changer in the industry. Although the company does not stand along with these top three main entertainment companies in terms of total assets, in 2017 alone, this small company made 32.5 billion KRW in operating profits. The amount was highly comparable with that of the big three companies in the same year: YG 25.2 billion KRW, JYP 19.5 billion KRW, and SM 10.9 billion KRW, rounded off. This remarkable victory by Big Hit Entertainment is compared with its operating profit from a year ago in Figure 2 below.

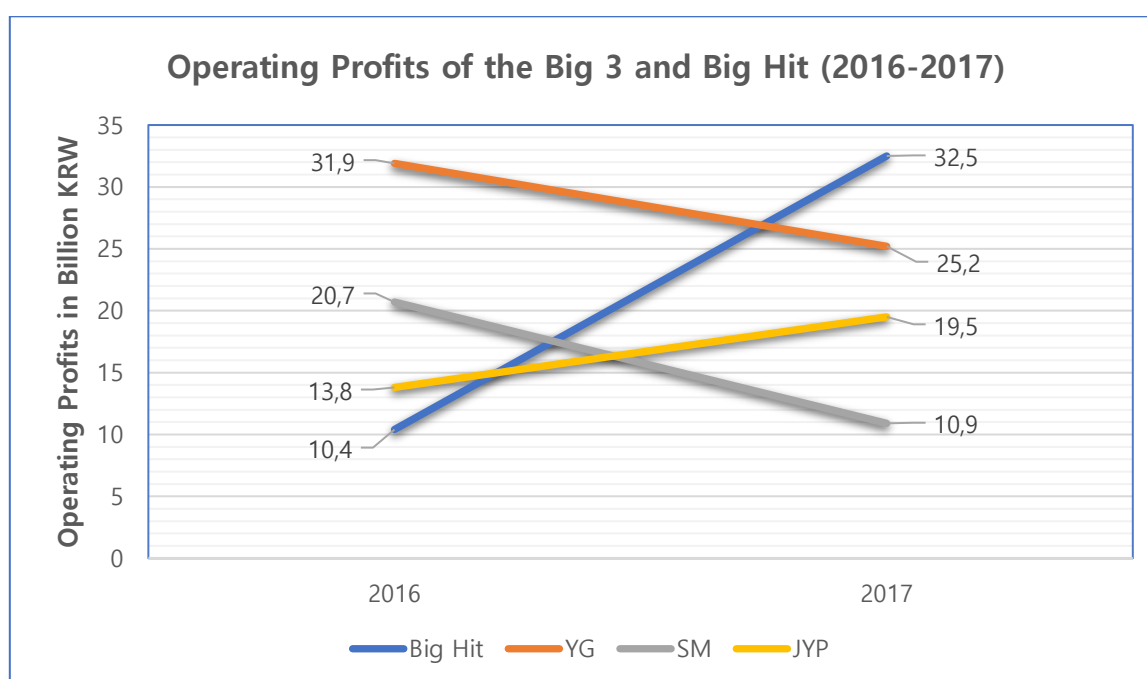


Figure 2. Operating Profits of the Big 3 and Big Hit (2016-2017). The chart is created by the

¹⁰¹ Financial Supervisory Service, business reports of S.M. Entertainment, YG Entertainment, and JYP Entertainment, DART.

author from the data given by the source. Source: Retrieval and Transfer System (DART) by Financial Supervisory Service of the Korean government.

Big Hit Entertainment does not have a number of subsidiaries. Thus, their revenue mostly comes from their own artists, and the only well-known idol group belonging to the company is BTS, who has recently achieved worldwide fame and is now the front-runner of the *hallyu* syndrome. The group has lately been featured on a number of renowned television talk shows in the U.S. The group's "domination of the American late-night talk show circuit" has been inevitable since their "well-received appearance at the 2017 American Music Awards."¹⁰² On the Ellen DeGeneres show, BTS performed their remix song "Mic Drop" produced by world-renowned music producers Steve Aoki and Desiigner. Then, BTS made their way to number one on the Billboard 200 on June 2, 2018 with their album "Love Yourself: Tear."¹⁰³ The album not only brought K-pop to the top of the Billboard chart for the first time in history, but also became one of the rare music albums with non-English lyrics to be ranked high on the chart. With their continued driving force, BTS has become the first K-pop group that does not belong to any of the "Big Three" entertainment companies to win both the Grand Prize and Golden Disc Awards. These remarkable successes and the popularity of BTS immediately placed Big Hit in the ranks of the major entertainment companies in Korea.

3.4.2 *Hallyu* Influence in Expanded Areas

Some of the leading entertainment companies in Korea have become conglomerates. S.M. Entertainment is the biggest corporation among its kind with two listed companies and 23 unlisted companies. The main company functions as a talent incubator, management agency, music label, film production company, new media organization, and event organizer. There is a variety of fields that the company takes charge of such as music, sports, fashion, broadcasting, movies, and lifestyle, which altogether create and are based on culture. With the company's business focus on cultural content, S.M. also owns a subsidiary called S.M. Culture & Contents. This branch of the company not only manages development and promotion of its actors and actresses, but also produces its own video content and advertisements in cooperation with other corporations. Within S.M. Culture & Contents, there is also a travel agency specialized in tourism, conventions, exhibitions, and global partnership in efforts to

¹⁰² SBS PopAsia HQ, "Is BTS now more popular than BIGBANG?", SBS PopAsia, December 1, 2017.

¹⁰³ Billboard, "Billboard 200," *Chart History*, Billboard.com, website, accessed June 15, 2018, <http://www.billboard.com/music/bts/chart-history/billboard-200>.

make sustainable expansion of *hallyu* influence abroad possible and to develop creative travel packages tailored to *hallyu* fans' interests.

Furthermore, S.M. opened a multi-complex called SM Town where *hallyu* fans directly and indirectly experience how *hallyu* stars are made and how their art is produced. At the complex, K-fans are given opportunities to visit the studios where the *hallyu* stars were trained, a hologram theater where they can meet virtual celebrities, souvenir-and-style shops that sell goods on which their favorite star's face or name is printed, cultural art exhibits, and so on. S.M. continues to build a new brand system and identity by keeping pace with the changes and flow of the new generation, which has led to the company's success and influence in other fields. Now the company puts its faith in culture technology, regarding it as a core technology of the future. To this end, it opened the New Visual Identity Exhibition from February 2018 to April 2018. This unique exhibition allowed both K-fans and non K-fans to experience an advanced technology and new forms of culture. Having the exhibition available both at the S.M. Entertainment Celebrity Center and on a smart phone application called "SM Makes It," the company showed its intention to approach *hallyu* fans from different angles and, moreover, to lead a new trend in other fields beyond that of entertainment. On April 4th, 2018, S.M. launched a real-life multi-live channel that has been broadcast through a studio in a moving car and also on the biggest electronic display on the wall of the SM Town building.¹⁰⁴ This has made the plaza in front of SM Town another attraction to visit for *hallyu* fans from abroad.

YG Entertainment, established a year after S.M., has trained youngsters that have talents in various fields: music art, acting, modeling, and comedy. Among the company's two listed companies and 20 unlisted companies, YG Kplus, which belongs to YG Plus, functions as a professional modeling agency and academy. Not only active in the talent incubation business, YG also engages in advertisement, beauty products, and even restaurant franchises through its subsidiary YG Plus. For example, Seungri, member of one of the most-loved boy band groups created by YG, BIGBANG, owns a restaurant franchise called Aori Ramen that belongs to YG Entertainment as its signature subsidiary company in the food business. Ever since opening its first branch in December 2016, the restaurant franchise has been so successful that it now has 15 international outlets as of April 2018, the number of which is still in-

¹⁰⁴ SM Entertainment, "SM real time multi live broadcasting channel 'It Live' launch!" News & Notice, *SMTOWN*, April 4, 2018.

creasing. A singer becoming a CEO of a business in a different industry, and achieving world-wide popularity through that business, is a perfect example of how the influence of *hallyu* is expanding across different industries and countries.

4. Entertainment Industry in Ethiopia

In the previous chapters, evidence showed that the *hallyu* mechanism has successfully led to the development of the Korean entertainment industry and the overall growth of the country through the spread of the country's own culture, creating a strong soft power. This chapter will examine the entertainment industry of Ethiopia and point out the areas where the *hallyu* mechanism can fit in, to improve the industry and help develop and spread Ethiopia's own cultural values. Ethiopia has a unique history of a lack of colonization by any European force, which has largely contributed to the country maintaining its indigenous cultural traits in performing arts such as music and dance. Despite having highly preserved elements, Ethiopia's entertainment industry has marched in place due to the lack of an effective development mechanism to excavate talents or to improve the status quo. The mainstream of the Ethiopian entertainment industry occupied by the old generation has rarely acknowledged young performing artists or anything considered as new or foreign to the existing system. As youngsters and a relatively higher number of girls have shown a tendency to pursue foreign cultural elements and/or the desire to be creative, there have been conflicts between the old and new generations in the entertainment industry in Ethiopia. The polarization between the generations was furthered and the development of the industry halted as the modern Ethiopian society was recently invaded by foreign influence through a massive amount of foreign aid and investments in the country.

4.1 Trends of Popular Culture

"To be honest, we [youngsters] do not concentrate on our music. We do not concentrate on national music. I am not saying there is no singer that has caught everyone's attention. For example, we can talk about Teddy Afro.¹⁰⁵ If we ask every Ethiopian 'Who would you like to meet?' and 'Who is the best singer in Ethiopia?', they will probably say Teddy Afro because he is just so [a] good singer. But then, nation-wise everybody [in the younger generation] listens to American songs and K-pop nowadays."¹⁰⁶

says Lina Mehasin, stage name Lina, who is a prominent singer and rapper trainee of MOM Entertainment, the first multi-purpose, talent incubating agency in Ethiopia. During an interview with the author, Lina explained how trends of the popular culture in Ethiopia are divided

¹⁰⁵ Teddy Afro's music genre is Ethiopian music, and his fifth album, *Ethiopia*, reached the top of the Billboard World Albums Chart in May 2017.

¹⁰⁶ Lina Mehasin, Personal Interview by Minji Kwag, Facebook video call, March 18, 2018, Appendix B.

between the old and the young generation in the Ethiopian society. When it comes to the country's traditional cultural music, she says the music is generally appreciated nation-wide, but most of the time by the older generation. On the other hand, when it comes to the majority of Ethiopian youth, Lina interprets their popular culture to be largely influenced by foreign culture and mechanisms. Such foreign popular culture mostly pursued by young generation is relatively more accessible due to its "openness in the sense that entry barriers are relatively low and access to it not overtly institutionalized," which has become even more accessible with "the emergence of HipHop-inspired musical forms which do not require the performers to learn an instrument and new technologies which make it relatively cheap to produce."¹⁰⁷

4.1.1 Ethio Music

As much as foreign popular culture is trending among Ethiopian youth, Ethiopians clinging to the national music genre were acknowledged by people from outside the culture when Teddy Afro's signature song "Ethiopia" ranked number one on the Billboard chart on May 9, 2017 and his album sales "broke the record of [the] Ethiopian music market."¹⁰⁸ Aster Aweke, Alex Getachew, Eyob Mekonnen, Jacky Gosee, and Getish Mamo, to name a few, are also Ethiopian musicians that perform Ethiopian music, conventionally shortened to Ethio music. These singers are currently the leading figures of Ethiopia's music industry, following Teddy Afro.¹⁰⁹ Although there are some differences in music per region, these singers' typical singing techniques fall into a similar category with their "traditional vibrato vocals."¹¹⁰ When it comes to its unique melodies and rhythms, Ethiopian music shapes and unites "the identity of Ethiopian musical diversity." The songs of the aforementioned famous artists are exclusively played over and over again on various TV programs and radio shows in all parts of Ethiopia. Their music is constantly heard on public transportation and in many other public places. Taxi drivers often play the songs aloud while transferring passengers. Also, in the local restaurants and shops, the songs of these musicians are selectively played. Likewise, in other countries it may be considered ordinary for American or foreign pop songs to come out of speakers in McDonald's or Starbucks, but there are hardly any foreign franchise branches anywhere in Ethiopia, except a rare case of Pizza Hut that recently opened branches in Addis

¹⁰⁷ Birgit Englert, "Popular Music and Politics in Africa – Some Introductory Reflections," *Stichproben*, 2008, 6.

¹⁰⁸ Abay Solomon, "Teddy Afro Becomes the First Ethiopian Singer to Top Billboard List," *Hahu Daily*, May 10, 2017.

¹⁰⁹ ArifZefen, "Most Liked: Songs getting the highest number of thumbs up," ArifZefen, accessed February 21, 2018.

¹¹⁰ Tom Gardner, "Teddy Afro, Ethiopia's biggest pop star: 'Because of our government, our country is divided'," *The Guardian*, July 13, 2017.

Ababa in April 2018. The Ethiopian government's strict regulation against having foreign brands land in the country has added to the isolation of its music and entertainment industry.

4.1.2 Ethio Dance

Along with music that has strong traditional cultural characteristics, Ethiopians enjoy performing particular dance moves with slight differences per region and city throughout the country. A typical Ethiopian dance, conventionally called Ethio dance, is named *eskista*, which refers to upper body dance movement, and that later became the origin of the Harlem Shake. The dance movement is peculiar to Ethiopian people as dancers intensely shake their shoulders and/or bounce their chests. The movement may have a slight difference between men and women, but in general both men and women actively move their upper bodies in a similar way. Ethio dance moves are unique and generally practiced among *habeshas*. *Habesha* is a term used by Ethiopians and Eritreans that share the history of the Kingdom of Aksum, to refer to themselves with pride and a strong nationalism. As the term unites all Ethiopians, despite having different tribal backgrounds, *habeshas* share and celebrate common or similar indigenous expressions and reactions to music. One can say that *eskista* is one of the generally accepted, if not dominant, genres of dance performed among *habeshas* in their daily life, at weddings and festivals. Ethiopian singers often have traditional dancers perform the dance on their stages and in their music videos. Generally, when performing, the dancers dress up in traditional clothes that may also differ from region to region and depending on the time period represented. The combination of presenting both visual and behavioral elements of Ethio dance has formed a strong convention of the nationally appreciated performing arts in Ethiopia.

4.1.3 Fusion of Foreign Influences

Ethiopia's entertainment industry seems solidified but has at times been influenced and reformulated by exposure to foreign cultures throughout history. Jazz was devoured by Ethiopian music when it was introduced to the nation, and the music was made into a new genre called Ethio-Jazz during its golden era back in the 1960s. While accepting the "instrumentation of Western music," the "pentatonic scale-based melodies of traditional Ethiopian music" were never lost.¹¹¹ Mulatu Astatike, who is the father of Ethio-Jazz music, still remains an active musician because he is the leading figure of the Ethiopian version of *hallyu*.

¹¹¹ Arefaynie Fantahun, "Popular music in Ethiopia," *Music Africa*, March 31, 2016.

Although he has spent a large portion of his life abroad, studying jazz and learning to play Western musical instruments, he has always sought to find a way to integrate his own musical expression and the traditional musical elements of his country of origin. Thanks to his efforts, his music satisfies not only Ethiopians but also the international music market, which made it possible for the Ethio-Jazz music genre to continue its presence all over the world. Bob Marley from Jamaica is another well-known figure in Ethiopia with his music genre of reggae. He is regarded by Ethiopian nations as their forefather of reggae music, which is proven by his statue standing in the middle of Addis Ababa and his pictures printed on t-shirts and different items easily found everywhere on the street. Marley introduced reggae to the Ethiopian society, and the people appreciated this new genre of music, integrating reggae into Ethio music.

4.2 Youth and Female Representation in the Entertainment Industry

Whereas the country's entertainment industry has culturally united Ethiopians and has succeeded in preserving the traditional elements and values in performing arts on one side, a gap created between the new and old generations has become noticeable and has halted further development or spread of Ethiopian culture. The gap has fundamentally come from the exclusion of youth and women in the mainstream entertainment industry and from neglecting their culture and their ways of appreciating culture. Systematically, Ethiopia has not been active in providing any platform for youth to develop their talents in relevant fields, nor has it promoted young artists' attempts to present culture in a different or a creative way. Such exclusion has negatively affected the industry and has kept it from further developing. Although a few young Ethiopian artists have recently been recognized, they hardly receive the spotlight in the mainstream. Nuha Awol, stage name Nuha, one of the youngest artists of MOM, stated the following regarding the general tendency of the Ethiopian entertainment industry in an interview with the author:

“These days, our media basically tends to focus on our national ones [Ethiopian traditional music] like any other media in any other country, but if I think about what is trending, as far as we know, was a musician called Sammy Dan¹¹² and a hip hop artist called Lij Michael. They are trending these days. But basically, not a lot of older generation's people listen to it, but a lot of young people do.”¹¹³

¹¹² Sammy Dan is one of the most famous reggae singers in Ethiopia.

¹¹³ Nuha Awol, Personal Interview by Minji Kwag, Facebook video call, March 18, 2018, Appendix B.

Nuha points out that the mainstream media focus on so-called traditional Ethiopian music and presentations by the old generation and seldom recognizes the newly developed trends among the youth.

4.2.1 Exclusion of Youth in the Mainstream

Excluding youth in the mainstream Ethiopian entertainment industry comes from a lack of working mechanisms to develop new talents and to effectively promote them. The absence of a talent incubating system for aspiring artists has furthered the gap between both old and young generations and left many talented youth behind. Until the establishment of MOM Entertainment in Ethiopia, there had been neither a private nor a public entity providing lessons, facilities, and/or management for young aspiring artists. It is evident that most of the currently famous Ethiopian musicians are often based abroad, such as in the US and Europe, to build up a foundation and to receive support for their activities. Once they have financial backing and a platform to produce their own forms of art, the artists find more opportunities to succeed and to be recognized. This strategy may sound easy for an already established individual who can afford to obtain the extremely inaccessible visa to go abroad first and to settle down on their own expenses until they can attain the necessary support. For this reason, it is no coincidence that the successful Ethiopian artists mostly belong to the middle age group, and are generally limited to those with a background in Western countries. Given the fact that the contemporary popular culture is generally promoted and shared on mass media, the less frequent appearance of young artists on TV has reflected and added to the indifference of the older generation's interest in recognizing or supporting aspiring talents in Ethiopia. Even if a young artist pursues specific forms of art that the old generation accepts, it is rather difficult for him or her to get a chance to perform on a stage or to be featured in the media. A team leader of Yematende, a prominent traditional dance team from MOM, Mikiyas Teka, said that "there are many talented youngsters that have a very incredible talent but could not rise because there is no one to support them."¹¹⁴ A reason for the exclusion of youth in the mainstream may be derived from apathy of the older generation towards development of the entertainment industry and/or from the fear of being challenged or changed.

President of the KFCE and co-founder of MOM, Kedir Tuha, points out "there are not quite big platforms available for the youngsters who are talented" in the field of entertainment

¹¹⁴ Mikiyas Teka, Personal Interview by Rahel Shenkute, Addis Ababa, March 9, 2018, Appendix D.

in Ethiopia.¹¹⁵ There are a few talent competition shows in Ethiopia; however, according to Tuha, these shows are merely for the purpose of entertaining the viewers rather than for excavating and supporting potential talents of aspiring young artists. This was evident in the recent national competition show *Ethio Talent Show* hosted by EBC 3, a public service broadcaster in Ethiopia. The show gathered aspiring artists without promising the potential winners any possible opportunity to be featured on TV, to be connected with a sponsor, or to be provided with a platform to develop their talents. MOM's traditional dance group Yematende and modern dance crew Letaric were featured on *Ethio Talent Show*. Even though Yematende participated in the program for a year to be among the finalists, there was not any support from the organizer or its partners. Each time they performed on stage for subsequent rounds, all the participants, including the finalists, had to pay the expenses of their stage outfits, the music production costs, and other necessary expenses for the competition by themselves. Since Yematende was supported by their agency, MOM, unlike most of other participants who did not have an agency or a supporter, Teka mentioned that his group was lucky.¹¹⁶ He also said that young artists are trying "to be recognized by the senior artists,"¹¹⁷ but the atmosphere of the entertainment market in Ethiopia does not necessarily encourage the older generation to take responsibility for supporting the youngsters, or to develop new talents. Even if there are individuals who would like to support youth, it is of concern that "there is no well-organized and built system that can create and construct artists," which leads to the reason for the foundation of MOM that is further discussed in Chapter 6.¹¹⁸

4.2.2 Female Disempowerment in the Industry

According to the USAID, the majority of Ethiopian girls "are unable to transition to secondary and tertiary school due to distance, personal security and economic challenges" and Ethiopian women "often face different and more basic economic constraints than men" in various industries.¹¹⁹ Women in Ethiopia are often implicitly forced by their families and the society to pursue rather conservative, conventional careers that are considerably less creative than those options readily available to men, if women are not encouraged to stay home altogether. As the entertainment industry requires its artists and performers to be relatively creative, girls and women have hardly been represented in the mainstream entertainment industry

¹¹⁵ Kedir Nuredin Tuha, Personal Interview by Minji Kwag, Facebook Video Call, March 19, 2018, Appendix C.

