

**BEHIND SOUTH KOREAN COSMETIC SURGERY:
ITS HISTORICAL CAUSES AND ITS INTERTWINED RELATIONSHIP WITH
KOREAN POP CULTURE**

by

Yuqing Wang

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of the University of Delaware in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Liberal Studies

Spring 2015

© 2015 Yuqing Wang

All Rights Reserved

ProQuest Number: 1596907

All rights reserved

INFORMATION TO ALL USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.



ProQuest 1596907

Published by ProQuest LLC (2015). Copyright of the Dissertation is held by the Author.

All rights reserved.

This work is protected against unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code
Microform Edition © ProQuest LLC.

ProQuest LLC.
789 East Eisenhower Parkway
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106 - 1346

**BEHIND SOUTH KOREAN COSMETIC SURGERY:
ITS HISTORICAL CAUSES AND ITS INTERTWINED RELATIONSHIP WITH
KOREAN POP CULTURE**

by
Yuqing Wang

Approved: _____
D. Heyward Brock, Ph.D.
Professor in charge of thesis on behalf of the Advisory Committee

Approved: _____
Jeffrey L. Richardson, M.A.
Interim Director of the Liberal Studies Program

Approved: _____
George H. Watson, Ph.D.
Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences

Approved: _____
James G. Richards, Ph.D.
Vice Provost for Graduate and Professional Education

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This thesis represents not only my work at the keyboard; it also represents a milestone in more than one year semester of research studying at University of Delaware and specifically within the Liberal Arts program. Throughout this semester, I have learned writing skills, resource allocating and logical organizing capability of the contents. Applying these techniques and skills from the classroom, I decided to compose a thesis that can present the current frenzy of the South Korean cosmetic surgery industry, tracing its historical sources that generally ignored by the western news reports.

The research was launched with helps and supports from several my liberal arts professors. First and foremost, I wish to thank my advisor, D. Heyward Brock, the erudite professor of the English department at UD. He has been supportive since the days I began working on the outline of the thesis. Ever since, Dr. Brock has supported me not only by providing research support over a year, but also academically helped me through the road of composition to finish this thesis.

I would also like to express my gratitude to Dr. Karen Rosenberg, for her wise feedbacks and knowledgeable suggestions to my thesis. As a renowned anthropologist, her professional scholar researching style also helped me keep my approach to composition in check. Her insights towards human evolution and the course of women

social development have contributed an incredible amount of improvements to the thesis as well.

A sincere acknowledgement also goes to my graduate thesis committee, who has provided me with invaluable assistance and direction in assembling the paper with correct format. Ms. Eileen Burget in particular, took many disparate sections of the thesis into attentive consideration and informed me with more proper academia fashion. Without her help, my interest in investigating the cosmetic surgery industry could not be formatted with professional style.

Finally, my sincere thank you goes to Mr. Sean Crowley, who is a professional cinematographer himself and who has helped me over the thesis topic development. During the most difficult times when writing this thesis, he gave the instructive guidance and morale support to continue moving on.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES.....	vi
ABSTRACT.....	viii
Chapter	
1 INTRODUCTION.....	1
2 THE POPULARITY OF COSMETIC SURGERY IN SOUTH KOREA.....	9
3 HISTORICAL CAUSES.....	20
Anti-Japanese Nationalism.....	20
IMF Financial crisis.....	26
Bankruptcy.....	28
Massive Layoffs.....	29
Surgery as Psychological Therapy.....	32
4 KOREAN POP AND THE COSMETIC SURGERY INDUSTRY.....	37
Origin of K-pop.....	37
K-pop Frenzy.....	38
K-pop and Cosmetic Clinics.....	39
5 THE IMPACT OF KOREAN COSMETIC SURGERY INDUSTRY.....	45
Impact I: Medical Tourism to Korea.....	45
Impact II: Increasing Job Opportunities.....	48
Impact III: Individual Identity Crisis.....	50
Impact IV: Pressure and Younger Generation.....	54
Impact V: High Risk of Cosmetic Surgery.....	57
6 CONCLUSION.....	63
REFERENCES.....	68