¹¹⁶ Teka, Personal Interview, Appendix D.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Tuha, Personal Interview, Appendix C.

¹¹⁹ USAID, "Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment," USAID, April 5, 2018.

in Ethiopia. As a result, the Association of Ethiopian Female Artists has been formed to change the social norms and to help more women do what they want to do. The vice president of the association states that through the association she wants to encourage women “to leave their homes and produce more work.”¹²⁰ The movement, however, has not been largely supported by the public enough to make any impacts on social change. In Ethiopia, most of the media platforms are directed and hosted by male representatives and have a tendency to feature more male celebrities than female celebrities. Women, both as organizers and as performers, are also rarely shown at public concerts and events organized on the scale of more than hundreds of people in the audience. This is evident in promotional posters that are easily found on the street. Whereas most posters promoting large-scale events or concerts usually feature male artists, other posters promoting domestic work or something regarded as a conventional duty of women, such as the Ethiopian traditional coffee ceremony, show images of women. Such lack of recognition, presence, and promotion of female artists in media and in the mainstream entertainment industry has resulted in the disempowerment of women and girls.

¹²⁰ Contributor, “Women artists’ collaboration on March 8,” *The Reporter*, March 10, 2018.

5. *Hallyu* Influence in Ethiopia

As discussed in chapters two and three, the spread of Korean culture as well as the development of the Korean entertainment industry was successful largely due to the *hallyu* mechanism, which discovered new talents and incubated young performing artists. This may have attracted Ethiopian youth and contributed to their desire for *hallyu*. Despite lack of accessibility and a geological distance that creates huge differences between Korean and Ethiopian cultures, the following research findings and observations demonstrate a considerably high volume of K-fans in Ethiopia and their youth empowerment movement influenced by *hallyu*. This chapter focuses on how Korean culture and its entertainment industry gained popularity and influenced the Ethiopian youth, especially girls. As Ethiopia is a young country with 71% of the population under the age of 30,¹²¹ the author attempts to prove that Ethiopia is in need of a new platform and a system to incubate and foster new talents of the youth regardless of gender. This is needed in order to sustain the development of the entertainment industry of Ethiopia and to strengthen the country's soft power through spreading its culture. This may help with the creation of Ethiopia's own cultural wave, which Professor Jung urges the Korean government to focus its cultural ODA on.

5.1 How *Hallyu* Landed in Ethiopia

5.1.1 The Korean Media and Social Media

The wave of K-pop and K-drama has successfully spread overseas largely through media and social media promotion, the Korean government's engagement, and various efforts of entertainment companies. Although in Ethiopia there has not been a remarkable promotion of such *hallyu* content by either the Korean government nor any entertainment company, Ethiopian youngsters have exposed themselves mainly to Korea's entertainment culture through international Korean TV channels and recently also through social media platforms. The way of dissemination of the *hallyu* contents through media and social media has been so highly effective that about 76% of the most active K-fans in Ethiopia have initially encountered Korean culture through Korean TV channels and/or social media. According to the author's survey research conducted with the most active members of the KFCE, 62% of the members said they initially encountered Korean culture through KBS World (36%) and Arirang TV (26%) as shown in Figure 3 below. On KBS World, a number of soap operas and

¹²¹ Central Statistical Agency, *Ethiopia Mini Demographic and Health Survey 2014*, Addis Ababa: Central Statistical Agency, 2014.

entertainment programs are aired, including but not limited to *2 Days & 1 Night*, *Happy Together*, *Music Bank*, *Entertainment Weekly*, and *Immortal Songs*. Arirang TV's overseas satellites also broadcast famous programs among K-pop fans such as *After School Club* and *Simply K-POP* that are aired in English and hosted by well-known K-pop stars who have excellent command of English skills, which has made it easier for Ethiopian K-pop fans to encounter the new culture.

Some of the most utilized social media platforms among Ethiopian youth are YouTube and Facebook, which have allowed K-fans to be actively engaged in their fan club's activities and to share the latest updates on their favorite *hallyu* stars. As shown in the figure below, social media is the second most used platform by Ethiopian K-fans after the two most watched Korean TV channels they selected. Such interactive platforms are often used by the fans as joining the platforms fulfills the sense of their belonging, allows them to freely express their desire of appreciating different styles of arts, which is hardly promoted in Ethiopian society, and acknowledges them as a fan. During the interview, Lina said, "I was very much interested to be friends with them because they shared something that I love and something that I like."¹²² Although the fandom was initiated by a small group of people, it soon became a gigantic group and as such, the group of young people, especially girls, was in need of a space where they felt they belonged and where they could be empowered by sharing their opinions and following their passion.

¹²² Lina, Personal Interview, Appendix B.

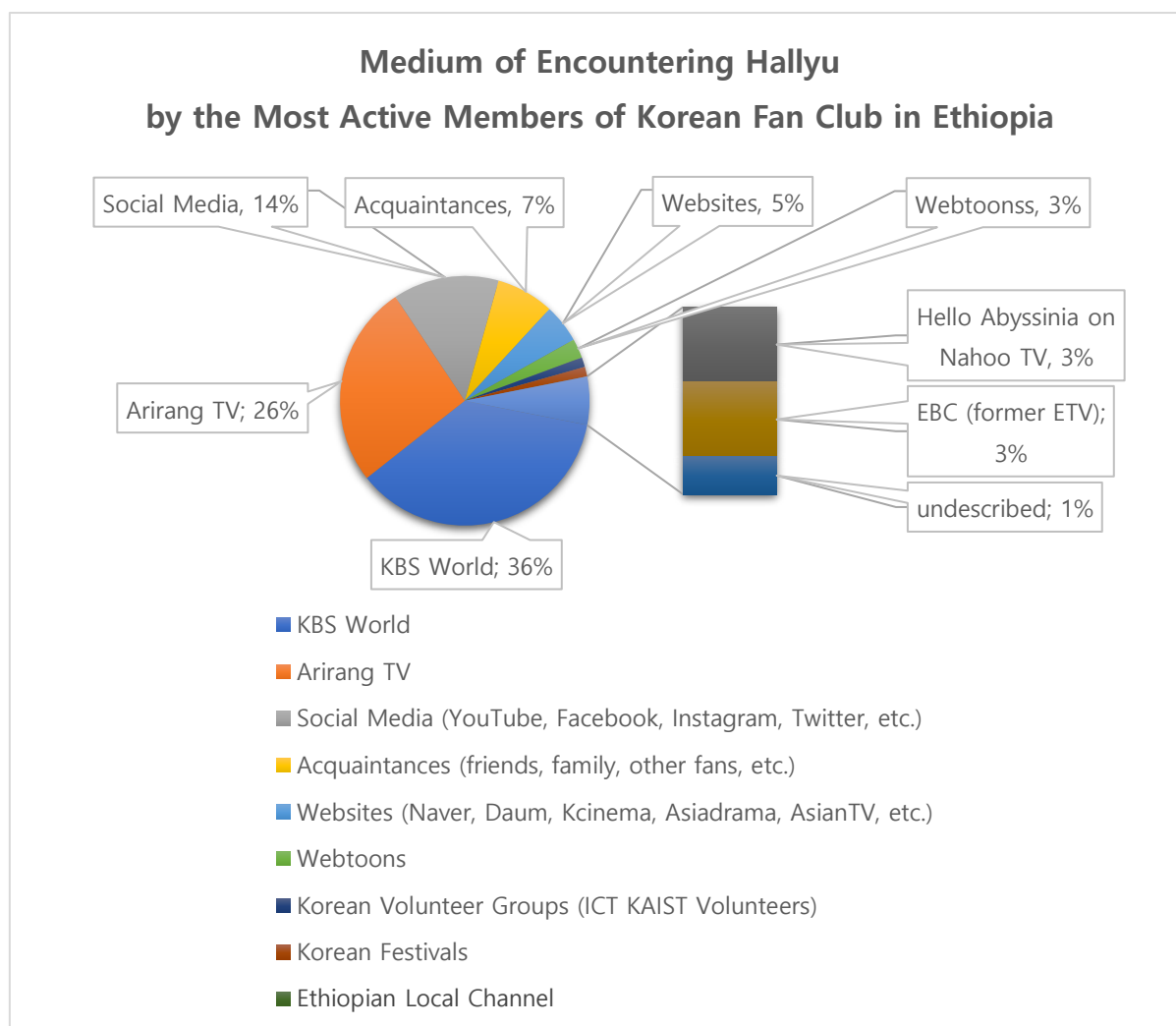


Figure 3. Medium of Encountering *Hallyu* by the Most Active Members of Korean Fan Club in Ethiopia. Note: This figure shows the initial medium through which the most active members of Korean Fan Club in Ethiopia have encountered *Hallyu* as of April 2018. The number of the survey respondents is 31.

Relying on the information given by outside sources such as the Korean broadcasters and the social media platforms, however, many Ethiopian K-fans often face difficulties. The reasons come from the fact that the country often has an unstable internet connection and that the majority of K-fans are students that find it difficult to regularly pay for the data or Wi-Fi connections. In many rural areas in Ethiopia, still, possessing a TV or a cellphone itself is a privilege, as Lina from MOM states even watching the TV was a big deal in Hawassa where she is from.¹²³ Especially when Ethiopia was under a state of emergency from 2016 to 2017, the internet connection was often cut off throughout the country and the use of social media was blocked by the government. It was simply impossible for anyone in Ethiopia to share

¹²³ Lina, Personal Interview, Appendix B.

information or to communicate with others online during the period. Since many K-fan clubs in Ethiopia are online-based, their activities were discouraged during that time period. Offline fan meetings as well as cultural events were also canceled due to the temporary curfew imposed by the government and a strict regulation against any sort of gathering in a public place during the emergency period. Even a number of cultural events for “2016 Selam! Korean Week” organized by the Korean Embassy for *hallyu* fans in Ethiopia was cancelled. On the day of the opening ceremony of the events on October 10th, 2016, many guests decided to leave in the middle of the ceremony in the evening in order to avoid being caught by police on the street “since the government set a new curfew.”¹²⁴ Even under the oppression from the given circumstances, nonetheless, fans continued their interest and calmly waited until they could again be active by following *hallyu* content by other means.

5.1.2 The Ethiopian Media

Among the other means that Ethiopian K-fans took to consume Korean music, TV series, and other cultural elements of Korea, high demands of the fans were satisfied by some of the local TV channels in Ethiopia such as EBC, Kana TV, and Nahoo TV. A representative Ethiopian public broadcaster, EBC, formerly ETV, has aired a number of Korean dramas with English subtitles. For example, *Dae Jang-geum* was aired on EBC in 2008 per request by the Korean Embassy in Addis Ababa.¹²⁵ According to the survey result demonstrated in Figure 3, a relatively large number of K-fans in Ethiopia claim that they started watching K-dramas on EBC and then switched to Nahoo TV, on which *Hello Abyssinia* used to be aired. *Hello Abyssinia* is an entertainment show directed, hosted, and produced by MOM, which alone has contributed to the prosperity of Nahoo TV due to its popularity when the station was newly established. The show featured up-to-date information about K-pop, Korean celebrities, various aspects of Korean culture, and activities of K-fans in Ethiopia. With the great success of airing season one, its second season was filmed in Korea. Lina, one of the cast members of the show, recalled that “the videos basically were about us: when we got to Korea, what was the first thing that we saw, what did we want to see and how did we react to it, also us going to different places and experiencing, how were our facial expressions and what we thought about, and how happy were we.”¹²⁶ The show was not only disseminating Korean culture but also facilitating cultural exchange and empowering Ethiopian K-fans. As the show was the only

¹²⁴ Kedir Tuha, Personal Conversation, Text Message to the Author, October 10, 2016.

¹²⁵ The Embassy of the Republic of Korea in Ethiopia, “대장금 방영 안내[Notice on Broadcasting Dae Jang-geum],” The Embassy of the Republic of Korea in Ethiopia, Notice board on the website, April 21, 2008.

¹²⁶ Lina, Personal Interview, Appendix B.

hallyu-related TV program that was produced by Ethiopians and broadcast in Ethiopia, *Hello Abyssinia* was one of the most highly watched programs by Ethiopian K-fan viewers.

A new private TV channel launched in 2016, called Kana TV, also made huge success by airing foreign soap operas. All the soap operas on the channel are dubbed in Amharic, the most commonly used language in Ethiopia, which allowed viewers to better comprehend the storylines and messages of the dramas. With composition of half of its programs consisting of dubbed foreign TV series from all over the world, Kana TV has seized 40–50% of the prime-time market share in Ethiopia.¹²⁷ Among the soap operas broadcast on its channel, Kana TV found K-dramas to be the most popular and thus to be the major contributor to the success of attracting a massive volume of viewers within a short period of time. This resulted in more K-dramas being aired on the channel. As of April 2018, 2 out of a total 7 foreign dramas aired on Kana TV were K-dramas: *Descendants of the Sun* and *Uncontrollably Fond*.¹²⁸ Both soap operas came out in 2016 and were considered new due to the fact that many of the local movies and TV series produced in Ethiopia often get re-aired for years after their release. This hints at why Ethiopian domestic viewers tend to find foreign film productions more appealing and how Kana TV could become Ethiopia's most watched private channel.¹²⁹

5.2 The Korean Fan Club in Ethiopia

The first comprehensive K-pop fan club in Ethiopia, Ethio K-pop Fans (EKF) was started by four girls who launched a fan page on Facebook in 2012 in addition to other existing fan clubs dedicated to a specific K-pop group or a celebrity. Initially the group consisted of friends who had spontaneous meet-ups to share the latest news on K-pop, K-dramas, and their favorite Korean celebrities. The number of the members increased tenfold within a year and reached about 12,000, thus adding Ethiopia to the list of the top African countries with the largest *hallyu* fandom.¹³⁰ In 2017, EKF changed its name to Korean Fan Club in Ethiopia (KFCE) as the community became a platform to discuss various aspects of Korean culture beyond K-pop.¹³¹ In order to understand more about the foundation of the club and the trends of its members, the author conducted a selective survey among the current most active mem-

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Kana TV, "Latest Shows," *Kana TV*, website, accessed February 25, 2018, <http://www.kanatelevision.com/en/shows>.

¹²⁹ James Jeffrey, "Ethiopia's addiction to Kana TV," *African Business Magazine*, May 8, 2017.

¹³⁰ Korea Foundation, [2017 Global Hallyu Status Quo Analysis I], Korea Foundation, 22.

¹³¹ This online community is a secret group on Facebook which can only be accessed by its members, and one can be added by invitation. See https://www.facebook.com/groups/304878296219652/?ref=br_rs.

bers of the KFCE on Facebook for a month from March 19th to April 18th, 2018.¹³² Since the online fan community includes members who are non-Ethiopians and those who are based in other countries, the survey was constructed to target only Ethiopians who live in Ethiopia, excepting 3 Ethiopian participants who moved to Korea in 2017. An exception was made for the 3 survey participants as they were the most active members of the fan club when living in Ethiopia and are also members of the MOM company.

5.2.1 How Members Became K-Fans

The most active members of the KFCE, according to the author's survey research, claim to have become fans between the years of 2005 and 2014. Since *hallyu* started in Korea's neighboring countries such as Japan and China, it took a while for it to be introduced to other countries outside of Asia, especially in Africa. To no surprise, the largest number of this survey's participants became K-fans in 2009 and 2010, when one of the most popular K-dramas, *Boys over Flowers*, was released (see Figure 4 below). This shows how K-drama has triggered the *hallyu* boom among Ethiopians.

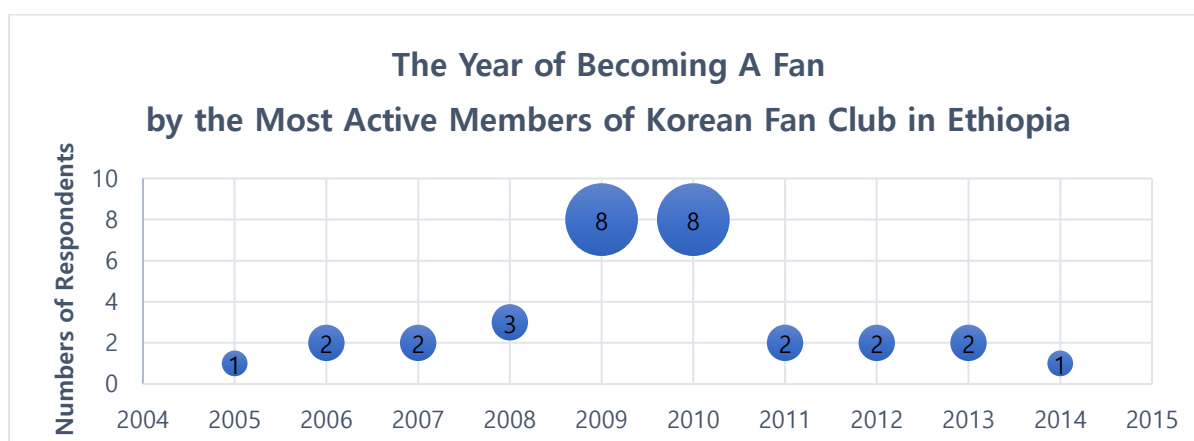


Figure 4. The Year of Becoming a Fan by the Most Active Members of Korean Fan Club in Ethiopia. Note: The data was collected in April 2018 through the author's survey. Refer to Appendix F.

Most of these fans started to learn about Korea and Korean culture through either K-drama (61%) or K-pop (32%) or both, which together make 93% of the total, and the rest include but are not limited to K-movie and variety shows, aka entertainment shows, as shown on the chart below.

¹³² The questions and the answers are attached in Appendix F.

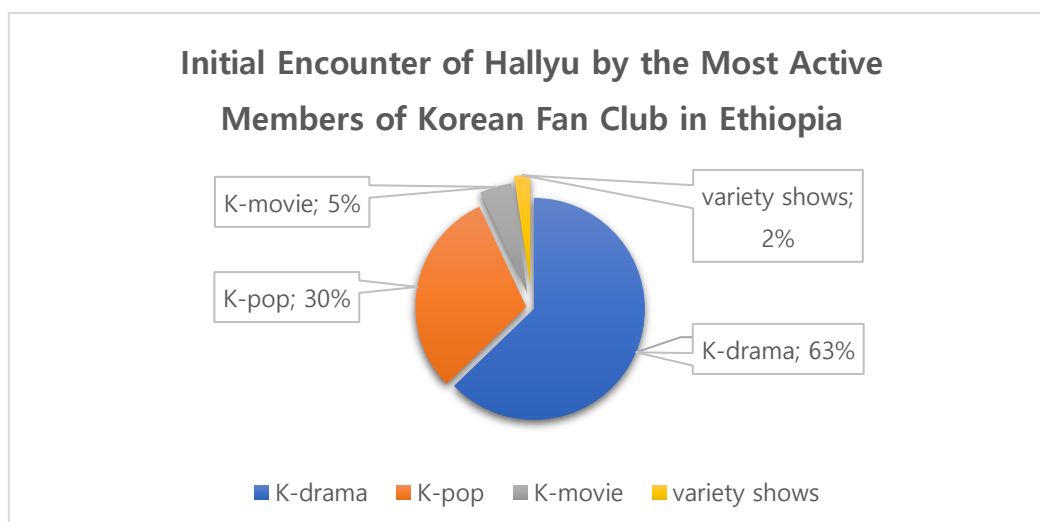


Figure 5. Initial Encounter of *Hallyu* by the Most Active Members of Korean Fan Club in Ethiopia. Note: The number of the survey respondents is 31, and multiple choices were allowed. The data is collected in April 2018.

The combination of Figures 4 and 5 supports the author's argument that the means of performing arts such as music and drama are highly effective when it comes to disseminating one's culture. By the fact that most of the popular *hallyu* stars in K-pop and K-drama industries fall into the age group of youth, whereas nationally or internationally recognized Ethiopian celebrities or artists are typically in their middle years, it is explained why Ethiopian youngsters fall for the *hallyu* syndrome. Among Ethiopian youth, a strong tendency shows that most of the K-fans are girls who are less represented in the Ethiopian entertainment industry. The following section interprets the tendency in relation to the need of youth empowerment regardless of gender and analyzes how the *hallyu* mechanism can help the Ethiopian industry be further developed.

5.2.2 Age and Gender Groups of the KFCE

Throughout the observation and research, the author found a correlation between the Ethiopian fans' desire for the Korean entertainment elements and their position in the Ethiopian entertainment industry, as well as the status quo of the current industry. The particular group of people neglected from the mainstream in the Ethiopian entertainment field, youth and women, tend to be more engaged in the Korean culture and entertainment industry. The majority of members (91%) of the K-fan club in Ethiopia are youth between the ages of 18 and 34, and the largest number of gender and age group (37.1%) turn out to be females in the ages between 18 and 24 (see Figure 6 below).