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1 Identical Faces.....	7
Figure 2 Highest Plastic Surgery Rate.....	9
Figure 3 Plastic Procedures per Thousand Population.....	10
Figure 4 Nation Surgery Ranking.....	12
Figure 5 Facial Surgery Ranking.....	13
Figure 6 South Korea Cosmetic Surgery Number.....	14
Figure 7 The Number of Medical Tourists to South Korea.....	15
Figure 8 Gangnam District.....	17
Figure 9 Clustered Surgery Clinics.....	18
Figure 10 Double Eyelid Surgery Patients.....	24
Figure 11 The Close-Up image of Eyelid Surgery.....	24
Figure 12 Macro Economic Indicators in Korea.....	27
Figure 13 Financial Conditions of Korean Chaebol.....	28
Figure 14 Sample Korean Resume.....	31
Figure 15 Auspicious Eye Shape.....	34
Figure 16 Before and After Surgery: Actress Kim Nam Joo.....	39
Figure 17 Before and After Surgery: Park Min Young.....	40
Figure 18 Before and After Surgery: Kwon Yuri.....	40
Figure 19 Cosmetic Surgery Advertisements Everywhere.....	42
Figure 20 Subway is the hub of clinic advertisements.....	42
Figure 21 Facial Contouring Products.....	44
Figure 22 Face Transformation Magic.....	46
Figure 23 Drastic Transformation.....	51
Figure 24 Face Transformation.....	52
Figure 25 Miss Korea Candidates of 2013.....	53
Figure 26 The Offspring and Parents.....	57

Figure 27 Commonly-seen Post-surgery Patients.....	59
Figure 28 Patient Wrapped in Bandage After Facial Surgery.....	60
Figure 29 Jaw Shaving Process.....	61

ABSTRACT

This thesis focuses on South Korea's cosmetic surgery industry. Its discussion covers three aspects: cause of the fast booming cosmetic surgery practices in South Korea; Korean Pop culture as a live advertisement promoting surgery clinics and pressuring more people to undergo cosmetic surgery; and the impact of cosmetic surgery on South Korean society and economics. The thesis challenges some interpretations on Korean cosmetic surgery that western media reports put forward. Many of these reports outline how influenced Koreans are by the "western standards" of beauty and, therefore, are trying to "look more western" through surgery (Kyung Lah, *CNN.com*). This thesis argues that the reasons that account for the Korean surgery boom can be traced to a set of more complicated factors, both historical and cultural. These factors gave birth to aesthetic surgery practice, while Korean Pop culture and stars largely encouraged the continued expansion and growth of the Korean cosmetic surgery industry. Jointly, these two forces together have made South Korea the most surgically-enhanced nation on the planet. In conclusion, the thesis examines the impact of such pervasive beauty surgery practices in South Korea.

Keywords: South Korea, Cosmetic Surgery, Beauty, K-pop

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Based on Dorland's Medical Dictionary, *cosmetic surgery* is one type of operational surgery under the umbrella of *reconstructive surgery*. Reconstructive surgery refers to medical operations on facial and body defects, which might be caused by birth deficiencies, accidents, burns or diseases. Reconstructive surgery is, therefore, intended to correct certain dysfunctional areas of the body. Cosmetic surgery, in particular, is an elective treatment, as the treated areas can perform normal biological tasks but simply lack of aesthetic appeal, or at least deemed by the patient him or herself to be unappealing.

In South Korea, it is reported by the ISAPS (International Society of Aesthetic Plastic Surgeons, *isaps.org*) that nearly 15 million cosmetic surgery procedures were done in 2011 South Korea is, therefore, considered to be the country with the largest cosmetic-enhanced population in the world. Korean aesthetic surgery clinics also reached to an unprecedented scale beyond other countries, with hundreds of clinics clustered in the Apgujeong-Gangnam area alone, which it is known as the Korean "Beauty Belt". This thesis analyzes the causes behind the booming cosmetic surgery treatments in South Korea national wide, and examines the relationship between cosmetic surgery's popularizing and K-pop culture. In this context, the thesis concentrates on South Korea particularly with no regards to other countries such as the U.S., Thailand, or Brazil,

which are also known for their copious use of aesthetic surgery. Nor does the thesis separately discuss the booming male cosmetic surgery¹ in South Korea.

My interest in Korean cosmetic surgery was sparked during my learning K-pop dance. Watching K-pop dance MVs and tutorials brought me to a further exposure to the Korean entertainment industry. The ubiquitous perfect facial features, i.e. big eyes, white skin, high-bridged noses, and sharp V-shaped chins, that almost every celebrity possesses triggered me to wonder: “how could all these people look so perfect but so similar?” Bearing in mind with this question, I started my researches on South Korea beauty culture and found startling statistics on Korean cosmetic surgery practices. For instance, SBS Dateline journalist Jeannette Francis reported that, “on a single street that extends for less than a mile in Gangnam district, there are at least 300 plastic surgery clinics” (Francis, *SBS Dateline*). Such obsession with cosmetic surgery in Korea has invited an array of attention, discussions and debates from news media and academic scholars. Yet a large number of media reports attribute Koreans’ craze for beauty to its pursuit of Caucasian features (Lah, *CNN.com*). For example, one CNN news remarks:

The Chinese and Korean patients are seeking to have a westernized face, high profile nose, slender nice cheekbone and mandible bone.

Another *CNN* report proclaims:

¹ In *Gender, Globalization and Cosmetic Surgery in South Korea* by Ruth Holliday and Jo Elfving Hwang, the research reveals that an increasing practice of cosmetic surgery in male population is emerging in the country.

The majority of facial cosmetic operations performed on Asians are considered "Westernizing" procedures. Two of the most popular, nose jobs (rhinoplasty) and eyelid lifts (blepharoplasty), are specially designed to make these features look more Caucasian (Youn, *CNN.com*).

ABC news states:

Double eye-lid surgery gives Asian mono-lids a 'Hollywood look', and a raised nose bridge is considered as an elegant Western trait (Chang, Thompson, *ABC News*).

Eating Disorders' author, Christine Iijima Hall, also comments that "the facial characteristics of the epicanthic eye fold, a 'flat' nose, and a broad nose bridge are common among Asians. Many Asian women desire to have the double eyelid and the 'sculptured nose' like westerners, so much so that they spend much time and money to adapt their features to such a standard" (Hall, "Asian Eyes", 12).

This thesis contends against the above remarks. It argues against the claim made by media reports from non-Asian countries that Korea's surgery frantic is caused by the "desire to look more like western Caucasians." Certainly, such media observations hold some validity to the shift of Asian cultural perception of beauty that may be influenced by western fashion. Yet, there is an underlying view conveyed by ideas that western

countries are the ones holding the definition of standard beauty and that Koreans are imitating Caucasian facial features.

Nobody is able to define beauty in a homogeneous way, nor is western appearance what Koreans aspire to model and that can drive them to enter into clinics in such large numbers. This thesis argues that an outside interpretation of Koreans' desire to achieve a more "western look" is not one of the fundamental factors fueling the plastic surgery boom in South Korea. As Ruth Holliday and Jo Elfving Hwang have stated, such a claim lacks the in-depth understanding of the factors brought up by contemporary Korean societal development:

Existing research on cosmetic surgery in Korea frames cosmetic surgery [...] as an undesired effort of Western cultural influence...However, this research questions these simplistic explanations. We will show that the meanings and practices of aesthetic surgery represent a process of negotiation between multiple discourses concerning national identity, globalized and regionalized standards of beauty, as well as the symbolic practices of coming of age, marking of social status and seeking success and peer recognition (*Gender, Globalization and Aesthetic Surgery*, 2).

With that being said, to try to model oneself after Caucasian traits could hardly lead to an entire district in Seoul to be clustered with surgery clinics, nor would it make one in five Korean women undergo some type of surgical procedure

(*asiancenturyinstitute.com*). It would not be sufficient reason for vast numbers of parents to bring their teenage daughters for the high-risk, painful medical procedures such as nose augmenting, eye enlarging or jaw shaving/sharpening. Henceforth, this thesis argues that the claim that “westernization” is what have accounted for Koreans’ pursuing plastic surgery overlooks certain important historical and societal causes that have contributed to the rise of the cosmetic surgery obsession in South Korea.