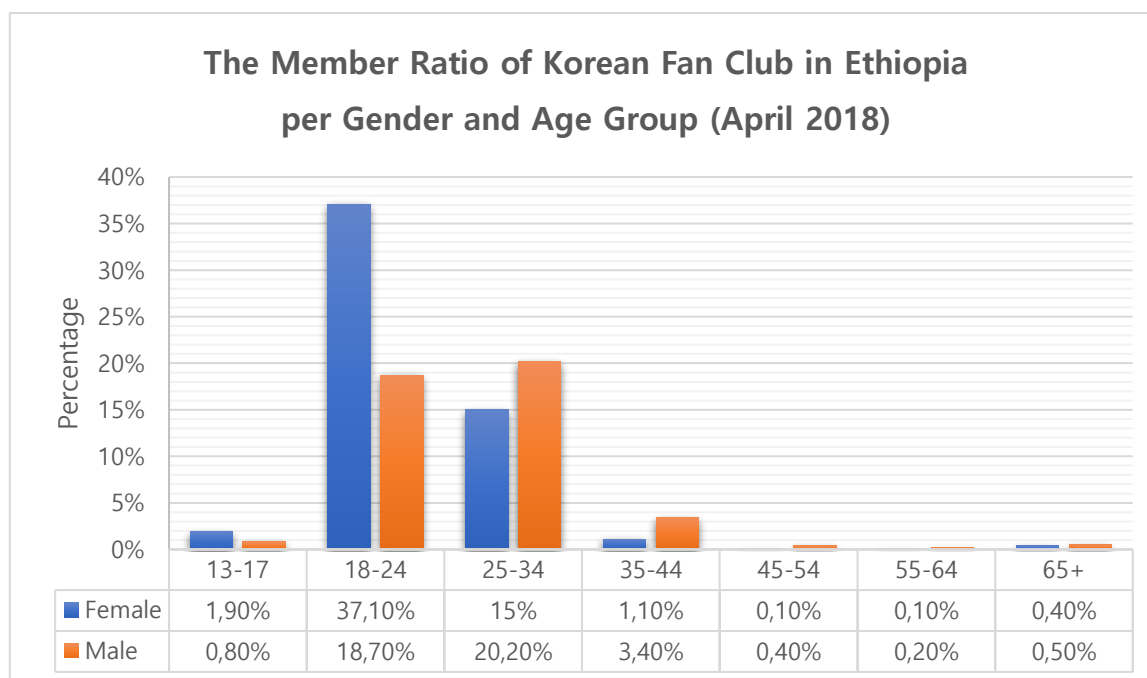


Figure 6. The Member Ratio of the Korean Fan Club in Ethiopia per Gender and Age Group.

Note: The chart was created by the author based on the data provided in the "Age and Gender" section on "Group Insights" of the "Korean Fan Club in Ethiopia" page on Facebook. Retrieved on April 18, 2018.

Likewise, young female members of the club are not only the most represented group but also the most active group within the community. This is evident according to the author's survey analysis: the average age of the most active members of the fan club is 20.9, 93.5% of them being girls and women (see Figure 7-8 below). It is important to point out this research finding because in the entertainment industry in Ethiopia, youth and women are particularly the least represented and the least influential. That said, the indifference or the social exclusion of Ethiopian youth and women in the industry partially resulted in them looking for another way to express their interest in culture and in the field of entertainment, which explains how their activities have become empowering to youth movement and influenced the foundation of MOM Entertainment.

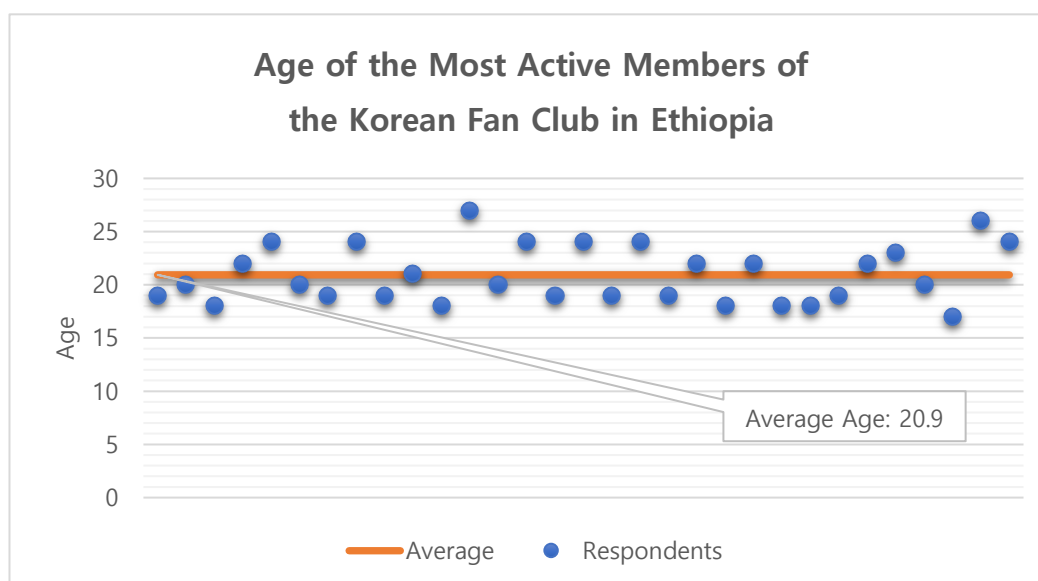


Figure 7. Age of the Most Active Members of the Korean Fan Club in Ethiopia. Note: The ages of the respondents are collected as of April 2018.

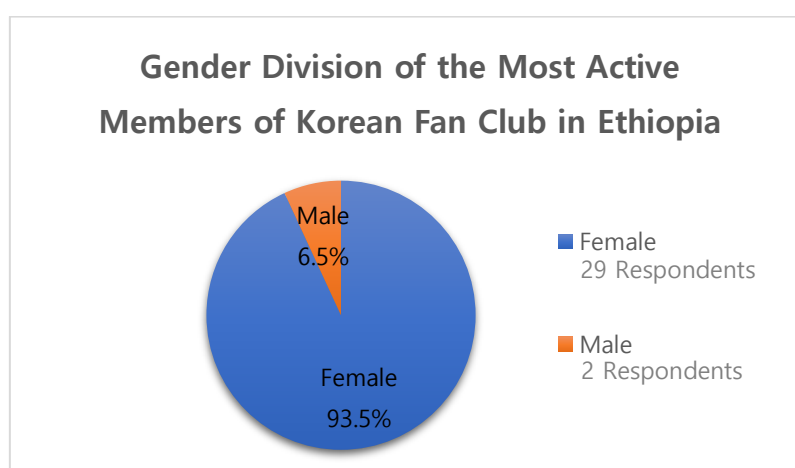


Figure 8. Gender Division of the Most Active Members of Korean Fan Club in Ethiopia (April 2018)

5.2.3 Fan Activities and Interests

When the size of the fandom was not considerable in the 2000s, Ethiopian fans used to meet up in small scale groups or share information about K-pop or K-drama on social media such as Telegram, which is the most commonly used messenger platform among Ethiopian youth. The messenger thus functioned as a bridge between fans and allowed them talk about “what kind of drama [they] watch, what is [the] new trend, what is the new song, who is the most famous K-pop band right now, and everything,” said Lina, a *hallyu* fan and an aspiring artist of MOM.¹³³ Soon the fans started creating online fan communities on Facebook, dedi-

¹³³ Lina, Personal Interview, Appendix B.

cated to each of their favorite *hallyu* stars to update news and to exchange information. President of the KFCE Tuha, also a co-founder of MOM, says that the fan club holds regular gatherings twice a year and organizes festivals.¹³⁴ K-Fans in Ethiopia also use YouTube as a platform to watch Korean dramas and TV shows as well as their favorite K-pop star's music videos. The use of social media spread widely and enlarged the fans' activities and engagement. Even when the government banned all social media usage during the state of emergency, many used a virtual private network that allowed them to penetrate the internet walls to access social media and to get up-to-date information on the *hallyu* trend. A number of websites that upload every episode of K-drama, movies, entertainment shows, music programs, and other video contents with subtitles are also regularly used by Ethiopian K-fans.

Most of these fans became fans of Korea, the country as a whole, and the Korean culture they have indirectly experienced through encountering the *hallyu* content. Among the cultural elements that Ethiopian fans are fond of, Korean people's manner (44.7%) was mentioned the most in the author's survey (see Figure 9 below). The survey respondents pointed out that when it comes to the manner of Koreans, respecting each other and the elders is often observed. Ethiopians also place great stress on respecting the elders in their society, which helps them feel more familiar with Korean society. Following the category of manner, fashion (20.4%), food (18.4%), language (4.9%), and history (3.9%) of Korea were also mentioned as the fans' favorite categories of Korean culture. In terms of fashion, both traditional clothes called *hanbok* and modern clothing styles were equally valued by these Ethiopian fans. There are so called K-pop shops located in the city center, Bole, in Addis Ababa where Korean fans purchase goods and fashion items that are influenced by *hallyu*. Likewise, the survey participants also said that they enjoyed both traditional and modern food of Korea—which is in many cases indistinguishable. As demands have risen, Korean restaurants located in Addis Ababa, which used to be a place that only Korean residents would go, have become a must-visit place among K-fans in Ethiopia.

Sharing similar cultures, the active K-fans in Ethiopia often use the Korean language in their daily conversations such as calling each other or their favorite Korean celebrities *unnie* or *obba*, which is a friendly way for Koreans to address each other.¹³⁵ Many *hallyu* fans

¹³⁴ Tuha, Personal Interview, Appendix C.

¹³⁵ *Unnie* is a term in Korean used when a female calls an older sister or an older female friend in a friendly way, and *obba* is for a female to call an older brother or an older male friend likewise.

learn the Korean language in order to watch Korean dramas and movies without subtitles and to keep themselves posted with the latest news on the *hallyu* trend without any language barrier. A relatively large number of respondents also answered “everything” for what they like about Korean culture (7.8%). The rest of the answers mentioned once or a few times are not represented on the figure below. Those included traditional ceremonies and games, outdoor activities such as hiking and bungee jumping, indoor activities such as *noraebang*, technologies, and architecture.

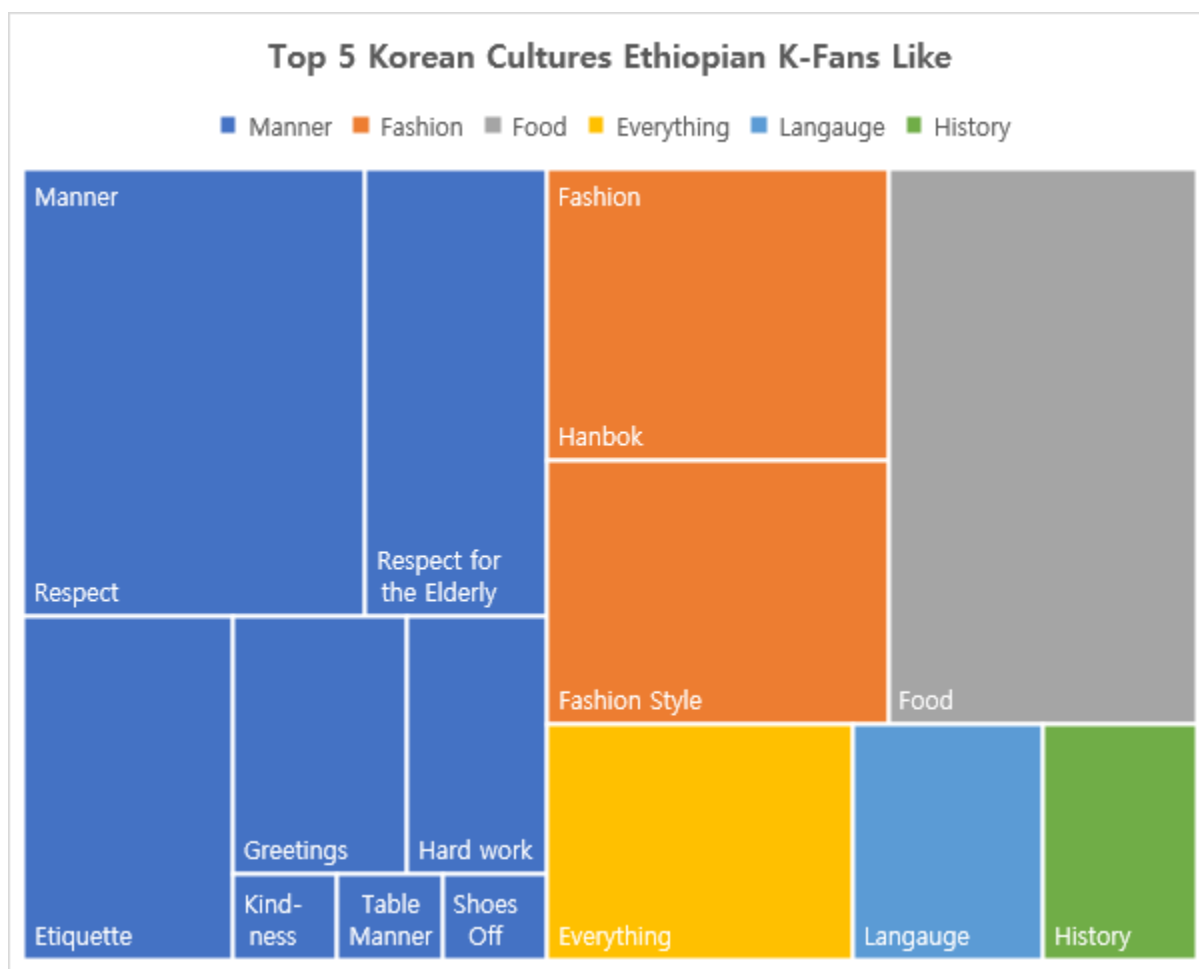


Figure 9. Top 5 Aspects of Korean Culture that Ethiopian K-Fans Like (April 2018). Note: This tree map is created by the author based on the narrative responses of 31 survey participants, who are the most active members of the Korean Fan Club in Ethiopia. The size of a square of each element reflects the number of times the element is mentioned; the bigger the size of a square is, the more times the element is mentioned. Multiple answers were allowed.

Many Ethiopian *hallyu* fans dream of going to Korea and meeting a Korean celebrity as well as having desire for further spreading the Korean culture. Those who responded in the survey that they hope to visit Korea gave the following reasons: to experience the life style, to

learn more about Korea, to visit cultural and/or historical sites, to try Korean food, to go shopping, to attend university, and to meet the stars (see Table 1 below). While visiting Korea is rated as the first priority with 43.8% of the overall response rate, meeting a celebrity is mentioned the second most at 26.6%. As multiple responses were allowed in the narrative response form without drawing a specific line between categories, however, some of the answers under the different categories may overlap. For example, meeting a celebrity, learning Korean language, and studying Korean studies can be reasons for wishing to visit Korea at the same time as being a goal to achieve while in Ethiopia. Therefore, in the table below, three of these contents were not necessarily included under the category of “to visit Korea” but rather pointed out separately.

Table 1. What Ethiopian K-Fans Hope (April 2018)

Contents	Detail	Times Mentioned	Percentage (rounded)
To visit Korea		7	10.9%
	To experience everything including life style	6	9.4%
	To learn more about Korea	4	6.3%
	To visit cultural/historical places	4	6.3%
	To try Korean food	3	4.7%
	To go shopping	2	3.1%
	To attend a university	1	1.6%
	To visit an entertainment company	1	1.6%
	total	28	43.8%
To meet a Korean celebrity (either in Korea or in Ethiopia)		10	15.6%
	To attend concerts	6	9.4%
	To attend fan meetings	1	1.6%
	total	17	26.6%
To spread Korean culture inside and/or outside Ethiopia		7	10.9%
To be recognized as a fan		3	4.7%
To learn Korean language (either in Korea or in Ethiopia)		3	4.7%
To learn from Korean culture (being respectful and working hard)		2	3.1%
To study Korean studies (either in Korea or in Ethiopia)		1	1.6%
To have more active interactions among the fans		1	1.6%
To love Korea more		1	1.6%
To let the new generation know about Ethiopian veterans of the Korean War		1	1.6%
	total	64	100%

Note: This table is created to visualize narrative responses of the survey participants. The respondents are 31 most active members of the Korean Fan Club in Ethiopia, and they were asked to freely state what their goal, desire, and/or hope is as a fan. Multiple responses were allowed.

5.3 Expansion to Youth Empowerment

As seen from the survey result, the active K-fans in Ethiopia desire to spread the Korean culture in Ethiopia and to be recognized as fans. Ethiopian fans' activities have evolved from appreciating a culture to actively engaging themselves in cultural exchange and further activities of spreading the culture. That said, the fans have now become initiators who have influence over the phenomenon and potential leaders who can make social change. Recently, one of the smaller K-pop fan clubs in Ethiopia, Ethio EXOLS, dedicated to a boy band group EXO, initiated a movement to show their support to their favorite K-pop group as well as to raise awareness of the need of social change in their community, using the power of their network. In celebration of the 6th anniversary of EXO's debut, on April 8th 2018, Ethio EXOLS displayed a 30-second promotional video of EXO on the outer wall of the biggest mall in Bole, Addis Ababa, which cost them 1,300 ETB [approximately 47 USD].¹³⁶ From their own expenses, the club members prepared and shared food with the homeless living on the street to raise awareness that volunteering is something as easy as helping the ones in front of them.¹³⁷ The group also visited the Ethiopian Korea War Veterans Memorial Park to call for action to support living veterans and to remember the legacy of the deceased veterans.¹³⁸ Around 99 out of 817 members of Ethio EXOLS either supported or participated in the process of planning and executing the campaigns (as of April 2018). As most of them are girls in their late teens that are considered to be weak in the society, such social change movements and activities initiated by these girls were rather unconventional and rare. That said, this group of young people overturned the social norms and empowered themselves by supporting those in need, raising awareness for social change, and taking the lead in achieving what they wished, regardless of social barriers.

With the influence of *hallyu*, Ethiopian fans have recently shown various engagements in other areas of interest. Many young female students, who are denied the right to higher education due to either their family decisions or social standards in Ethiopia, dream of going

¹³⁶ ExoLkb Happyvirus, a post on the page of "Korean Fan Club in Ethiopia," Facebook, April 7, 2018.

¹³⁷ ExoLkb Happyvirus, a post on the page of "Korean Fan Club in Ethiopia," Facebook, April 8, 2018.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

to Korea in order to attend a university to receive a quality education. Since the demand has risen, the Korean Embassy in Ethiopia has provided scholarships for Ethiopian students to study abroad at Korean universities. The scholarships are given to prospective undergraduate or graduate Ethiopian students who have excellent command of Korean language and outstanding school records. The embassy has also organized Korean language speaking competitions in cooperation with Addis Ababa University that offered lectures on Korean language outside the regular academic course work. As the university stopped offering the Korean language class, the first private Korean language institute, called Korean Language School, in Addis Ababa was open in early 2018. Jong Kook Park, the founder of the institute, who also serves as a lecturer, brought his outstanding students to Korea for a short trip from April 14th to 30th in 2018.¹³⁹ Under the circumstances of difficulties to get a tourist visa, this was a unique opportunity for the Ethiopian youngsters who have been eager to go to Korea and especially those who have been dreaming of pursuing their careers in Korea. The next chapter explains how some of the *hallyu* fans in Ethiopia created a company by themselves to support like-minded youngsters in achieving their dreams.

¹³⁹ Jong Kook Park, a post on the page of “Korean Fan Club in Ethiopia,” Facebook, April 23, 2018.

6. Participatory Case Study of MOM Entertainment

As observed in the previous chapters, there has been a great demand for the *hallyu* contents and the Ethiopian youngsters' desire to become acknowledged with their talents. The combination of all elements resulted in the youngsters gathering and creating their own platform to achieve their goals by implementing the mechanism of Korean entertainment companies and developing their own system. The MOM Entertainment company is a multi-complex company based in Addis Ababa, co-established by Ethiopian *hallyu* fans who became pathfinders and achievers of their own dreams as a result of being followers and supporters of *hallyu*. Benchmarking the mechanism of the major Korean entertainment companies, MOM was established by aspiring young artists who are fans of Korean culture. As briefly explained in the previous chapters, MOM is the first company of its kind in East Africa that functions in all areas of the entertainment industry, including talent development and management, music label and production, event organization, promotion and advertisement, and film production. "There was no corporate company making stage[s], good singers, and professional musicians" which has been "the holdback of the industry," said Rahel Debele, one of the co-founders of MOM.¹⁴⁰ The author conducted participatory observation research on the company by directly participating in all projects of the company as a major investor and a chief executive officer of the company since the end of 2016. Based on the author's own observations and experience, the background of the company's establishment and the objectives, the achievements, and the limitations in the business will be analyzed. This paper will then further discuss how the *hallyu* mechanism can be effectively adopted in the Ethiopian society for the development of the entertainment industry through youth and female empowerment.