This thesis argues that Korean cosmetic surgery is a commercial product generated through some combined historical and economic factors: Japanese colonization in between 1910 and 1945, Asian Financial Crisis, competition-led lookism culture and encroaching K-pop media advertising. This thesis contends that these historical and economic components are what brought cosmetic surgery into existence; meanwhile K-pop culture and media advertising are what stimulates the continued expansion of the cosmetic surgery industry.

First, Japan’s colonial rule in Korea ignited Koreans’ resentment against Japan. Such resentment triggered the formation of Korean nationalism. Koreans, therefore, are eager to differentiate themselves from other Asians, especially the Japanese ethnicity. Korean stated that their body features are superior to the Japanese and their looks far from typical Asian traits. Second, the Asian Financial Crisis, which heavily injured Korean employment in 1990s, brought even more fierce competition among job seekers. With heavy layoff rates and fewer job openings, the employment market began to also include appearance as one of the selective conditions for hiring a candidate. This practice,

which is still in existence today in the country, requires the applied candidates to attach professional headshot photos at the top corner of the job application form (*jezebel.com*). It is generally considered that attractive-looking people are intelligent, respectable, and higher in social status, who are, therefore, more likely to be selected through the interview and to gain more favor from employers.

Two facts about Korean cosmetic surgery distinguish it from other countries. One is how ‘cosmetic surgery’ is termed in Korean. The Korean work for “cosmetic surgery” is *Seonghyeong*, or *성형*, of which the meaning can only be translated as “reform” surgery. Such a way of referring to cosmetic surgery is quite different from western countries, implying Koreans’ unique perspective towards the procedure: the word “reform”, exerting positive connotations, and is considered a “rebirth of a new life” and makes the individual “transform to be more beautiful” (*eatyourkimchi.com*). Comparatively, “cosmetic” or “plastic” surgery is considered to have a negative connotation as “man-made” or “artificial”. This point will be further illustrated in Chapter 3, *The Historical Causes under Lookism-Drive Society*.

The other fact is that cosmetic surgery is not done as an enhancement of the patient’s original facial features. Instead, the surgery is dedicated to reshape patients’ features to a set form of beauty standards, which are accepted by the cultural-societal perception of beauty. As shown in Figure 1, cosmetic surgery in Korea is more towards molding many women look alike-- all have V-Shape chins, double eyelids, big eyes, and

two plump under-eye belts, which add an innocent, childlike smiling-eye look to the individual.

Figure 1 Identical Faces



Source from: <http://www.allkpop.com/forums/discussion/183269/what-s-the-ideal-korean-look>

This thesis thus consists of four thematic sections: (1) popularity—how widespread is cosmetic surgery practice in South Korea; (2) causes—the history and social evolution attributes that led to the birth of cosmetic surgery; (3) expansion—Korean pop culture and its function as celebrity-endorsed advertisements for Korean plastic surgery clinics; (4) impact—the influence of cosmetic surgery to Korean teenagers, Korean tourism, and its national economy. Based on the thematic sections, the study is divided into six chapters. The first introduction chapter concentrates on the