6.1 Background and Objectives

MOM Entertainment was established in May 2016 with goals of creating a platform for aspiring artists in Ethiopia to grow and contributing to the development of Ethiopia's entertainment industry. There are four major reasons why the company chose Korean entertainment companies as a benchmark. First, Korean entertainment companies were the driving force for the formation of the modern Korean entertainment industry that led to further development of other industries as well as overall prosperity of the country by creating the international syndrome of Korean culture. Second, the talent incubation system of typical Korean entertainment companies that act as talent management agencies values the empowerment of

¹⁴⁰ Rahel Girma Debele, Personal Interview by Minji Kwag, Facebook video call, April 19, 2018, Appendix E.

youth and women and makes them major players in the mainstream industry. Third, Ethiopians share some similar cultural features with Koreans, which evidences the possibility of the *hallyu* mechanism being successfully adopted in the Ethiopian society (see Figure 10 below).

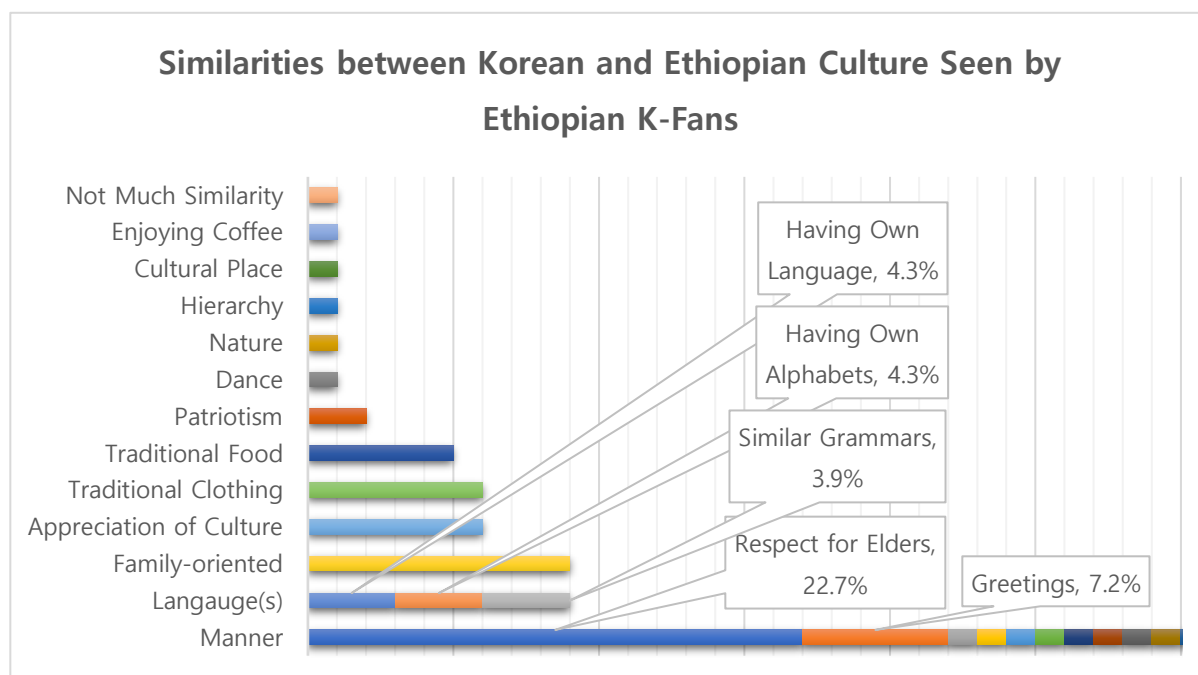


Figure 10. Similarities between Korean and Ethiopian Culture Seen by Ethiopian K-Fans. Note: This figure shows the similarities between Korean and Ethiopian cultures seen by the most active members of the Korean Fan Club in Ethiopia as of April 2018. In broader categorization, manner (42.7%), language (12%), family-oriented culture (12%), appreciation of their own culture and having traditional clothing (8% respectively), and having traditional or cultural food (6.7%) were mentioned the most. Respect for the elders (22.7%) and greetings (6.7%) were the most addressed within the category of manner. In the category of language, both countries having their own language(s) and alphabets as well as similar grammars (4%) were equally pointed out in the survey. The total 31 respondents were allowed to pick multiple answers (n: 75).

MOM took examples of the major Korean entertainment companies such as S.M., JYP, and YG and integrated the companies' mechanism into their own with a different approach. The approach MOM took was a bottom-up approach, as the company was formed by a group of young people who were aspiring artists and K-fans, whereas all 3 major entertainment companies in Korea were established in a top-down approach by an already successful artist—Sooman Lee, a talented music producer and a singer, who founded S.M.; Hyunseok Yang, a member of Seo Taiji and Boys, who founded YG; and Jinyoung Park, a renowned singer and performer, who founded JYP. All these Korean companies had communalities to succeed in their business that MOM was not granted from the beginning: enough capital, funds, net-

working, and power already established in the field. With the opposite approach and lack of initial capital needed for the business, in addition to the indifference of Ethiopia's conservative side, the co-founders of MOM have suffered in varied aspects since its foundation. Although the MOM company was registered as a public limited company, it rather fell into the category of an NGO as the main objective of the company lay in empowering and incubating talented youth regardless of gender, rather than its own profit gaining.

The company's goal was first to empower youth by encouraging them to pursue all sorts of art in their own ways and to be creative and incubate their talents. Since youth in Ethiopia have not been considered as main players in the country's entertainment industry, MOM became a hub for youngsters to gather, freely share their ideas, and find partners to collaborate on creating an art, whether it is music, dance, film, or something else. By joining the company, Nuha said that her "ultimate goal is to reach an audience and to build a relationship with the audience" and "for music to grow, to have more people listen." During her interview with author, Lina stated that she wants to convey her exciting feeling to other people through creating her own music.¹⁴¹ Lina also added that she wants to "support anyone who is in the same situation or different to accomplish their dreams," which is what the company intends to do with its artists.¹⁴²

The practice room in the MOM company was equipped with an audio system and wall-sized mirrors and open for anyone to come and practice. Every weekend, the space provided was full of 50 to 70 youngsters, and a gathering of such large group of like-minded people itself encouraged each individual to pursue their dreams by helping each other. Among its young aspiring artists, MOM puts special focus on empowering women and girls and featuring their capabilities in mainstream Ethiopian society. As a young female singer in the past, Co-founder Debele reminisced about her experience and said she often "volunteered everywhere" to show her talents without getting paid.¹⁴³ Even though "so many people loved to see [her] performance," she criticized that the absence of a talent development system or agency in the past was "the holdback of the industry," which made her decide to found a company like MOM.¹⁴⁴ By empowering youth and women artists and professionals in Ethiopia, MOM aims to achieve sustainable development of the entertainment industry in Ethiopia and to

¹⁴¹ Lina and Nuha, Personal Interview by Minji Kwag, Facebook video call, March 18, 2018, Appendix B.

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Debele, Personal Interview, Appendix E.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

spread Ethiopian culture overseas in the long term. The company also aims to open branches in other African countries to help African youth reach their dreams and to become a leader of the wave of their own culture like Korea's young artists made *hallyu*.

6.2 Adopting the *Hallyu* Mechanism

The *Hallyu* syndrome brought sustainable success and prosperity to Korea's entertainment industry as it discovered new talents and advanced a variety of cultural elements. Aiming to achieve the same outcomes in Ethiopia, the MOM Entertainment company's motto lies in the empowerment of youth and women based on the *hallyu* mechanism. The company was established in order to create a mechanism and a platform through which young people regardless of their gender can stand and be recognized for their talents. The status quo of the entertainment industry in Ethiopia has shown a lack of engagement of the new generation in both the mainstream industry and its market. There has been lack of presence—if not outright absence—of talent academies or agencies in Ethiopia, which resulted in failure to discover and foster new talents and creative ways to appreciate the culture. In order to make improvements in the corresponding fields, MOM adopted successful aspects of the *hallyu* mechanism while creating its own mechanism that complements negative aspects of the *hallyu* mechanism, and that can be best applied to the Ethiopian society.

6.2.1 Successful Aspects

Some of the successful aspects of the *hallyu* mechanism that MOM benchmarked are holding a long-term audition to excavate aspiring artists, incubating their talents, and providing connections and platforms to best present them. Throughout a-year-long open audition, MOM selected about 80 talented youth between the ages of 15 and 20, more than half of whom were girls. This group of youngsters consisted of singers, dancers, actors, fashion designers, writers, music producers, movie directors, video editors, website developers, and others who are interested in creating or developing any form of culture in the field of entertainment. Most of the aspiring artists who applied to be part of the company were also *hallyu* fans who grew their dreams of becoming a star by listening to K-pop and watching Korean TV series and shows. As the circumstances of the Ethiopian entertainment industry have not fully supported and have alienated young artists from the industry's mainstream, many of these young people had given up their dreams before joining MOM. Therefore, the company tried

to recruit as many youngsters as possible and to provide them with various opportunities to facilitate their creative activities.

The applicants went through multiple auditions in different locations where other audition participants were also present. Occasionally the auditions took place in an open public area to check the potential trainees' courage and will. The prerequisite did not require anyone to be outstanding with their talent, as Debele believes one's potential can be discovered and developed through proper "training and exercise."¹⁴⁵ As a professional singer herself, Debele gave the selected trainees "vocal training every weekend for two days." For acting class, the company "invited the professional actors every week" who gave lessons to the trainees on a volunteer basis.¹⁴⁶ Dance teachers and choreographers were also invited to the company to give complementary choreography lessons. All these voluntary teachers were also young professional themselves who needed a platform to show their talents, so the company provided them with opportunities to be featured on a stage or in the media in return. The youth were encouraged to collaborate with each other and were also given opportunities to meet with senior artists and potential supporters to help improve their competence. All the costs for providing a place to perform, organizing events, music and film production, transportation, and occasionally meals for trainees were covered by the company, excepting accommodations.

6.2.2 Combating Negative Aspects

The MOM Entertainment's co-founders designed its mechanism in a way that does not bring the negative outcomes that were observed in the *hallyu* mechanism. First, the company made sure that its trainees, who are still students, prioritize school and getting the necessary education. Often, Korean artist trainees or young celebrities are given an exemption from regularly attending their schools in order to keep up with their arduous schedules for training and performing, which sometimes leads to the agency's exploitation of their young trainees. In order to avoid such excessive training and to protect the students' basic right to learn, the MOM company provided lessons only on the weekends, while allowing its young trainees attend the school and spend time on their academic course work on the weekdays. This policy helped MOM trainees get their basic education and improve their talents within their field of interest at the same time. Second, during the auditioning process, the look of the applicants was not regarded as a selecting criterion. Selecting a visually attractive individual as a trainee

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

and even having plastic surgery performed on their celebrities to gain more fame has been a custom of the Korean entertainment companies, which has negatively affected the beauty standard among the youth in Korea and the followers of *hallyu*. In order to avoid this, the MOM company most valued the latent qualities and the will of their aspiring trainees. As a judge for the company's auditions, Debele gave the most points to those who showed their "passion and confidence," which the company regards as important assets that make an artist successful.¹⁴⁷

Last, but most importantly, MOM encourages its artists to create and pursue their own form of art; everyone in the company was guaranteed autonomy in terms of their performance. Such a trainee-oriented platform of the company not only made self-sustainable growth of talents possible but also prevented objectification or sexualization of the youth, which has been a considerable negative aspect of the *hallyu* industry. The MOM company's music production team was composed of singers, rappers, and music producers who compose, write, or produce their own music in cooperation with each other. The dance crew consisted of traditional, modern, K-pop, and hip-hop dance teams, each of which came up with their own choreography using their creativity and passion. Outstanding trainees were given opportunities to record and release their songs, to participate in producing their own music videos, to perform on a stage, and/or to be featured on TV. A student who majors in fashion design took charge of designing unique stage clothes for each and every singer, performer, and actor within the company, including the clothing for staff members to wear at events and concerts. Actors and writers came up with scripts for the company's featured TV program, which was directed, filmed, edited, and produced solely by MOM's amateur directors, cameramen, editors, and producers. The film production crew also filmed the practice and lessons of the trainees at the company and during the events, which were made into promotional videos for the company. Detailed achievements of the company's projects and its members' engagements are further described in Chapter 6.3.

6.2.3 Integration of Ethiopian Culture

Although the MOM company has its founding roots in the *hallyu* mechanism, MOM artists pursue various genres and different forms of art and put effort into integrating Ethiopian cultural elements into their art production to spread their culture. Just as Seo Taiji and

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

Boys mixed different genres of music and performance to effectively combine the foreign cultural influence and Korean cultural elements, MOM also created a new fusion genre called “Ethio-Electro,” aka, “Double E.” Double E is a fusion of Ethiopian music and Electronic music, coding the traditional Ethiopian melodies and Amharic lyrics on top of Electronic beats. A mixture of both contemporary and traditional cultural elements in the arts reduced the gap between the old and new generations and also allowed young artists to take part in appreciating and spreading their inherited culture, which otherwise has often been forgotten by the new generation. To many artists, melding their culture into their art has a meaning beyond showing their talents; it is strengthening their national identity and accomplishing their desire and dreams. Mikiyas Teka, the leader of the group of young traditional dancers, Yematende, says that his team members and many Ethiopian youngsters “all have a special love for [their] country Ethiopia” and that the “country’s traditional dance is also impressive and unique,” helping them “understand each other’s desire.”¹⁴⁸ For the Double E music produced by the MOM’s music production team, the company’s dancers also come up with a unique choreography that combines modern dance moves from today’s international popular culture and traditional Ethiopian dance.

6.3 Projects and Achievements

6.3.1 Art Production and Event Organization

As of February 2018, the MOM musicians released 7 singles in collaboration with each other within the company, or with other renowned musicians and music labels that they were connected to through MOM. One of the remarkable collaboration works is Eisum and Nasjey’s *Interlude*, featured by Definition and Nuha from MOM, produced by CorMill and Fly Melodies.¹⁴⁹ Among the MOM-produced songs, those available online are: Rahel’s *የክረምት ጭዋታ* [Yekeremit Chewata] featured by Nuha, Cha Cha’s *ስወዳት* [Swedat], and Mahi G’s *ህልሜን የምትፈታው* [Hilmen Yemetfetaw]. These songs were written and sung by the musicians of MOM themselves and produced by Upon, the company’s prominent music producer. Recording and mastering work was done at a partner company of MOM which has a studio equipped with an advanced audio recording system and mastering program.

¹⁴⁸ Teka, Personal Interview, Appendix D.

¹⁴⁹ A collaboration music of MOM Entertainment and Jey Prime Records is available on: <https://soundcloud.com/jey-prime-records/interlude-x>.

In terms of event organization, MOM has either hosted or participated in 8 concerts and fundraising events throughout its first fiscal year. The main purposes of event organizing were to publicize and to promote the work of the artists and sometimes to donate their talents for the betterment of the society. At the company's first single release party held on March 20th, 2017, two new singles, *Yekeremit Chewata* and *Swedat*, were introduced to the public within the performance.¹⁵⁰ Most of the trainees and the artists of MOM performed on the stage to show their talents in different genres of the arts: dancing, singing, playing musical instruments, acting, musical theater, and so on. Renowned Ethiopian singer Bedilu Esayas was also invited to the event to perform his music and to encourage the aspiring artists. Out of around a hundred guests that attended the event, some were potential supporters from different areas of entertainment as well as potential investors from a national bank and from the private sector, hoping to see the new faces of the entertainment industry and their talents. MOM hosted another big festival, "Youth 4 Youth," on July 8th, 2017, which was the first charity event organized solely by youth for youth in Ethiopia. MOM's artists voluntarily performed at the festival to raise awareness and to fundraise for patients of their age, who are suffering from the end stage renal disease (ESRD). The MOM company's artists constantly volunteered to perform at other fundraising events such as the "International Childhood Cancer Day" event and the "Ethiopian Korean War Veterans" event.^{151,152} By supporting the weak, the youth proved that they can be self-empowered while at the same time empowering others in need of help. Moreover, with the company's support, MOM's K-pop cover dance teams have annually performed at regional K-pop festivals that attracted hundreds and thousands of *hallyu* fans, where a winning team was provided with an opportunity to compete with other talented artists from all over the world and was given a chance to go to Korea to perform on a stage with K-pop stars.

6.3.2 Media and Marketing

MOM extended its business to the media and put a significant amount of investments into its production of the TV show *አንቺ አቢሲኒያ* [Hello Abyssinia] on which information on various Korean cultural aspects such as language, music, food, fashion, dramas, and movies

¹⁵⁰ Videos and pictures of the event can be found on the Facebook page of MOM Entertainment. Search @MomentOfMusicEntertainment on Facebook.

¹⁵¹ International Childhood Cancer Day event was organized by Tesfa Addis Parents Childhood Cancer Organization (TAPCCO Ethiopia) on February 15, 2017.

¹⁵² The event for Ethiopian Korean War Veterans was held by Ethiopian Korean War Veterans Association on February 25, 2017.

was shared. *Hello Abyssinia* became the most popular program on Nahoo TV, from 2016 to 2017. The show was entirely directed, written, hosted, and produced by MOM's film production crew, who had excellent knowledge of Korean culture as K-fans. The show also featured the company's K-pop dance groups Ssenbers and Crystal 5, Ethiopian dance group Yematende, and modern dance crew Letarik to present and promote different genres of music and performance. When some of these dance teams were featured on *Ethio Talent Show*, organized and broadcast by EBC 3, MOM accommodated them by giving them priority to use the practice room, by providing them with any needed equipment, and by financing their stage clothes. As EBC is Ethiopia's oldest and largest broadcaster, MOM's support and its dance teams' acknowledged achievement on the show added to the promotion of their talents and the company's marketing. Furthermore, MOM often featured its artists on a number of radio shows each time an artist of the company released a single or collaborated with a well-known artist. The MOM musicians were given a chance to present their songs and to introduce themselves on the radio shows. A radio show on EBC 104.7 called *K-love Show* that plays trendy K-pop songs and talks about K-pop stars and the latest news in the K-pop industry, was also occasionally co-hosted by MOM in 2017. Besides using the mainstream media platform, MOM Entertainment targeted social media as its key marketing strategy. Following the trend, the company collaborated with online-content creators who make viral videos on some of the most popular social media platforms among the youth in Ethiopia: Vine, YouTube, and DireTube.¹⁵³ One of the successful collaboration projects was making a music video of the song ስጉገረፍ ታወረዋለህ [Setgerf Tawerawalhe], produced by the most famous comedian in Ethiopia, Comedian Thomas.¹⁵⁴ MOM's dance crew designed and performed the choreography of this song, and parts of the music video were filmed and produced by MOM's filming crew.

6.4 Difficulties and Limitations

Despite the remarkable progress made by the company, MOM Entertainment has gone through a number of trials and errors as the company was established and administered by young people who support other youth. At the beginning of the business, some of the renowned senior artists in Ethiopia and potential partner companies of MOM recognized the company's young artists' competence and potential growth. However, their promised cooperation and support turned out to be mere words floating in the air, mainly because they did not find it profitable to invest in such a long-term talent development project. Given the fact that

¹⁵³ DireTube is an Ethiopian online platform for media and entertainment founded on October 26, 2008.

¹⁵⁴ Watch the music video here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4TLNK2suFoo>.

the social stratum of the youth is considered to be relatively low in the conservative society of Ethiopia, the engagements made by MOM and its members were often neglected by the mainstream society. The company's efforts to empower women and girls and to have more of them active in the field of entertainment also hardly attracted the mainstream's attention. Consequently, the company was put into a situation where it failed to secure enough sponsorship and partnership to continue its business. Without receiving proper patronage of the arts produced, MOM's artists found it difficult to debut and to be active in the mainstream entertainment industry, and the company's continuous investments in supporting and promoting its artists' activities and projects caused a deficit to the company. Such difficulties in the financial status of the company eventually put MOM Entertainment on the verge of bankruptcy and it was forced to close down its office in October 2017. Although a number of MOM artists still continue to pursue their careers in the fields through individual projects, without a company backing them, their engagements have been relatively less acknowledgeable in the industry.

6.4.1 Breach of the Agreement

MOM suffered a major setback by the cold reality of the business world in Ethiopia as promises and agreements were often breached. One of MOM's most invested projects was its featured TV show *Hello Abyssinia* on Nahoo TV, which has also rightly brought great success to the business of its broadcaster Nahoo TV and made its channel popular among the youth population in Ethiopia. Nahoo TV aired all episodes of *Hello Abyssinia* in prime time for about a year, during which time a number of commercial advertisements had been placed within the airtime of the show. According to the written contract signed by both parties, the profits gained by such commercial advertisements were to be split between Nahoo TV and MOM Entertainment. Nahoo TV, however, did not abide by the contract, which resulted in MOM profiting nothing from its one-year production of the TV show. Whereas Nahoo TV continued to gain profits by placing advertisements during the air time of the reruns of *Hello Abyssinia*, MOM was thrown into a mountain of debt from the massive production costs. As compensation, Nahoo TV agreed to provide its filming crew and all the necessary filming apparatus for the production of season 2 of the program, which also failed to be implemented after producing the first episode and resulted in the discontinuance of the show.