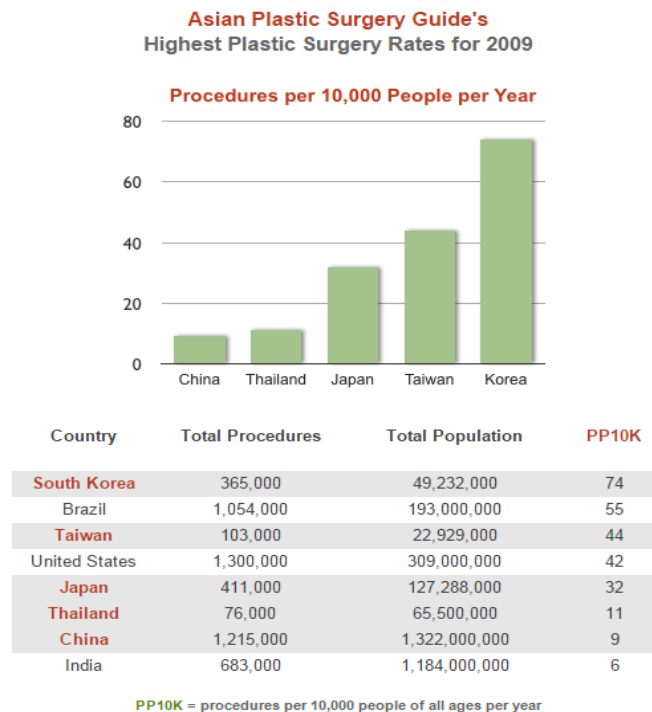
purpose of the thesis, debunking the misinterpretations of Korean plastic surgery and establishing the thesis structure. Chapter 2 presents statistics to answer exactly how popular cosmetic surgery is in Korea. Chapter 3 begins with a brief synopsis of Korean history in order to discuss the historical, economic and social reasons that brought cosmetic surgery into existence. Chapter 4 connects K-pop culture with its cosmetic surgery epidemic to argue that K-pop is a powerful advertising vehicle for surgery clinics to allure the global audience into this beauty capital for surgery operations. Chapter 5 analyzes the impact of the Korean cosmetic surgery boom. It argues that its cosmetic surgery industry brings in large international medical tourists, generating lucrative profits for the Korean national economy. This section also discusses that the pressure of appearance compels younger and younger Koreans to step into operation room in order to look as beautiful as the stars. Chapter 6 summarizes the key arguments in the thesis and points to further research areas and readings that could be explored by readers.

Chapter 2

THE POPULARITY OF COSMETIC SURGERY IN SOUTH KOREA

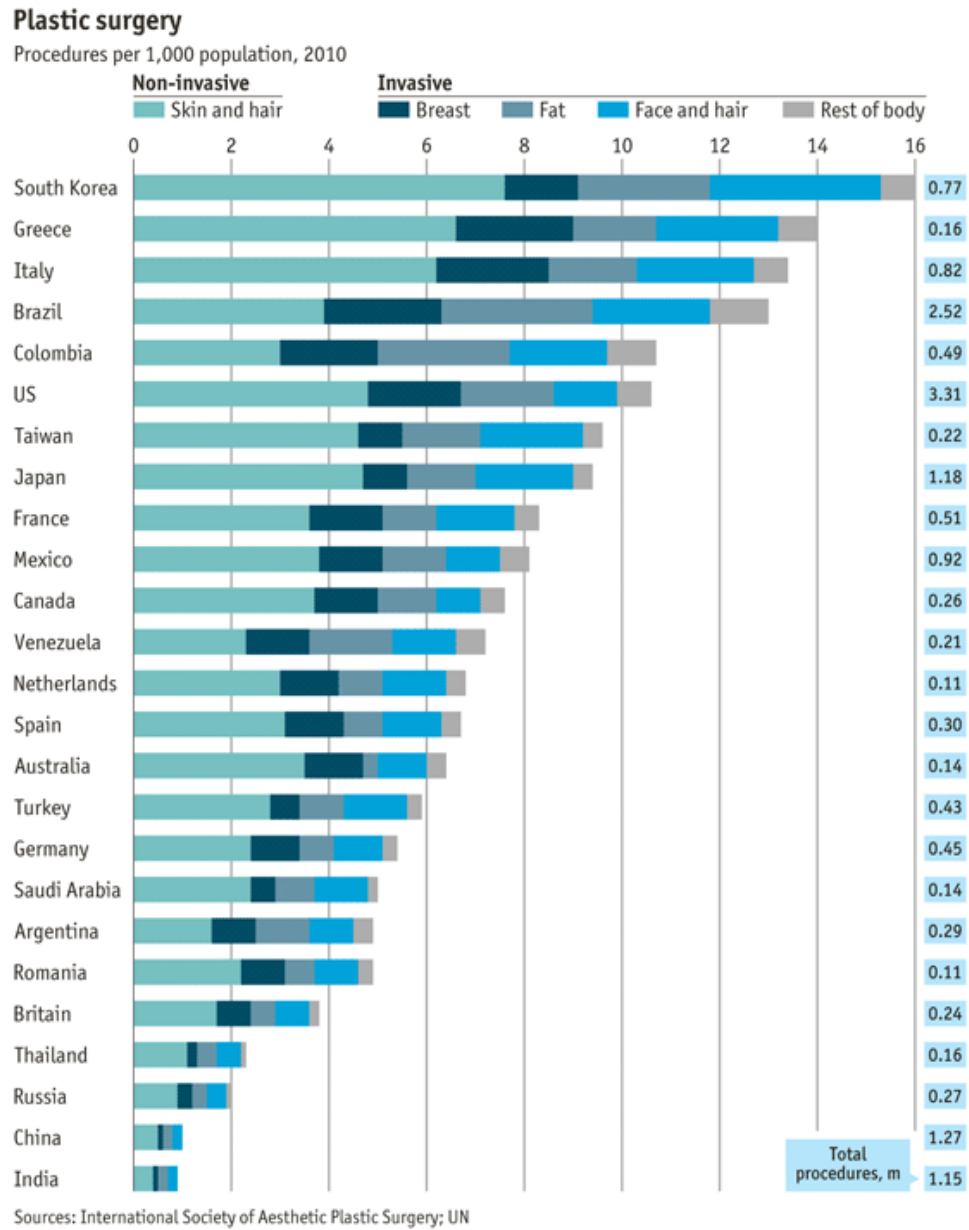
After the release of “ISAPS International Survey on Cosmetic Procedures Performed in 2009”, South Korea is ranked as the number one country with the highest ratio of overall aesthetic surgical procedures in per ten thousand people (PP10K) of all ages per year (*isaps.org*), as shown in Figure 2 and 3.