6.4.2 Lack of Supported Platform

At the time of the MOM company's establishment, the online payment system was not yet common in Ethiopia. Therefore, an artist's song release online did not necessarily guarantee an immediate profit for the company. Although Ethiopia's first online music market ArifZefen was established in 2017, it was rarely expected to gain any profit from selling a song on this new platform. Furthermore, ArifZefen only allowed albums to be uploaded, which means rookie artists who did not yet have an album but only singles released were unable to utilize the platform. Outside the online market, the public remained indifferent in supporting young artists and their art. The mainstream media and the major platforms for entertainment in Ethiopia rarely featured a new artist. Even if there were demands, MOM's co-founder Debele criticized that "we make music, but some other people make income from that because they sell it in the black market."¹⁵⁵ The winners and the finalists of *Ethio Talent Show* were also confronted with the reality that there was no further support besides a cash reward and no chance to be featured on a different platform to show their talents after the competition. Without receiving further necessary support, the vicious circle of investing and failing to gain enough profit caused a halt of MOM's business. This is where the author sees that the Korean government's *hallyu* cultural ODA can be applied.

¹⁵⁵ Debele, Personal Interview, Appendix E.

7. New Paradigm of Cultural ODA

Typically, a donor country sets the priority of its foreign aid on the development of the primary industries in developing countries, through which the donor country can also benefit. Due to the circumstances of most of the aid-recipient countries lacking the capital, manpower, technology, and infrastructure necessary for development, the countries become dependent on the aid given. As discussed in the introduction chapter, once a developing country starts relying on foreign aid that is mostly donor-oriented, the country easily falls into the scheme of being ruled by the donor's neo-colonization. In the process of rapid industrialization and modernization of the primary industries in their country, the nation would likely become vulnerable to foreign interferences, which may result in losing their own cultural traits and traditions. Culture is an asset that every nation identifies themselves by and is what completes national identity—although the definition of culture is much broader, this paper limits the boundaries of culture as those of a country and its people. That said, a proper mechanism of cultural development needs to be established that can help the recipient country stay independent with its strong cultural identity and further spread its cultural traits. *Hallyu* is proven to be a leading example of a former developing country, South Korea, using its own culture as an effective public diplomacy tool that has largely contributed to the prosperity of the country. To base a cultural ODA on the recipient country's needs and cultural values, the *hallyu* mechanism can be implemented into the Korean government's cultural ODA model. To analyze how it can be implemented in Ethiopia, the following sections demonstrate an execution model of the cultural ODA of the Korean government, which shows the partnership structure of the government and in cooperation with private sectors.

7.1 *Hallyu* Cultural ODA

7.1.1 About KOFICE

KOFICE, an institute designated for official cultural exchanges of the Korean government, has recently put emphasis on combining culture and ODA. The head researcher from KOFICE, Sanghyun Nam, stresses that such cultural dialogue should be mutual and mutually beneficial.¹⁵⁶ The projects that KOFICE carries out fall into 4 categories: research study, cultural exchange events, cultural ODA, and facilitating networking among related organizations. The research team investigates cultural differences and cultural consumption preferences of different countries as well as their interests in Korean cultural content in order to make a cus-

¹⁵⁶ Sanghyun Nam, Personal Interview by Minji Kwag, Seoul, April 5, 2018, Appendix A.

tomized policy per country. When holding cultural exchange events, KOFICE targets countries that have some favor towards *hallyu* but have relatively low opportunity to experience *hallyu*. “Under the name of cultural ODA,” although it is not an official term, Nam states that KOFICE does “projects mostly for social contribution.” The projects include building or renovating overseas ODA facilities related to culture such as “a cultural classroom, a graphic production studio, or a fashion school” as well as talent donation of *hallyu* stars by having them provide choreography or vocal lessons. Nam explains that when conducting ODA projects, KOFICE “integrate[s] the artists or the relevant cultural contents especially *hallyu*.” Lastly, KOFICE “intends to build a network among the relevant institutions by unifying the policy and promoting their cooperation to raise efficiency,” which has made *hallyu* more successful.

7.1.2 Cultural ODA in Africa

Taking the *hallyu* syndrome as an example, a developing country may turn the successful development model of the Korean entertainment industry into their own development model. Although the context of each country’s culture may differ, the mechanism of *hallyu* can be adjusted and adopted based on the values and needs of a country. However, there have been limitations observed in the cultural ODA in Africa. First, due to the fact that most of the overseas research studies are conducted online, some regions with restrictions on internet connections are often exempted from the research radar of KOFICE. In the case of Ethiopia, the government monopolizes providing of the internet connection for the entire country, and the internet was often unavailable during the recent state of emergency, which explains the Korean government’s lack of knowledge on the *hallyu* influence in Ethiopia. Second, there have not been enough representative entities such as a Korean cultural center that connect the Korean government and the local community in most African countries. Normally a Korean cultural center located in a country acts as an official institute aligned with the Korean government for facilitating cultural exchanges between Korea and the respective country. Egypt, Nigeria, and South Africa are currently the only African countries that host a Korean cultural center. In Ethiopia, the absence of such a public institute that connects KOFICE with the local community has halted the facilitation of culture-based activities by the government besides events hosted by the Korean Embassy in Addis Ababa. Even though the embassy has organized some annual cultural events for the past couple of years, such events solely organized

by the embassy without any engagement from the local side have not been effective in building a strong relationship with the local community.

7.2 Execution Model of *Hallyu* Cultural ODA

In order to remedy the shortcomings of cultural exchange engagements overseas, KOFICE organizes events “in cooperation with local organizations or associations,” to include the participation of local artists.¹⁵⁷ The cultural events organized by KOFICE, however, also show a tendency to have the primary objective of spreading *hallyu* as “these events have characteristics of festival through which [they] spread out Korean cultures overseas especially in the countries that show interest in *hallyu*.” A festival called “Feel Korea” organized by KOFICE is held especially in countries where some interest in *hallyu* by the local population is evident. When the festival was held in London in 2017, the cultural content presented during the event was mostly about popular Korean celebrities, Korean food, K-pop, K-drama, and the promotion of the 2018 Winter Olympics in Pyeongchang, Korea. When it comes to cultural exchange, there needs to be a new paradigm that makes mutual engagement and interactions of both countries possible and that corresponds to the purpose of mutual understanding. Likewise, cultural ODA should come after understanding the needs and the culture of the recipient and should function beyond sharing one’s culture or building a cultural facility; a proper cultural ODA model should be able to elicit the cultural traits valued by the people and help them build their own mechanism to effectively preserve, develop, and spread their culture and tradition. In the case of *Hallyu* cultural ODA, the *hallyu* mechanism can be applied as an appropriate ODA model in a way such that it contributes to the empowerment of the youth, the development of the entertainment industry, and building a stronger soft power of a country that brings a domino effect to the co-development of the country’s other relevant industries.

Figure 11 below shows an execution model of the *hallyu* cultural ODA suggested by the researchers of KOFICE. This model is designed to suggest a beneficial mechanism for both the donor and the recipient through cooperation of both public and private partnerships. A real-life example similar to this model is *Super Idol*, a TV program that nurtured young musicians from both Korea and China, aired on MBC Music in 2015. Using Chinese capital and Korea’s entertainment management system, the program was co-produced by the two

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

countries. The TV show was regarded as successful in a way that both countries and the relevant entities such as the broadcaster and the sponsor companies gained profits.

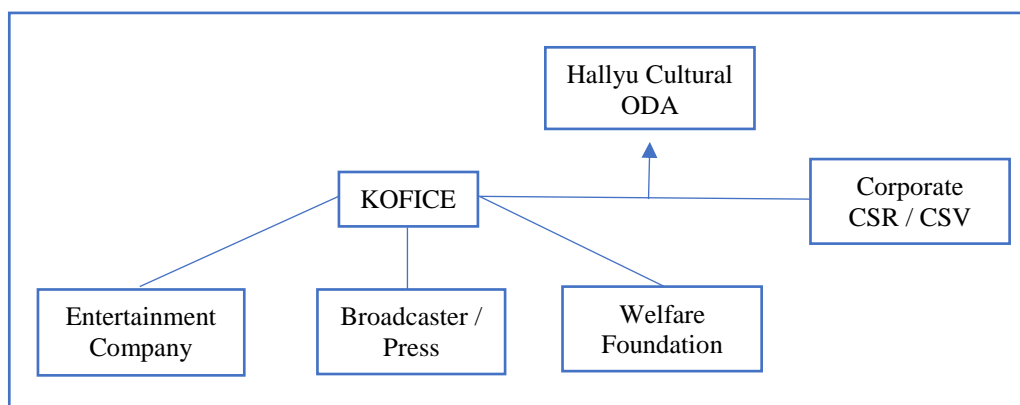


Figure 11. Execution Model of the *Hallyu* Cultural ODA of Public-Private Partnership. Note: The figure is recreated by the author based on the source: KOFICE, Image 16, *2015 Hallyu Fusion Project Research*, KOFICE, December 30, 2015, 595

Another example is that an ODA in Indonesia in 2016 involved YG Entertainment and provided “dance and vocal training for disadvantaged youth.”¹⁵⁸ Also providing “local TV channels with Korean audiovisual programs for free” has been taken as a form of cultural ODA.¹⁵⁹ However, any of these projects is hardly focused on assisting the recipient people with fulfilling their needs, creating their own forms of arts, or valuing their own cultural elements. These *hallyu* ODA programs are rather seen to focus on injecting Korean culture into others by insisting on a Korean way of development mechanism, which may result in a failure to provide recipient-oriented, sustainable foreign assistance. Thus, it is important that the execution model of *hallyu* cultural ODA follows the principles of cultural ODA by contributing “to the promotion of cultural and higher educational activities and preservation of cultural heritage in developing countries” and to help implement the *hallyu* mechanism into their own mechanism that can be sustainable by itself.¹⁶⁰

7.3 Relevance of the *Hallyu* Cultural ODA to Ethiopia

As a unique African country that has never been colonized, Ethiopia holds a strong national identity built based upon the country’s cultural traits and traditions, which should be passed on to the next generation from the old generation for the sake of sustainability. However, the entertainment industry of the country has shown a tendency to exclude the youth and

¹⁵⁸ Lee, *Cultural Policy in South Korea: Making a New Patron State*, 2019.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ KOFICE, 2015 *한류 융합과제 연구* [2015 Hallyu Fusion Project Research], Seoul: KOFICE, December 30, 2015, 605.

women in its mainstream, and this has negatively affected the sustainable development of the industry and further dissemination of Ethiopian culture. Moreover, with the invasion of new, different cultures from the outside through a massive amount of aid and investment provided by the international community and foreign countries in the Ethiopian society, the cultural gap between the old and new generations has been enlarged. The youth in Ethiopia, especially girls, have thus started to follow foreign cultures, one of which is Korean culture. The *hallyu* mechanism that made the spread of Korean culture possible is the legacy of Korean entertainment companies' talent incubation system and the Korean government's support. Since the *hallyu* syndrome hit Ethiopia, there have been movements of the youth to make a social change through the mechanism of *hallyu* within the Ethiopian society.

7.4 The Role of MOM Entertainment

To achieve the sustainable development of the Ethiopian entertainment industry through fostering young artists, Ethiopia needs an advanced talent incubation and management system and support from both the private and public sectors. In order to conduct an effective cultural ODA, the Korean government needs support from the local community and their passion towards culture. These two factors perfectly match each other's demands and supplies; from the perspective of the fandom of Korea in Ethiopia, KOFICE is the entity that the local community is eager to be connected with and to get support from; from the perspective of Korea, the active Korean fandom in Ethiopia and the role of MOM Entertainment can be the important key elements to the success of the government's cultural ODA using the impact of *hallyu*. Referring back to the execution model of the *hallyu* cultural ODA suggested by KOFICE, a local entertainment company or a talent incubator such as MOM Entertainment can thus be placed in a pivoting position that will act in favor of both countries and both its private and public partners (see Figure 12 below).

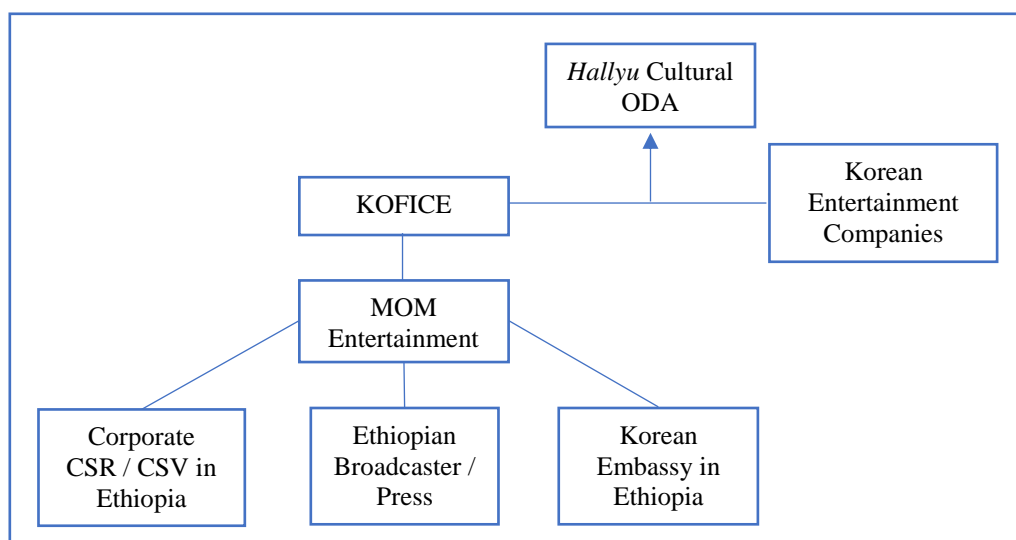


Figure 12. Execution Model of the *Hallyu* Cultural ODA of Public-Private Partnership in Ethiopia. Note: The figure is recreated with some edits by the author based on the source: KOFICE, Image 16, *2015 Hallyu Fusion Project Research*, KOFICE, December 30, 2015, 595

In the above unprecedented execution model of the *hallyu* cultural ODA suggested by the author, MOM Entertainment acts as the main player of the entertainment industry in Ethiopia—like the Korean entertainment companies did for the entertainment industry in Korea. It attracts support and cooperation from the private and public entities as well as the media sector in Ethiopia. Engaging more entities based in Ethiopia will help the ODA be more recipient-oriented and will better amplify the results from the perspective of the locals. In this model, Korean entertainment companies may function in an advisory position, sharing their knowhow in the field and providing experts, as well as in a partnership with a local entertainment company like MOM through which they can co-incubate talents. Taking the role of the go-between, KOFICE would then be the focal point that connects the two countries and provides the cultural ODA in cooperation with the private sector. Having the *hallyu* mechanism already initiated based on the local culture through a local entertainment company, KOFICE's ODA would be likely to have a better integration into the society and would see improved outcomes in favor of both the donor and the recipient. With such an ODA model, Ethiopia may reach autonomous, sustainable development in its entertainment industry with fostered cultural assets and new talents that will lead to the creation of Ethiopia's own cultural wave.

8. Conclusion

The wave of Korean culture, *hallyu*, is a unique concept that has become a syndrome, as it has significantly contributed to the development of Korea and has awarded the country with an influential soft power. As the wave started from the popularity of *hallyu* stars along with that of K-pop and K-drama, Korean entertainment companies that incubated the stars and their talents have been the driving force of the development of the Korean entertainment industry. The *hallyu* mechanism adopted by these companies mainly focus on youth empowerment regardless of gender and is based on cultural traits and values. While excavating different genres and applying advanced systems influenced by the West, Korean entertainment companies have developed their own framework to successfully disseminate Korean culture as well as to discover new talents of the youth. Within this mechanism, the Korean entertainment industry was able to achieve autonomous, sustainable development that brought a domino effect of co-development of other industries and the enhancement of the country's image. The *hallyu* syndrome also reached Ethiopia, where its ripple effect has actually reached beyond appreciating Korean culture to creating a movement among the youth in the country.

In Ethiopia, the youth, especially girls, have been disempowered by society and have been excluded from the mainstream. In the entertainment industry, the tendency has shown that aspiring young artists are not given proper opportunities to develop their competence, nor are they given a platform to present their talents. According to the author's analysis, the Ethiopian society's indifference has affected the reason that most *hallyu* fans in Ethiopia are girls in their teens or 20s. Many of them grew their dream of becoming a star by watching young celebrities in K-pop and K-drama, and their desire to appreciate different cultures and to present their own culture through different art forms became evident from the recent movement shown among the fandom in Ethiopia. The Ethiopian K-fans' social change movements were observed, and the movements were to help the weak, to raise awareness of social issues, and to empower themselves. They have shown what they can contribute to their society using the network of the fandom. In line with the fans' activities and movements, MOM Entertainment was established by some *hallyu* fans who benchmarked Korean entertainment companies' *hallyu* mechanism. Putting emphasis on talent excavation and incubation, cultural dissemination and development, and media promotion and marketing, the shared values of MOM and its members and supporters in a short term included but were not limited to 1) providing training for aspiring young artists who want to improve their aptitude; 2) providing a platform for

them to practice and produce creative art forms; 3) facilitating networking and cooperation among the youth; 4) enlarging youth engagement in different fields of the entertainment industry; and 5) promoting and publicizing their talents. In the steps of achieving these short-term goals, the MOM company aimed for and gradually accomplished empowerment of youth and females in the Ethiopian society and the creation of Ethiopia's own wave of culture in the long term.

All of the shared values and aims of MOM can best be adopted and practiced when there is support from the public sector. The observed failures and limitations of the business of MOM could have been reduced if there were support from the Korean government in the format of ODA. According to the research, the *hallyu* cultural ODA of the Korean government is sought to be a mutually beneficial solution to develop the entertainment industries of both Ethiopia and Korea and to spread both cultures. In the past, many of the Korean government's development assistance projects have been donor-oriented, such as handing down Korea's developmental knowhow and promoting Korean culture in the developing world. Such one-way affairs have been proven to bring negative impacts to both countries, since the development model is not based on the needs of the recipient and therefore cannot be sustainable. It is important to support the local society in such a way that they can autonomously develop a sustainable mechanism that can improve the shortcomings within their society. When it comes to the cultural ODA, therefore, it is also important that the Korean government does not try to inject its own culture into the Ethiopian society. Rather, the government should support the movement of the private sector such as the MOM company that is based on Korea's development mechanism and that can sustainably contribute to the development of the country. Since Korea has achieved remarkable economic growth and an enhanced national image as consequences of the *hallyu* syndrome, with support, Ethiopia can also create its own wave of culture based on the sustainable development of its entertainment industry through youth empowerment.

To reach long-term sustainable development of the country's entertainment industry through the spread of its culture, the Ethiopian government also needs to work on its "cultural base and future-generation base" in cooperation with the private sector, which was one of the biggest success factors of *hallyu*.¹⁶¹ Tuha, co-founder of MOM Entertainment, states that Ethiopian public officials need to plan and look for outcomes for "20-30 years" ahead rather

¹⁶¹ Tuha, Personal Interview, Appendix C.

than “focusing only on their five-year term.”¹⁶² Alongside planning for a long-term period of empowering new generations, it is also necessary that the government provides legal protection for the youth with strict legislations, so as not to repeat the deficiencies observed in the *hallyu* industry. First, the government needs to carry out children and youth protection laws in the labor market in order to prevent labor exploitation that was problematic in the *hallyu* mechanism. Second, it is important to provide legal protections for young individuals that are vulnerable to getting involved in unfair or illegal situations with potential partners or sponsors, as seen in the previous cases of MOM. Such policies are not only applicable in the entertainment industry but are also needed in every other industry of the country in order to support the youth, who are the next leaders of the country. Completing this research study on the development of the entertainment industry of Korea, it was proven that the *hallyu* mechanism, empowering youth and women is the key to sustainable development, and that fostering and incubating new talents while at the same time embracing different cultural values contributes to the cultural spread, making *hallyu* possible. If Ethiopia also succeeds in adopting such a mechanism and adjusting it in order to create its own mechanism, empowering youth in the entertainment industry regardless of gender, and accepting differences and changes in culture within its society, then the new wave of Ethiopian culture will surely begin.

¹⁶² Ibid.

Appendix A

Interview Transcript

Interviewer/Interpreter: Minji Kwag

Interviewee: Sanghyun Nam, Leader of the Research Team, KOFICE

Date: April 5th, 2018

Location: Seoul, Korea

Spoken Language: Korean

Kwag: Thank you so much for sparing your time for today, my question for you Mr. Sanghyun Nam is, first, what KOFICE does.

Nam: Our institute, as its name suggests, is conducting all sorts of policy projects related to international cultural exchange. We take a form of a private enterprise, but we receive subsidy from the government's budget on projects on international cultural exchange and vicariously execute the projects. Before we became the Korean foundation, we had undertaken many projects with the name of *hallyu*, and now we put a bigger meaning on international cultural exchange than *hallyu* and are executing international cultural exchange activities that have a bigger meaning. In the past, since [our projects] were related to *hallyu*, our projects were done mostly around the contents industry, and now, exceeding contents which we call cultural industry, we performed relevant businesses including the side of arts and traditional culture. Basically, our policy on the cultural exchange lies in a form of mutual interchange. That being said, we are managing projects that are not just showing our own there, but also assimilating and mingling with their own. We can divide our projects largely into 4 categories, which may become 3 later.

First, as I am in charge of it, we are conducting a research study. Before we come up with any policy, we need to obtain some sort of information about the country and figure out their cultural traits to have it underpinned. Thus fundamentally through research study, we conduct researches on how cultures are per each country, what their cultural consumption preference is, also how they are consuming Korean cultural contents, and so on in order to deduct characteristics per country or region.

Another one is that we are holding cultural exchange events. These events have characteristics of festival through which we spread out Korean cultures overseas especially in the countries that show interest in *hallyu*. In cooperation with local organizations or associations, we make events with installing booths together, having the artists from their side also participate when making a concert or something like that in this manner. From our side, there is a festival called Feel Korea. Putting differentiation from the other organizations, we organize events around the countries that show some preference for *hallyu* but do not have an opportunity to directly experience it compared to the other countries with a boom in *hallyu*. ... We name it a bilateral cultural exchange event.

The third is the ODA project as you may be interested. We conduct both general ODA projects and mostly culture-integrated ODA projects, which makes it distinguished. Actually, the term "cultural ODA" is not an official term, but in order for us to put discrimination in terms of policy, we do projects mostly for social contribution under the name of cultural ODA. Our ODA projects thus have closer relation to the ODA aspect rather than to cultural aspect. Therefore, as I said just before, we are taking two ways: one towards cultural aspect and the

other towards ODA aspect. Although the ones related to the cultural aspect may not be clearly distinguishable in terms of their areas, when we conduct the ODA projects, we integrate the artists or the relevant cultural contents especially *hallyu*. When we repair or renovate the overseas ODA facilities, we work on the facilities related to culture such as a cultural classroom, a graphic production studio, or a fashion school.

Like so, we conduct ODA projects within the culture-related area. Our basic concept is to have the *hallyu*-related personnel such as the K-pop artists to do community service activities in a format of talent donation overseas. For example, we open a dance classroom or a music classroom and provide education to the local students. Also, we recently opened a fashion school in Indonesia and accepted students who can study fashion, and we invited the fashion designers in Korea as mentors to educate these students and also to participate in a fashion show with them. Like this, as we consider fashion as also part of culture, we have been working on the ODA in cultural aspect.

For the other ODA projects that are less relevant to cultural aspect and defined by the government as an ODA project, we receive the budget from the government and build libraries. Around the overseas regions where there is lack of reading enjoyment, we are building libraries and making them equipped with the needed books sent from Korea. As it is an ODA, we are doing such projects around developing countries. This is the third.

The fourth is that now we are working on making networks. As the international cultural exchanges are out of sync in our country, we intend to build a network among the relevant institutions by unifying the policy and promoting their cooperation to raise efficiency. Our target can be a private sector, a related organization, and also a local government. We either form a consultative group between the related organizations or organize a forum or workshop. In case the case of private sector, we even partake in a business with them, viewing it as part of constructing a network. Connecting with the ODA project, we also make networks while going overseas together with the private entities to collaborate on the social contribution projects. These kinds of projects are done by KOFICE.

Kwag: Wow, additional questions seem unnecessary as you stated everything in detail. (laugh) Summing up all the projects that you have mentioned, how would you define cultural ODA?

Nam: KOFICE simply defines cultural ODA as an ODA that is tied with cultural contents. Culture is an abstruse thing; as it has varied genres, it is hard to explain it in words. Therefore, we define it as an ODA project that is tied with culture and/or that utilizes culture. Among our projects, there are fashion, movies, broadcasting, music, and so on that are immensely diverse. We are conducting ODA projects that are matched with the concepts of such diverse genres of the cultural domains.

Kwag: Has any of the projects been pushed ahead in Africa, especially in Ethiopia?

Nam: There is none in Ethiopia. Lately, there was a library construction project in the African region. When it comes to the cultural ODA ... since a space created by SBS in Zanzibar has not been operated, since last year we have sent them operational budget so that there could be education for the local people to learn about broadcasting production and continue to maintain the space.

Kwag: In the case of Ethiopia, as I have lived there for a year, there are around 12,000 *hallyu* fans registered online.

Nam: There are that many? (startled)

Kwag: Yes, everyone gets surprised by the fact. They are officially registered online, but since the internet circumstance is not favorable, if you include the fans active offline or the unregistered fans, the number is tremendous. Since the young generation pays great attention to *hallyu*, there is a local broadcasting company that broadcasts Korean dramas with dubbing, called Kana TV. Also there is a TV program about Korea actually run by Ethiopian K-pop fans on Nahoo TV, and it is on Nahoo TV under the program title *Hello Abyssinia*. The actual Ethiopian fans who have an excellent command of Korean language host the show, and myself was also the host-cum-director for its season 2. ... Also, there is a radio program on K-pop that has been on air for about 10 years, so it has been a while since *hallyu* was rooted. Have you known about this?

Nam: Actually, I think it is a blind area. The African side basically lacks research on *hallyu* because overseas research is mostly conducted online. Due to the cost and the budget, the countries where the online research is hard to be conducted are exempt from the research target. Since [Africa] is in a blind area for the research, it is true that [the region] gets quite excluded for policy making. I believe not only me but also most people are not aware of the phenomenon in Ethiopia, it is a pity when there are so many [*hallyu* fans in Ethiopia]. ... Every public or private project is accompanied by cost in order to do something, and if the demand does not cover the cost enough, in fact, the project does not get through nor does the policy. Therefore, from the private side, there is almost no concert in the African region. For example, they go to Central and South America only to make a loss. The private entertainment companies do it for the purpose of maintaining the fandom even though there is a loss, taking a form of concert tour in neighboring regions. Government-related businesses are not really undertaken there, except the ODA projects. Especially there is almost no cultural ODA in the government level except what we do. But, there are some cases like CJ¹⁶³ or a similar private enterprise organizing a movie screening in Africa on a social-contribution dimension, not that of ODA. I was not really aware of [what you mentioned].

Kwag: Would the Korean government plan to cooperate with the Ethiopian local corporations?

Nam: We are not doing profit-making businesses though we may plan to make an opportunity to create a cooperative network between the private companies. There are businesses that are in a similar format such as the fashion business I mentioned earlier as we incubate and support the local fashion talents to stand on a fashion week in their country with the buyers in Korea. As the buyers make purchases, private interchanges are induced. So, such format exists, but we have not considered Africa as a region where such format can be adapted. Recently, there is an upcoming general meeting of AfDB that stands for African Development Bank, which excavates projects to help companies that go to Africa to meet up and cooperate with local companies. It will be held in Korea this year, and I heard that there was a request for including cultural aspect, especially *hallyu* aspect, to the meeting. We received the request to have SM and CJ make a presentation on their business, for which CJ confirmed and SM is

¹⁶³ CJ Corporation is a South Korean conglomerate which has conducts business in industries of food, pharmaceuticals, biotechnology, shopping, entertainment, media, and more. CJ E&M is a subsidiary company of CJ Corporation in charge of entertainment and media with 7 main divisions: media content, film business, music content, convention, performing arts, animation, and media solution

still under consultation though it is unlikely. For CJ also, it did not seem so easy to make the decision, but since the government was asking for it, they seemed to have said yes for now. Looking at this, from the private corporations' side, the number of 12,000 people may not seem so big. Regarding the gain by investment, if the private sector does not see it cost-effective, they cannot do it as a philanthropy even if we make a place. The corporations have their own priorities, considering which countries can bring them bigger profits. So if you look, currently China has gone down even though it was the core country, which resulted in the corporations' averting their eyes back to Japan. Regarding the Americas, the companies have knocked on the door from the first, and this time it worked well. Compared to the Americas, they are turning away to South Asia. Since the priorities lie like that, for Africa, Central and South America, and Central Asia, they choose to take a format of maintaining the fandom by organizing concerts or so, instead of making further business, I think. Since the enterprises are like that, it seems like the case that the government cannot actively work on it even though there are potential markets such as India.

Kwag: I know. You said, CJ has confirmed to participate in the meeting. Then what are the exact roles of the group in this?

Nam: Speaking about that, the people who have discretion for the investment for each African country participate in the meeting, and the business operators in Korea per field go out to explain their business. So if such explanation of business matches, there comes investment, which leads the company to enter Africa. ... Whereas other corporations are actively engaging themselves in this, those from the cultural side are invited, which is a different situation.

Kwag: According to what you have mentioned, it seems there is a bare chance that the relevant projects will be carried out in Ethiopia or other African countries within a short period of time from now on.

Nam: From my humble opinion, it is so. If it is to help matching the private companies, within a short period of time, my thought is that it won't be easy even if it is realized. The projects will be managed around the ODA; there are not a lot, excluding ODA. We do have projects that support overseas *hallyu* communities as the power coming from the international fans is highly appreciated. From our side, most of our projects basically take exchange and return as a direction rather than advancement of the industry. So, like the case of the artists' social contribution that I mentioned before, we request them to return their appreciation to the fans from whom they make a base to gain profits. The existence of the overseas *hallyu* fans cannot be more appreciated. Korea Foundation, so called KF, collects information on the number of *hallyu* fans and what their activities are every year.

We also execute projects that directly support the overseas fan communities through Korean Cultural Center due to stability of the project. We give budget to the Korean Cultural Centers and let them proceed on their own including calculating the cost. If the overseas *hallyu* communities unite and send us a business plan, we support the budget in order for them to hold the events. I know we provide around 20,000,000 KRW per region yearly to 6 to 7 regions. None of us goes there, it is the communities that hold *hallyu*-related events by themselves. There is none from the African side. Thinking of it, in fact, there is no cultural center that we communicate with. For example, there is a cultural event for diplomatic relations between countries, which is also organized by us. This year is an anniversary of diplomatic relation with one of the African countries neighboring Republic of South Africa, but as there is no cooperation organization there such as the embassy or the cultural center, we had to cooperate

with the embassy in South Africa. Therefore, we will hold an integrated anniversary of diplomatic relations and cultural event of all three countries around South Africa at the embassy in South Africa this year. Since there is no cultural center [in Africa], there is no opportunity for us to support the communities even if they individually contact us, not to mention there are less passages for us to inform them about it. Even if we send them the information, since they do not cooperate with cultural centers or something like that, we get captured in a situation where it gets difficult for us to support them in consideration of stability of the budget. ...

[interruption]

Nam: In the case of Africa, it would be nice for the individuals [Korean fans] and such entities [like MOM] to have a profitable basis on the local demands. Concerning the company's failure on TV program and other things, it does not look easy. Then, a desirable way can be our government or private enterprises supporting or investing in them possibly through a connection to be made that will lead to the business expansion, which, realistically speaking, seems difficult.

[interruption]

Kwag: Thank you so much for your time for the interview today. The interview was more than helpful.

Nam: I feel sorry that I could not contribute more to the interview, but please feel free to contact me anytime for further questions. Thank you.

Appendix B

Interview Transcript

Interviewer/Interpreter: Minji Kwag

Interviewee: Lina Mehasin (stage name: Lina) and Nuha Awol (stage name: Nuha) from the MOM Entertainment

Date: March 18th, 2018

Medium: Facebook Video Call

Spoken Language: English

Kwag: Hi, Lina and Nuha. Thank you so much for your time for this interview today. I have some questions regarding the entertainment development in Ethiopia and also MOM company that you are in part of. What do you think is the trend of Ethiopian popular culture?

Nuha: Right now, Ethiopian youths are into different stuff, both international and national, more international than national ones because we are more exposed to that culture especially around urban area. When it comes to K-pop, the reason it is popular right now is because it is very trendy around the world; it has a lot of things that youth people like; it is very fun, energetic and useful.

Lina: I think Nuha just said it all. It is very catchy for me personally. When it comes to K-pop, the songs are more modernized and something I would want to listen to everyday even though I do not know what they are talking about. I actually do now. But before, I used to not know what they are talking about, but still I would listen to it every day. It is love that K-pop builds inside of us. It is really lovable and exciting.

Kwag: In general, what kind of music or which singer is more often heard on media or offline in Ethiopia? When you think of the most popular singer in Ethiopia, who could that be?

Nuha: Teddy Afro?

Lina: Teddy Afro, yeah. To be honest, we [youngsters] do not concentrate on our music. We do not concentrate on national music. I am not saying there is no singer that has caught everyone's attention. For example, we can talk about Teddy Afro.¹⁶⁴ If we ask every Ethiopian "Who would you like to meet?" and "Who is the best singer in Ethiopia?", they will probably say Teddy Afro because he is just so good singer. But then, nation-wise everybody [younger generation] listens to American songs and K-pop nowadays.

Nuha: These days, our media basically tends to focus on our national ones like any other media in any other country, but if I think about what is trending, as far as we know, was a musician called Sammy Dan¹⁶⁵ and a hip hop artist called Lij Michael. They are trending these days. But basically, not a lot of older generation's people listen to it, but a lot of young people do.

Kwag: Why is there a so much impact among youth on the international music and dance? What is so attractive, for example, about K-pop to you?

¹⁶⁴ Teddy Afro's music genre is Ethiopian music, and his fifth album, *Ethiopia*, reached the top of the Billboard World Albums Chart in May 2017.

¹⁶⁵ Sammy Dan is one of the most famous reggae singers in Ethiopia.

Nuha: Because first of all, I think it is new. If I compare it to the American hip hop culture, it is very different. And it is more approaching to younger people in their pre-teens or teens around that age. It is the kind of music they can listen to, and it has a proper impact also.

Lina: It just makes you feel like very much excited. You get excited even though you do not know what words they are using or what the meanings of it are, but you just get excited. And I think nowadays not just teenagers, but also [others listen to K-pop]. For example, in my house, if I listen to it, my older sister will listen to it, and others and others [will also]. So, basically you have to adapt it, and once you start listening to it, you want to continue listening to it. It has that feeling, it has that vibe where you cannot stop once you start. (laugh) But not only for teenagers these days, but everyone as well. Maybe not for the old generation people, but yeah. It just gets you going through your day. (laugh)

Nuha: What is also different is that a lot of people listen to English music. So when you find people who listen to K-pop music, it is kind of like a community. You feel like a part of something.

Lina: Yep, and you know how they [K-pop singers] have English lyrics in their music so that you can a little bit relate and understand what they are talking about, and so that everyone around the world can listen to it. I appreciate that, too.

Kwag: So, is K-pop the thing that triggered for you to be interested in Korean culture in general? Or is there some other element like Korean dramas and movies?

Lina: For me, first I started watching K-drama when I was in the 7th grade, and that started all. I used to not watch music at all, but then after once I started watching the movie, in the movies, there are OSTs¹⁶⁶ that you hear. And then you feel like, “Oh my god, the songs are such good songs. Really, I want to listen to this song.” One thing led to another, and I found out in KBS World, there is *Music Bank*.¹⁶⁷ So I started watching K-pop, and I thought the first time “Ah maybe they are little children, acting like a little bit this and that.” But then once you start listening to it, you cannot help it. You cannot stop. That is how it was for me. (laugh)

Nuha: For me, I think it is a little bit different than most people because I do not think a lot of people would say that. But thing that actually triggered me to start listening to K-pop and [watching] Korean dramas is my mom because (laugh) she was a fan of K-drama before me. That was when I was 7 years old. She used to regularly watch Korean dramas, and I started watching K-dramas not on KBS World but on a local broadcasting station, ETV - or it is called EBC now. I started watching *Daejanggeum*, *Jew in the Palace*. Yeah, that is how I started it, and then it took me a while before I got into the K-pop because every time I listen to K-pop, I was like, “I do not understand what they are saying.” Okay, one day I was really bored, and I was like, “Okay, let me give it a try.” I remember my first song was by Sistar, and then I started listening. I was like, “Oh, it is actually fun. I do not understand, but this is fun.” So, this is what triggered me to start Korean dramas and K-pop.

Kwag: Then could I ask the reason for you to join MOM Entertainment company?

¹⁶⁶ Official Sound Track

¹⁶⁷ One of the most popular K-pop music TV programs

Nuha: The first reason was because we knew each other through K-pop because they [the founders of the company] used to organize K-pop meetings. So, that is where we first met. This was a group of people trying to make an entertainment successful as the same as the Korean companies do, which was very interesting, and I had faith in it. That is why.

Lina: For me, I used to live in a rural area, so K-pop is not much known. It was pretty much me and two or three friends of mine. Other than that, people have no ideas. Even TVs are big thing. So I grew up in a rural area where people do not have any ideas on this. When I first came to Addis, I started noticing a lot of people actually would watch and have an influence on K-pop, and I was very much interested to be friends with them because they shared something that I love and something that I like. And so, I started hanging out with them, and then this [cellphone] application called Telegram has this group of people who formed a group and who were very much interested in K-pop and K-dramas. So, we started talking to each other on what kind of drama we watch, what is the new trend, what is the new song, who is the most famous K-pop band right now, and everything. We started talking about that, and then accidentally, I hear a friend of mine talking about MOM. And I was so much interested. At that time, I was a grown-up. I was at a medical school, and so I did not have a lot of time. I heard about it, and I wanted to go. And I went there. It was an audition, and I auditioned. I met a lot of people who are really much welcoming and very much interesting.

Kwag: Yeah, I remember seeing the audition video. I was fascinated by all of your audition videos. I could see so much passion and enthusiasm about this music, dance, and rap, and everything was so cool. ... So what do you think is your role in MOM company?

Lina: I am a singer. I am also a rapper. That is pretty much it.

Nuha: I am a singer, a rapper, an acting trainee, and (to Lina) you are also the radio host. And I was (laugh) training to be the TV host.

Lina: Yeah, I also do a radio show. I used to do it.

Kwag: Wow, could you tell me more about it? What the TV show and the radio show about? And how you produced and made your songs, and how you danced, and so on?

Nuha: We produced our song Yekeremit Chewata with the producer Dani¹⁶⁸ and help from an entertainment [company] called Polar Entertainment, and we were able to produce the music and also the music video which we did in Korea. And the dancing part, I participated in K-pop dance cover competitions, which is the KWF, two times. When it comes to the acting, I took the full acting course which was given at MOM, and I finished it. The TV host thing on *Hello Abyssinia*, I co-hosted with Yonathan¹⁶⁹ to present K-pop songs which are trending this week. That was it.

Lina: The radio show was about... You just talk about what is hot topic [about Korean celebrities]. For example, you can talk about who is going to the military or who we are going to looking at on the TV and who is doing what. Basically, it covers news, lifestyle, who is dating who, and who is going to get married and stuff like that. After we talk about that, people [the listeners] get to recommend a song so that we can play it for them. It was fun. The radio show mainly focuses on K-pop, K-drama, and only Koreans.

¹⁶⁸ MOM's main music producer under his stage name Upon

¹⁶⁹ MOM's actor trainee

Kwag: I also heard that you made a song that was an advertisement for a company for radio?

Lina: Yes, it was Panache. It is called Panache. Yeah, we did it with one of the owners of our company, Rahel, and it was really fun.

Kwag: What other activities have you done? Are there some activities that were published, or were you ever on a stage through MOM?

Nuha: We went to a volunteering stage which was for cancer. There was also a concert which is called "Youth for Youth" and Korean War Veterans stage.

Kwag: And Lina, your songs or raps, have they been released?

Lina: Currently, they have not. I am working on that. Ummm we will see what will happen, but currently we are working on that. We are coming up with the song in the future, so I hope it will work.

Kwag: What are the limitations in your activities? What prevents you from having your songs released and making yourself appear on media and performing on stage? What makes it so hard?

Lina: Well at the moment, since we are in Korea right now, we do not know a lot of people. We do not have that much of connection. So we are looking for some support from the media, and if we get that support, I think there will be no problem. I am sure they will like it. ... That is what we are looking for and that is what we are working on, finding a person or a producer or some TV show that can actually just be interested in us, and we are working on that. It is not going to be hard, I am sure. We are definitely going to be finding them soon, but at the moment, that is the big thing for us. And also, we need to be careful because writing lyrics for a song can be difficult. The words or the lyrics has to match with the people who are going to listen to it, and basically, we are in Korea so it has to be something with Korea because we need to catch their attention in order to go global or in order to get support. We need to attract people with Korean words and Korean things. That could be a little bit difficult also, but we are willing to take any challenges that are going to come because that is what we love to do.

Kwag: What do you think Nuha?

Nuha: When it comes to Ethiopia or mostly everywhere else, it is easier for companies and sponsors to help people who are more established and are more known because that is basically going to make more money. But I think there are still problems helping young people or people who are just starting up to help them build and create something although I would say that I was also surprised by people I have met who are willing to help and people who are willing to collaborate to help us. But I still find some troubles with getting [my] work out there for [audience] to listen to. Something is needed to encourage young people to get into the industry.

Kwag: What made you go to Korea? What is your purpose of living in Korea?

Nuha: The main purpose is... first of all, there are a lot more opportunities because you are not limited to a certain thing. It does not matter how, but you get access to the internet, to meet

people from around the world, not only a certain place. If you think of Ethiopia, they currently got also problems in the country whether it is moving around or creating something. There are a lot more opportunities and people we can meet as a company [in Korea].