Figure 2 Highest Plastic Surgery Rate



Source from http://www.asianplasticsurgeryguide.com/news10-2/081003_south-korea-highest.html

Figure 3 Plastic Procedures per Thousand

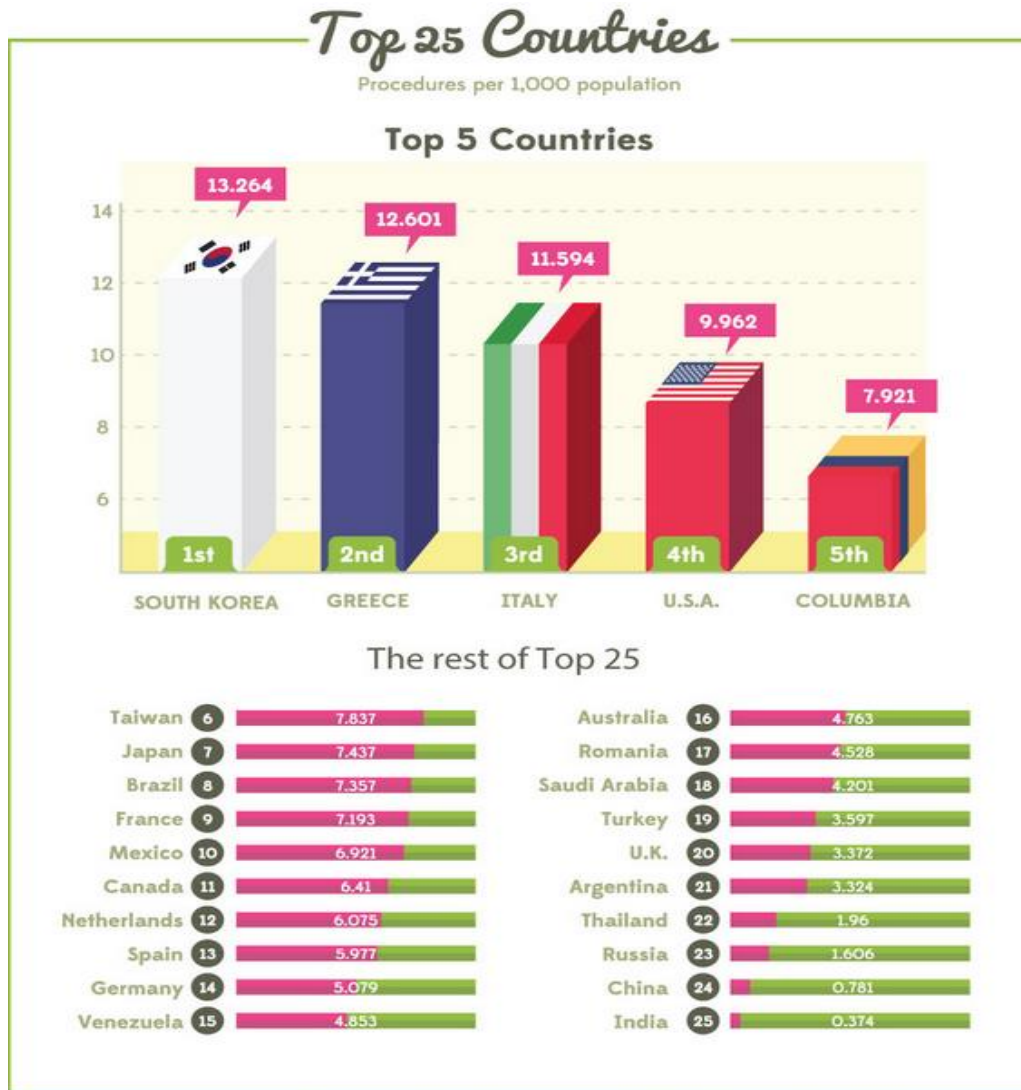


Source from: <http://www.economist.com/blogs/graphicdetail/2012/04/daily-chart-13>

Korea, reported to have 365,000 total procedures, has turned out to boast 74 procedures PP10K in 2010, 1.8 times higher than the number in the United States, which is PP10K of 42 (*asianplasticsurgeryguide*).