Lina: I have always been interested in Korea. I have never been interested in going outside of Ethiopia [besides Korea]. And the thing that made me interested was to see if it is true how they [Koreans] live their life is similar to how I see them in the pictures [dramas]. I have always been interested in their culture also because it is a little bit similar to Ethiopia, my country. Like the greetings and some of it was a little bit similar, so I thought this may not be hard. Even if I go there, it would not take me that long to adapt or something. So yeah, that was one of the reasons. Since the day I started listening to K-pop, I have had a feeling that if I go to Korea I will meet them [K-pop stars]. Unfortunately, I have not run into one of them, yet, but I am sure pretty much soon that I will.

Kwag: I hope so, too. What are the things that you have achieved while in Korea?

Lina: So far, we have been on a radio show on MWTV (Migrant World TV). Also, we have been doing busking, which was really interesting and fun, and people were kind enough to hear us sing in Hongdae. I did Nicky Minaj song, and people were like, "Oh my god, she is doing rap." And so they were like very much (laugh) interested, and [they asked], "Can you do a Korean song?" We tried a little bit. Also, there is a TV called Africa TV, and somebody we knew from there. We asked them if we can join, and she asked us if we can join with them. And so, she took us to the palace, and I tried on the dress *Hanbok*, and it was really beautiful on me (laugh). We went around; we had street food *Tteokbokki* and *Kimbab* which is my favorite. And people were commenting live on what we were doing, all that stuff, and they were appreciating us and talking about how beautiful we are (laugh).

Nuha: I am trying to produce songs because I have been writing songs, which are around 4 songs till now, and I am still working on them. We have been able to get an environment where we can record with a mic and necessary things to record.

Kwag: What about the song, Nuha, the one you shared on your Facebook timeline?

Nuha: Yeah, it was a collaboration even before I started MOM. He was a person I knew from the states, who did songs. And I did not really do much; it was more like only for the hook part, that is what I did. It has been almost like 8 months and stuff, and he is also a coming-up artist who is currently working in the US. And the song title is *Interlude*.

Kwag: What are the participant artists' names, and who did what? Who sponsored the cost, and how successful was it including the album sales profits?

Nuha: The participants are Eisum, Nuha, Nasjey and Hi-def. Eisum did the producing and also rapped, and we all wrote our own lyrics. Nobody sponsored the song; it was done on a laptop. It was successful but not profitable because nobody was able to help with the production and mixing, so it was not released; it was only on SoundCloud.

Kwag: I heard from Kedir that you guys are trying to do a collaboration with American singers, musicians. How is that going?

Nuha: Yes, we are. Currently, [we are looking for] anyone to collaborate with. Maybe it could be a come-up artist or just an artist who has been there [the US]. But I think it is coming along not as we expected, but it is still good we are having a little bit response. We are still working on it because it takes time to make music and to get where you want things to be I think.

Kwag: Besides that, what are the limitations in doing some sort of activities in terms of entertainment in Korea?

Nuha: I think the main limitation is probably the language because... Not only the language because there are a lot of people that do music here. The industry is more competitive, and you need to work harder and stand out more because there are a lot of people with talent and a lot of people are special. So, in terms of standing out and culture, I think that is the limitation.

Lina: I completely agree. There are like so many people who want to dance and sing and do what we want to do, and it is very competitive. So we have to have our own charm and something that makes us different, and we are trying to figure that out. By the way, we are trying to do cover songs, too, and we are trying to have our own channel on YouTube as well. So, we are trying to come up with a lot of stuffs to get attention and to prove to people that we are different and we actually have something worth showing and worth everyone's time. So, yeah, we are working on that as well.

Kwag: What else did you do in Korea besides music producing?

Lina: We were volunteering at schools for little kids for a cultural exchange. We went there two times. Last time when we went, we did a presentation for Korean kids to know a little bit of Ethiopia, and we basically introduced [Ethiopia]. We talked about everything; we talked about the words between Korea and Ethiopia; and we talked about how long it takes from Korea to Ethiopia; Ethiopian places to visit. We also asked questions at the end of the presentation, and they were really really nice kids who were responding, attentive, and very smart. At the end of the class, we got to enjoy making bracelets, and also we made rings. (laugh) We had a cultural food which we made the kids taste, too, and react to it, which was (laugh) unexpected (laugh).

Kwag: Why unexpected?

Lina: We made them taste this food *kolo*.¹⁷⁰ It is a snack actually. And they tasted it, and some of them did not like it. Some of the kids did not like it. (laugh) We had so much fun, and the kids were so cute and so sweet. I did not want to leave.

Nuha: Yeah, we wanted to go back as soon as we left because they are so innocent and they are so care-free. They are just beautiful.

Lina: When we came to Korea, we were doing a video also. Us going to the street and experiencing everything for the first time of course with the help of *kam-dok-nim*¹⁷¹ Hwang Il-young. He helped us a lot by [spending his] time, offering us to be our cameraman, and moving along with us. It was really hot those days. I remember the weather was really difficult. It was something that we did not experience [before]. He even took that and went through what-

¹⁷⁰ Roasted grain mix of barley, safflower seeds, organic chickpea, wheat and whole grains, and/or legumes

¹⁷¹ A Korean word for "director"

ever we went through, laughing and story-telling. He helped us so much, and we also want to give him a shout-out and thank him for his time and for his kindness as well.

Kwag: What were the videos about?

Lina: It was for *Hello Abyssinia*, of course, [and also] the videos basically were about us: when we got to Korea, what was the first thing that we saw, what did we want to see and how did we react to it, also us going to different places and experiencing, how were our facial expressions and what we thought about, and how happy were we. Just like a reaction video. I think we shot it pretty well because there were a lot of excitements and a lot of emotions going on at the time.

Kwag: I see. Thank you so much for sharing your experiences. My final question is: what is your ultimate goal?

Nuha: My ultimate goal is to reach an audience and to build a relationship with the audience that we are going to have. For music to grow, to have more people listen, and then to enjoy our songs, also to support and promote the K-pop community in Ethiopia. I would love it if we get to have K-pop celebrities come to Ethiopia because there are a lot of fans in Ethiopia. I think it is one of the goals.

Lina: For me, I love to be a singer. I really do. I wanted to become a singer. I love singing. And when I listen to other people's song, I have this feeling that excites me, and I want to be able to create that feeling to other people as well through my music. And I want to create music, and I wanted to do that for people as well. I want them to enjoy and sing along together with or without me. I also want to promote this Ethio-Korean culture either in Ethiopia or in Korea, or around the world basically. And I also want to support anyone who is in the same situation or different to accomplish their dreams and stuff.

Kwag: Wow that is really nice to hear. I really look forward to the results that you will make. I will cheer for you from the distance. Also, please let me know if you had anything else that you wanted to speak up.

Lina: We also want to promote our company because without our company we would not be here and we would not have been enjoying half of our dreams. There are so many just like us with the same dream but still did not get a chance to. We worked hard, and we are here presenting our company that is MOM. In the future, I hope that our company could be that company where everyone reaches out to be able to accomplish their dreams. So, I want to promote and help our company be successful whatever our dreams are and to be able to help others just like how it helped us. And I also want to tell anyone who can help us out to reach us and to communicate with us and talk about stuff with us so that we can get into the industry.

Kwag: Thank you so much for sharing your experiences and opinions. Your input has been more than helpful, and I appreciate your time for the interview today.

Appendix C

Interview Transcript

Interviewer: Minji Kwag

Interviewee: Kedir Nuredin Tuha

Date: March 19th, 2018

Medium: Facebook Video Call

Spoken Language: English

Kwag: Thank you so much for your time and the interview today, and I am just going to ask you some questions about the entertainment industry in Ethiopia and also about your company MOM Entertainment. So, first of all, what do you think is the trend in popular culture recently in Ethiopia?

Tuha: I think we can divide that into two. Like, the traditional and the modern pop culture. And the traditional is the typical Ethiopian culture which is focusing on the Ethiopian instrument, way of singing, and I am talking about music specifically. But the modern one is focusing on the international, global influences like electronic dance musics, rap musics, and others.

Kwag: I see, and can you describe the platform for the Ethiopian youngsters to perform on the stage or on media when it comes to popular culture?

Tuha: Okay, there are not quite big platforms available for the youngsters who are talented. There are a couple of talent shows that are provided with a prize, but besides that, there is no well-organized and built system that can create and construct artists. So, it is like narrow opportunity for the artists to come out to the live.

Kwag: When it comes to the Korean dramas, Korean movies, and K-pop influence in Ethiopia, do you think it's affecting the youngsters in Ethiopia?

Tuha: Definitely yes. As I am an Ethiopian, and I am the youngster also. I am affected by the Korean pop culture, and so many of my friends are. I think definitely the K-pop culture has influenced the youngsters in Ethiopia. And as far as I know, there are more than 12,000 [who are registered as fans on Facebook fan page] in number, and viewers of K-pop or Korean drama or Korean culture, whatever it is, are more than that. And I think it is influencing the majority of the youngsters now.

Kwag: And you are the President of the Korean Fan Club in Ethiopia, right? What are the activities that you have done?

Tuha: We basically have been doing the gatherings, and we have been organizing this competition, preliminary round for auditions like the "K-pop Star" or "K-pop World Festival," and other audition programs. We have been gathering twice a year. And we usually do cover dance for some musics that we like. That is so far what we have done.

Kwag: Okay, and who have you had partnerships or sponsorships with?

Tuha: Most of the Korean companies, including Korean restaurants: Arirang and Rainbow. There are two, and the owner is the same person. Our major sponsors were the Korean embas-

sy and Arirang restaurant, and also sometimes KOICA and also the Korean hospital, Myungsung Hospital. And there are also other industries that helped us like Angels, which is a hair [wig] company. Also, there are many Korean companies that are based in Ethiopia and that participated in our events.

Kwag: Doing such activities, you came up with this idea of establishing a company, an entertainment company in Ethiopia. You said, it is the first of its own kind in East Africa. Is that true?

Tuha: I believe so. I believe so. There is no detailed information about East African entertainment industry as far as I know, and there is no organized system in raising artists or talents in a definite and then constructive way. So, I believe it is the first that focuses on the youngsters.

Kwag: And you started this company, benchmarking the Korean entertainment companies, am I correct?

Tuha: Exactly. Yes, you are right.

Kwag: What are the systems that you benchmarked?

Tuha: Long-term training it was, and a long period of auditioning was also one of the criteria. And providing a lot of various platforms for performance was also the other category, and then linking the culture-based society with international audiences also was the other one. Also, trying to measure the two views in one culture.

Kwag: What do you think is the objective of this company and its members, the youngsters?

Tuha: The main objective was to lay down an infrastructure. Since it is the beginning for an organized-system company, it was to have its infrastructure for other exemplary companies to come and then build an industry in the East African region to have its influence on the global audience and on the international level. The main objective was to create a place for youngsters so that they can do what they are talented for or they are given to do and also to help and enable them to gain what they dream of.

Kwag: I heard that they dreamed of becoming a star after watching these K-pop stars and Korean celebrities?

Tuha: Most of them I can say yes.

Kwag: How many members are there, and what is their age group?

Tuha: Their age group range is between 14 to 22, and totally we have 53 to 55. They are permanent members like trainees that we have now. Some of them are releasing their own first singles.

Kwag: At the beginning, you divided the Ethiopian popular culture into two, saying that there is a traditional part and also there is a modernized part, international one. So, what is the ratio within this MOM group?

Tuha: MOM group, I could say maybe 70:30. 70% modern, and 30% would be the quite typical Ethiopian flavor.

Kwag: The 70% of these group members, what kind of music do they do, or what kind of activities do they do?

Tuha: We have two groups: dancing and performing, and singing groups. When it comes to the singing, we have a new genre. To Ethiopia, it is a new genre. It is called Electro music, which is famous right now. And we named it Ethiopian Electro music, and that is basically what we are producing right now. And the rest, they are performing through dance.

Kwag: What other activities have the company members been doing?

Tuha: We have been producing a TV program that has been promoting Korean culture and Ethiopian culture at the same time. And also we have been performing for various periods of time and various events.

Kwag: What were the limitations in doing such activities as a company?

Tuha: We had two limitations as the main problem. The first one was the financial ability. That was the first and the main problem. The second one was, since it was a new system, we had to do the promotion, too; We had to introduce the system and then we had to work on the system. So there was quite no technician who can well organize and who has been working in that field for a long period of time. Since it was new, it lacked a little bit of professionalism.

Kwag: When it comes to the Ethiopian fan club of Korea, you said there were a lot of sponsors and a lot of partnerships, right? But for this company, are you saying that there are not a lot because you said there is a financial issue?

Tuha: Yeah, there are not a lot. Our projects were quite financially demanding because we were investing in youngsters, and these projects were based on long-term benefit of the program. It was not for a short term, so there were not many sponsors or investors that were involved.

Kwag: So, speaking of the popular culture or entertainment industry in Ethiopia, you are saying, in general, there is less support for youngsters to develop their talents.

Tuha: Yes. Yes.

Kwag: I see. What could be the solutions then?

Tuha: The solution could be constructing and designing this type of company in many various ways so that there could be more opportunities for the youngsters and for the industry to make a blueprint.

Kwag: And that is one of the reasons I am guessing why you brought your company members to Korea? And you are in Korea right now?

Tuha: Yes, exactly.

Kwag: And what have you been doing in Korea as a company?

Tuha: We have been producing musics, new songs, and also we have been shooting music videos. And also we have shot for the new season of the TV show.

Kwag: Is there something else that you want to add to this interview?

Tuha: I see the only solution comes from the Ethiopian government because the only responsible facility is the Ethiopian government for this generation, for Ethiopian people. Not individuals or a company can function as a government. So, I wish the government works on it on cultural base and future-generation base, not focusing only on their five-year term during which they are supposed to be serving the public but also on the future, more than 20-30 years, so that could benefit the next generation which is now the youngsters.

Kwag: Yea, I totally agree with you, and thank you so much for sharing your insights with me. We will finish our interview here, and I really sincerely thank you so much for your time and for the answers to the interview questions. Thank you so much, Kedir.

Tuha: You are welcome.

Appendix D

Interview Transcript

Interviewer/Interpreter: Rahel Solomon Shenkute

Interviewee: Yematende

Date: March 9th, 2018

Location: Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Spoken Language: Amharic

Shenkute: Hello all, thank you so much for your time and willing to participate in this interview. The interview is dedicated to Minji Kwag's master's thesis research on the case study of the MOM Entertainment company in regards of the entertainment industry development in Ethiopia. Could you kindly introduce yourselves?

Yematende: Hi, my name is Mikiyas Teka. I am 21 years old, and I am the team leader of Yematende.

Hi, my name is Eyueal Alemu. I am 19 years old.

Hi, my name is Feraol Arega. I am 19 years old.

Hi, my name is Mikiyas Berhanu. I am 21 years old.

Hi, my name is Dagmawi Zenebe. I am 19 years old.

Hi, my name is Belayneh Tesfaye. I am the dancing machine of the group, and we are the group and of young people who perform Ethiopian traditional dance.

Shenkute: Thank you for your brief introduction. First, I am interested in knowing what made you become interested in the traditional dance and how you formed this group.

Teka: Thank you! Here we all have a special love for our country Ethiopia, you see. There should be a love for you to be interested in a certain thing. Since we love our country, we got to know that our country's traditional dance is also impressive and unique compared to other world's dances. My group members and I have special thought about our culture. And as you know, the beat is very exciting, so our body was able to act on the exciting beats. And we understand the beats and the moves connect our group, through which we were able to understand each other's desire to move with these unique beats.

Shenkute: What do you think is the position of youth in the traditional music and dance industry in Ethiopia? Are youth the main players in the industry? Are the young traditional artists/performers well recognized and represented both on media and in the entertainment platform such as a concert or a performance stage?

Teka: I would say these days, the Ethiopian youth are trying to be outstanding regarding this issue. We are trying to include us to be recognized by the senior artists. I wouldn't deny that there are many things changed, but we lack many things like entertainment companies that are financially stable, and there are only a few of them. Even though I know some progresses are made, there is still no agency [like MOM], and private TV channels like Kana TV are trying to support and give performance stage to the youngsters these days. Many programs are there like Ethio Talent Show which we are stared on. But still, there are many talented youngsters that have a very incredible talent but couldn't rise because there is no one to support them. We would say we are really lucky we have got to know our current agency. But one of our dreams is to build a big artist industry to support the youth with special talents.

Shenkute: Why did you join MOM Entertainment company?

Teka: We joined MOM Entertainment because we had never heard of any agency or an entertainment company [that supports artists] in Ethiopia. Most of the famous artists here got to where they are now through their own efforts, and I can tell it would have been very hard for them. We asked what the [MOM] company could do for us, and we have come to know that having an agency makes many things simple for an artist. We could get many benefits from the company, and through the agency, we believed we could be more active and show our talents to people sooner and more often. And we do admit that the agency has given us many benefits even in this short period of time.

Shenkute: What did you benefit from MOM?

Teka: We have benefited many things from MOM. Like, we have a beautiful training and practice room, which is very convenient to practice in. We were also able to perform on many stages and videos through the company. And we are totally sure that there will be more benefits in the future, too.

Shenkute: You are the finalist of an Ethiopia's national talent show. What do you get when you win the competition?

Teka: We are not sure yet, but we are told that we will be offered a prize and might be sponsored for our new activities. We will have chances to perform with more professionals.

Shenkute: What do you want to achieve as a group and also individually?

Teka: We want to achieve many things. As a group, we want to perform in every corner of our country first, and then go abroad to show our unique and diverse cultures to the world, to the universe. We want to contribute our effort to the development of our country's entertainment industry. Individually after succeeding in introducing our culture to the world, I would like to open as many film companies as possible, and I want to support every Ethiopian who wants to upgrade his/her talent.

Zenebe: I individually always want to improve my talent, and as our leader Mikiyas said, I want to perform all around the world to show our country's culture. I also want to be a trainer after I have improved my dancing skills.

Shenkute: What are the limitations in your activities and projects?

Teka: If you are asking about the limitation in reality, as we are beginners, we have a long way to go, and there are many limitations for now. But we think there will be no limitations [in the future]. We want to do every possible thing to achieve our goals, and I am sure nothing can limit that natural ability of ours.

Shenkute: Is there anything else you want to add to this interview?

Teka: As you know, we have made it to the finalist on Ethio Talent Show. This is the beginning. We have many things to show. We are really thankful to our parents first, and our agency and fans for supporting us. We want to kindly ask for more support. For us to achieve our

goals, we need many supports; we expect many supports, and we won't disappoint you regarding our talents. We are always ready to show you something new. Look forward to our upcoming activities. Thank you very much for taking your time and interviewing us. This is another support because we know that there is someone who is curious about our activity. We really appreciate that.

Arega: I want to add something. I couldn't pass without saying thank you to my group members. I wouldn't have made it to this stage if it weren't for them. Special thanks to them, and thank you for interviewing us because I know I couldn't have the chance to say thank you to my members and also my parents. MOM Entertainment is the best. Thank you. Thank you very much!

Shenkute: Thank you so much for being honest and sharing your experience, progress, and all the other things with me today. I appreciate it. Hope you could achieve your dream and represent Ethiopia as young artists and contribute to the development of the country in the entertainment industry.

Appendix E

Interview Transcript

Interviewer: Minji Kwag

Interviewee: Rahel Girma Debele

Date: April 19th, 2018

Medium: Facebook Video Call

Spoken Language: English

Kwag: Thank you so much for your time for the interview today. I am very thankful that you participate in this interview for my thesis about Ethiopian entertainment industry. And as you are the co-founder of the MOM company, I would like to ask you some questions in regard. First of all, before you started this company, what was your previous job?

Debele: I have been a professional singer, a songwriter, and a producer of a movie before I founded the MOM Entertainment company. Before that also, I had my own company, Hammer Film Production. And after me and my friends, including you, decided to establish a company, I closed my previous company and opened the new one, the MOM Entertainment.

Kwag: For how many years were you a singer-songwriter?

Debele: Since around high school age, for more than 10 years.

Kwag: At the time when you were on a stage, how was the environment different for youth singers and senior singers?

Debele: When I was very young, I was singing at high schools and volunteering everywhere, supporting elders and HIV patients. I volunteered everywhere. At that time, so many people gave me good impression and said “you will be a good star.” It was a good atmosphere back then. So many times when I go on a stage, people loved to see performance. But there was no corporate company making stage, good singers, and professional musicians. That was lack of Ethiopian entertainment industry. It is the holdback of the industry. That is why I was always thinking if I found this kind of company, we can solve these problems. That was what I was thinking back then.

Kwag: So the MOM company benchmarks the Korean entertainment companies, and how did you come up with this idea? How did you get to know about the Korean entertainment companies?

Debele: After I saw some kinds of Korean dramas and Korean music. Because I have to world’s music. Because as a musician, I need to learn something from nice music and something from other countries. So I was looking for nice music and movies, and at the time I found Korean dramas. At that time, I owned my other company, and I only produced movie. Since I was also a singer, I searched for fans of Korean music to see who is following this music. At the time, I met my friends, the co-founders, and we decided to work together because K-pop is a big influence for Ethiopian industry and also for all over the world.

I always consider what is in me. When I think of Korea, Ethiopia and Korea have similar culture. And 65 years ago, Ethiopian soldiers went to Korea to support the country during the

Korean War, and that makes me more inspired. And I decided to work on knowing the culture and people of Korea. That is why I started working with the MOM, and we are influenced by K-pop. Thanks to you and other partners, we made it. We did it.

Kwag: That is a very great story. So, what is the system of the K-pop industry that you benchmarked?

Debele: What I like the most from Korean [entertainment] industry is that they make teenagers into a super star. They make them trained and give them stage and everything. They make them professional. They make them a star. That is what I like the most. In our country, there is not this kind of system. No. If I give you one example, I suffered a lot alone to get that stage, to be a singer... because there was no company like this. So I did not want other teenagers and other youngsters to suffer like I suffered before. So that is also what I learned from Korean industry. They give the youngsters power. They support Korean music, Korean industry. That is why it is a big industry now. That is what I like the most and that is what I get from Korean entertainment companies: to develop teenagers, to give them training, and to make them stars.

Kwag: You directly gave them a complimentary vocal training. How often did you do that, and what was the program? What did you teach team?

Debele: I gave them [a group] vocal training every weekend for two days. Because they are full-time students, they need to go to school for 5 days. They need to learn at school as our company is not good enough to support their education. So, they need to follow their family's decision. But sometimes, when they have time, I would go there to give them personal training as well.

Kwag: That is amazing. And there were other trainings such as acting and choreography training. Under which circumstances were they provided? Who were the trainers?

Debele: Actually, we told our friends about how we work because there are so many friends out there who work in the movie industry. For acting training, we invited the professional actors every week, and they gave them training as volunteers. Also our dancers know how to dance. They are creative, and we support them to create their own style. It worked.

Kwag: Even though the trainings were given for free, you still had to pay the rent for the office, and you have had events and some projects to produce music and movies. How did the company afford it?

Debele: You paid a lot, and we all paid out of our pocket. You spent a lot of money there I remember. I am always thankful because you supported this company a lot. As you know, we paid everything from our pockets because we needed to support the kids and they did not have anything although we did not have anything, either. But, we had dream, a big dream.

Kwag: There has been a TV program that MOM produced, and there have been 7 singles released. So didn't company get any revenue from those activities?

Debele: So many people knew the music, but you know what other problem is in Ethiopia? It is copy right. We make music, but some other people make income from that because they sell it in the black market. They copy and combine it, and they sell it. That is one of the big-

gest problems in the industry in Ethiopia. People loved the music and singers, but we did not get anything from that.

When we lived in Ethiopia, we had a plan to make a big stage for performance, for concert, which did not work at that time. So, we did not make any money, but only promotion. So many kids know MOM Entertainment. MOM is known among youngsters for Ethiopian music, but we did not get anything. In terms of dream, we can see we achieved a little bit like one step for work because we can see our music in media.

When it comes to our TV show, we produced and gave the episodes to the station, they were not willing to share the profits gained from advertisements. That is how bad Ethiopian industry is, and that is how Ethiopian seniors are going back. That is why [the company did not earn any money].

Because only a few people are rich and powerful, they make treat others as workers not as professionals. They do not treat us as professionals. That is why we cannot make money. Because we worked on the TV program, but they did not pay for us. Even the system is so bad.

Kwag: Even when the TV program had a sponsor, when the program had advertisements...

Debele: They lied. They lied. There was Coca Cola advertising included on our show, but they lied.

Kwag: The sponsors. Even if the first company that sponsored the TV show did not work out, the company tried other potential sponsor companies to reach out. How did it go and how did it fail?

Debele: We tried a lot of companies. We sent a lot of proposals, and we even presented everything about our company. But, you know, this is a new idea, this is a new thing. For them, it is an impossible stuff, thinking “what is this” and “they are young.” They had this kind of thinking. We convinced them, but still, they did not want to give a sponsorship because we are young. (laughter) That was so hard. That was so hard.

Kwag: How the support from the Korean embassy? Did the company use to cooperate with the Korean embassy?

Debele: Yeah, we always used to work with the Korean embassy [as a fan club before establishing the company], but they are not willing to support us. Whenever they call us, whenever they want something, we always supported them. But when we ask for their support, the embassy says “oh, it is a business, we should not support a business.” But whenever they need us, they call us. And we never say no to them. (laughter). We never say no.

Kwag: How about the major Korean corporations that have branches in Ethiopia.

Debele: Ah... It is a big history. One time, I was disappointed by a big company like Samsung and LG working in Ethiopia. Even though our work is related to Korea and we also support K-fans, learn something and everything from Korean industry, and want to make our industry like them, they do not want to and are not willing to support our company. That was a big shame. Yea, I was disappointed at that time. But at a K-pop festival 2 years ago, the Korean embassy called us, and we were supporting the event. At that time, LG supported the

event because of the embassy, not because of us. But we gathered almost all people, and all dancers belonged to our company. That is so funny.

Kwag: What other limitations do you think there are within the company's business?

Debele: Everybody knows we have to pay for training, center, and even sometimes for kids' transportation, and so many stuffs, but still we could not make money for that. If we get some stage like a training center and good trainers, we can be a big entertainment company, and also, we can support the kids. But, we could not do that because we do not have supporter. So many problems.

Kwag: Going back to the discussion of trainees, how did you select the trainees? What was the procedure?

Debele: First, when we hold an audition, I need to see people's dream and passion because they can make it big by training. All I need is passion and confidence. That is what I like the most because anybody can make their voice good through exercise. Now it is a technology era, so people can be a singer or a dancer through training and exercise. I always saw people's passion.

Kwag: That is why you made them sing in a public place for an audition, right?

Debele: Yes, (laughter) because I need them to expose themselves. They start from one place by promoting themselves. They can start from one point like we did in a café. Something like this. All I need to see is passion.

Kwag: I totally agree. How many auditions have you had for the MOM company?

Debele: There were a lot, but we selected like 65 kids because we cannot handle more than that. Every day and every weekend, people are coming, and they ask us if they can work with us and ask for our favor. But, we could not handle that because of our financial status and everything.

Kwag: Not only the trainees, but also there are supporters, like volunteers who helped the company when there is an event. So, total how many are there in company who are supporting and participating?

Debele: 5 board members, co-founders, more than 65 trainees, and some supporters more than... I do not know. We always talk to people around, and they promise us something and sometimes they come out to support. And there are so many people out there. I am not sure about the number.

Kwag: When you were going to Korea, you brought two talented youngsters with you, Nuha and Lina. What do you see out of them? What do you think they can achieve in Korea?

Debele: It is like a different way. Before, when I was living in Ethiopia, if they get a chance to live in a country like Korea or the USA, [I thought] they would be like a big hit. But, after we came here, they did not show what they have. They did not do like what they did before. Still I believe that they can sing, dance, and write their own songs; they can do so many things.

Kwag: So, in Korea, they have to start from zero.

Debele: Yes. That is why.

Kwag: As a company, what do you want to achieve in a short term and in a long term?

Debele: I spent half of my life (hollow laugh) on this entertainment. But, as a company, I need to achieve an international entertainment [industry]. We want to show our cultures, organizing events with another culture like Korean and making a big collaboration. And I want to show that there are a lot of cultures in our country, and there are a lot of music styles. I want to promote that in other countries. If we work like before, we can do that. I need people here; we need people here to support that and to cooperate with our company to make it big, to make it international. Because we have a different music and a different culture that we need to show all the world. Yeah, we can make it big in a long term. In short term, we want to establish the company again in Korea. If we get sponsors and supporters, we will invite some of the talented young kids from Ethiopia. We can make collaboration here; we can make a big festival and culture exchanging event in short term. That is what I want, and that is what we want I think.

Kwag: I definitely agree with you, and I believe in the dream that you have. If you try, there is nothing that you cannot achieve. I hope the company gets the supports that it needs, and I hope that the company members try their best to achieve it.

Debele: Yes, I think so, too. You did a lot.

Kwag: Thank you, and was there something else that you wanted to mention for this interview?

Debele: Uhm, I respect Korean people, and now while I am living in Korea, I saw so many nice things here, and I learn so many things from Korea. Every system, everything, and every business aspect. I really love that, and I want to share this experience with my country as well as exchange because there are so many nice things in Korea.

Now I am working in a club while I am living [here]. I want to invest something in Korea, and I am investing in club business because there is musician and music. My key role in my job is always contacting with entertainment and music. So, even I invest money with a Philippian girl and share Coyote lounge in Osan, American [military] base area. That is good, and I meet so many professionals as well, even Korean celebrities when they come. And I promote our company and everything because I want to promote our company and our motif while we are living in Korea. And on the way, I need to invest in working because I want to support myself.

Kwag: So, in Korea, you already made a big step by founding a platform for the artists to perform and to show their talents. That is really awesome.

Debele: Success is on the way in our life. First, we need to support our life, then on the way, we need to support our vision and our dream to make it come true. That is like, everyday we put small thing, and we can get whatever we want. The big dreams.

Kwag: That is really good to hear. Thank you so much for your time today. It was an amazing interview with you, Rahel, and I hope everything goes as you planned or even better.

Debele: Thank you so much. You did a lot for us and for this company, and I hope we will make what we dreamed before.

Appendix F

Survey Research

Organizer: Minji Kwag

Respondents: The Most Active Members of Korean Fan Club in Ethiopia (n. 31)

Date of Publish: March 19, 2018

Date of Data Collection: April 18, 2018

Medium: Facebook page of “Korean Fan Club in Ethiopia”

Spoken Language: English

Questions and Answers

No.	What is your age?	What is your gender?	When did you become a Korean fan (what year)?	How did you first get to know about Korea?	Through which medium have you encountered Korean culture so far?	What do you like about Korean culture?	What are the similarities between Korean and Ethiopian culture?	What is your goal/desire/hope as a Korean fan?
1	19	female	2010	K-pop, K-drama	KBS World	Everything	The respect between families, the greeting styles, the respect for older people, the family structures and the overall way of life	To meet INFINITE in person
2	20	female	2012	K-pop, movies	KBS World, communicating with fans	I like Korean culture because it is about respect towards one another and it shows us the values of our seniors that our cultures matter and they make us what we are.	The similarities are the part people in both countries have strong sense of respect towards their culture and respect is the major foundation for them at the same time they both have amazing cultural foods and dances.	As a Korean fan, my desire is to explore and know more about Korea and also get the chance to explore the country and participate in many programs that will enhance my knowledge about Korea. I believe what I know is far less than what is out there. I would love to be part of it.
3	18	female	2010	K-pop	Arirang TV	I like how people respect one another and their passion about their work and I like the beauty of their history.	They have a lot but to mention some, the respect we both have for seniors.	My goal is to experience every little thing I cannot here and to be able to offer the same for the newer generation of this fandom.

4	22	female	2010	K-drama	KBS World, Arirang TV, YouTube	Respect for one another, the food, the music, the language; everything about the culture is my favorite.	The greeting ways and also the respect you have to give for the elderly person which is very common thing in Ethiopia as well. Also, people call their names by the first born. For example, Lina's dad or Lina's mom.	I just want to experience Korea in person and find out more about what everything is than just by looking at my TV. Also, to meet some of the people [Korean celebrities] and appreciate them for making my day every time, show some love to them, and tell them that they are doing a good job.
5	24	female	2014	K-drama	KBS World, Arirang TV	Their respect for their elders and beauty and fashion	Our respect for elders	
6	20	female	2009	K-pop, K-drama	KBS World, Arirang TV, YouTube, Hello Abyssinia	I love everything about Korean culture, but just to mention a few, starting from taking off your shoes when you enter home, the traditional clothes (hanbok), the food especially bulgogi, traditional songs like Arirang, and most importantly the hard working and respectful people!	Some of the similarities between Korean and Ethiopian culture are both having their own unique alphabet, the traditional food and clothing, having respect for elder people, way of greeting and even, surprisingly their grammar when they answer to yes-no questions!	My first goal as a Korean fan is to meet in person my favorite actors and K-pop idols, especially Kai! I would also like to show them how much we love them and that there are so many fans here in Ethiopia who are always supporting them.
7	19	female	2010	K-drama	KBS World, Arirang TV	I like their traditional foods and hanbok, and respect for elders.	Ethiopia and Korea are similar in social bases. Water closet is mostly their interaction with people.	My desire as a K-fan is to go to Korea and live as Koreans, eat Korean food, speak Korean, and attend idol fan meetings and concerts, especially EXO's.
8	24	female	2009	K-pop, K-drama	KBS World, Arirang TV	I love everything about Korea, especially their culture. The elders respect the young, and the young respect the elders. I love the food and their dressing style.	Korea has a beautiful cultural place and cultural dressing as same as here in Ethiopia. And Koreans like coffee, and Ethiopians also do.	Going to Korea is my goal, as well as going to historical places and meeting my favorite actress Jiwon Ha!
9	19	female	2010	K-pop, K-drama	KBS World, Arirang TV, YouTube	I love the food, the complete devotion to culture and the language.	Ethiopians and Koreans both place a high importance on respecting the elderly.	As a fan, I would love to go to Korea (especially Busan, Seoul, and Jeju) and visit all the awesome historical places.
10	21	female	2011	K-drama	KBS World, Arirang TV	Respect for the elders, the food, cultural music, and cultural dress.	The similarity between the two countries is respecting the elders and parents a lot.	I like to learn Korean standard language, and I like to see K-pop stars on stage.
11	18	female	2013	K-drama	KBS World	I love their respect for each other.	Both Koreans and Ethiopians	I wish I could go to Korea and

							have deep respect for their culture and also respect seniors a lot.	meet idols and experience Korean life style, but most of all, I really wish Korean culture will spread in Ethiopia.
12	27	female	2007	K-drama, variety shows	KBS World, Arirang TV, YouTube, and different websites (Kcinema, Asiadrama, ...)	The cultural clothes, foods, the respect for elderly and senior people, and the traditional games	Having own unique alphabets, clothing, food, and respect to elder citizens.	As a K-fan, I would like to visit and explore Korea to learn more about the culture, meet the actor/actress that I admire the most, have experience of different food taste and visit culture places.
13	20	female	2010	K-pop, K-drama	KBS World, Arirang TV, Hello Abyssinia, YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and other social media	Almost everything like the K-industry, the mesmerizing old stories of the kingdoms (Baekje, Silla, Goguryeo), amazing road street foods (<i>goguma</i> , <i>tteokbokki</i>), technologies, kindness and respect they have, noraebangs (singing place where you let go of your stress), the beauty products they make and their amazing styles, the traditions they follow (<i>doljanchi</i> , the event they do on the 1 st birthday of a baby), the beautiful seasons especially spring, the seas and Han river, and the outdoor activities they enjoy like hiking and bungee jumping, etc. There are a lot of reasons to say.	The similarity is that both have kindness.	As a Korean fan, I just want to do great on my life like having the respect and working hard. Plus, hopefully, if I get a chance, I want to visit Korea and experience all the things I dreamed about.
14	24	female	2010	K-pop, K-drama	All, ICT KAIST Volunteers, Korea Festivals	Their respect for elders and cultural clothes	Respect for elders and value they give to their families	To visit Korea
15	19	female	2007	K-drama	KBS World	I like Korean culture because I can feel the past, the present and the future in just one Korea.	The similarities between Korea and Ethiopia are they are both very respectful for their culture and traditional clothing, and their passion towards their country.	My desire as a K-fan is to attend Korea University and experience the things that I have seen only on TV in person.
16	24	female	2009	K-drama	KBS World, Arirang TV, friend	I love all about the Korean culture, especially the outfits and the foods, even the language.	Korean and Ethiopian culture have a lot in common for example, the cultural clothes, the	As a Korean fan, I really want to be recognized like the fans in other countries, and I hope the

							food and the language. We both are unique, and we have our own compared to other countries.	concerts will be held here in order to see our favorite artists.
17	19	male	2013	K-pop	KBS World	Their clothing, dining system (food and table manner), and the way of greeting.	Their respect for their elders	To attend a concert of my favorite K-pop groups
18	24	female	2008	K-drama	KBS World, YouTube, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Naver Webtoon and Daum	Manner and clothing	Respect for the elderly and having the country's own alphabet, food, and drinks.	I want to make a deep learning about Korea. I do not want to be a fan by name; I want to study Korean studies further so that I get to know about Korea better and can answer any questions that come from new K-fans who do not know about Korea that much.
19	19	female	2009	K-drama	KBS World, Arirang TV	Cuisine, architecture, clothing, ceremonies	Social life	I hope we can interact people to people more.
20	22	female	2012	K-pop	KBS World, Arirang TV, Instagram, Twitter, Webtoon, friend	I love Korea because of the different and variety stuffs they have like the culture, language, cuisine, cultural clothes, and the way they hold different types of ceremonies. Their manners and respects for others and how hard working and dedicated they are!	The similarities are both of them have their own culture and language unlike other countries.	As a fan, I want the K-pop to capture the heart of the world. I want our idols to be known all over the world because they are our pride! And I am sure in the coming 2-3 years, they are going to conquer the entire planet!
21	18	female	2006	K-drama	KBS World, Arirang TV, friend	Greetings, respect, and fashion style	Respect-wise and greeting-wise are very common in Ethiopia and Korea	I want to shop in Korea because I love their style.
22	22	female	2011	K-drama	KBS World	Their greeting, the food, fashion, language ...	Both of them have respect for the elders and love their culture or country	To visit Korea
23	18	female	2010	K-drama	KBS World, Arirang TV, my mother and older sister	Respecting old people and seniors	I think our greeting is the same	Meeting GOT7 (it is my life goal), also visiting JYP building and attending JYP Nation concert. I hope I will one day.
24	18	female	2009	K-drama	KBS World, Arirang TV, YouTube	The respect, the blend between old and new, how much they love their country, and so on.	How they eat gathered around a table and the respect for older people	I would like to visit Korea and learn the language (reading and writing).

25	19	female	2005	K-pop, K-drama, K-movie	KBS World, Arirang TV, YouTube, AsianTV	Everything, the manner especially, the traditional dress, food, etc.	Parents are too protective.	As a Korean fan, I want to introduce Korea in our country because there are a lot that people do not know about Korea and their amazing culture. And I want [Ethiopia to host K-pop] concerts like other countries. Since there are not many fans, Korean celebrities cannot come here. I want to let the Korean celebrities [know] that they have many fans here in Ethiopia, too.
26	22	female	2009	K-pop, K-drama	KBS World	Their manners and respect for others, their hard-working habit and food.	They have their own culture and language.	I want our <i>obbas</i> [favorite male celebrities] to be known all over the world.
27	23	female	2009	K-pop, K-drama	KBS World, Ethiopian local channel	Mostly I love the food, the language, the etiquette that they have in general, and how they show their respect to the elders.	I think the main thing both countries have in common is etiquette and respect that we have for elder people	My goal as a Korean fan is mainly visiting Korea and attending my favorite K-pop group's concert or fan-sign event.
28	20	male	2006	K-drama	KBS World, Arirang TV, YouTube, Facebook	They have this thing called respect in a more advanced way, and the way they treat people plus the clothing is just off the chain.	Actually, to be honest, there is not much similarity that is why even [K-pop] fans like to watch dramas because they like to see what they do not know.	To go [to Korea] and meet Hyolyn and Lisa
29	17	female	2008	K-drama	KBS World, Arirang TV, EBC (ETV at the time, an Ethiopian local TV), mother	I love the family culture, the respect, the depth in <i>hansik</i> (Korean food), and the politeness of people. I like being able to relate to the Korean art without [knowing] the language which I do know now though.	The hierarchy. They are both beautiful countries with beautiful sceneries and beautiful people.	As a Korean fan, I want to bring K-culture [much] closer to Ethiopia. I want us to be able to bring all our favorite stars to our country.
30	26	female	2008	K-drama	KBS, Arirang TV, YouTube, WatchAsian	Respecting each other and being mannerly. Hanbok is my favorite traditional clothes. I love all Korean traditional food.	The similarities are respecting your elders, and as we all know, we call our older sister <i>onni</i> in Korean. We have the same way of addressing our elder brother and sister in Ethiopia, which is really lost at the moment in	To live in Korea, to learn how Korea got big as of today, to learn Korea's hard-working culture, to love them more, and to be a native speaker. The great deal and special relationship between Korea and Ethiopia

							urban, but this might still be reflected in rural areas. And also, husband and wife calling each other with the elder son's name. For example, Jihoo's mother/Jihoo's dad/Jihoo's father. We have same traditional way of couples calling each other in the rural areas in Ethiopia.	was the Korean War where Ethiopia participated, and I hope all Korean and Ethiopian coming generations are aware of it because it is not much concentrated on though it could have made the two countries friendlier. This is one great point and deal between Ethiopia and Korea.
31	24	female	2009	K-drama	KBS World, Arirang TV	Their cultural food is so amusing and their cultural clothes are just so beautiful. And their manner towards others is so example setting. I mean, the way they say hello to others is so respectful and all.	The way we respect our mom and dad, and older people, our cultural clothes, and a lot of others.	Going to Korea, meeting up with all my biases especially GD, trying all the foods there, and going to Busan

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