In addition, *Seoul Touchup* published a series of graphs that combined its own findings with statistics released by ISAPS survey in 2011, as shown below:

Figure 4 Nation Surgery Ranking



*This map & graph represents 87% of the world's plastic surgeries.

Sources from: <http://www.seoultouchup.com/plastic-surgery-statistics/>

Figure 5 Facial Surgery Ranking

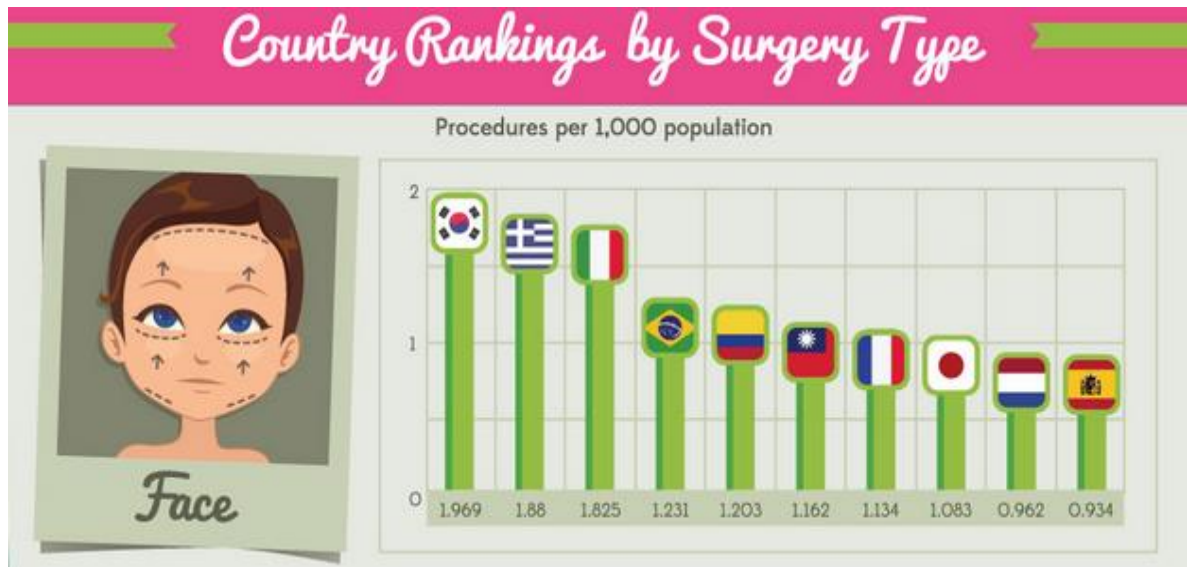
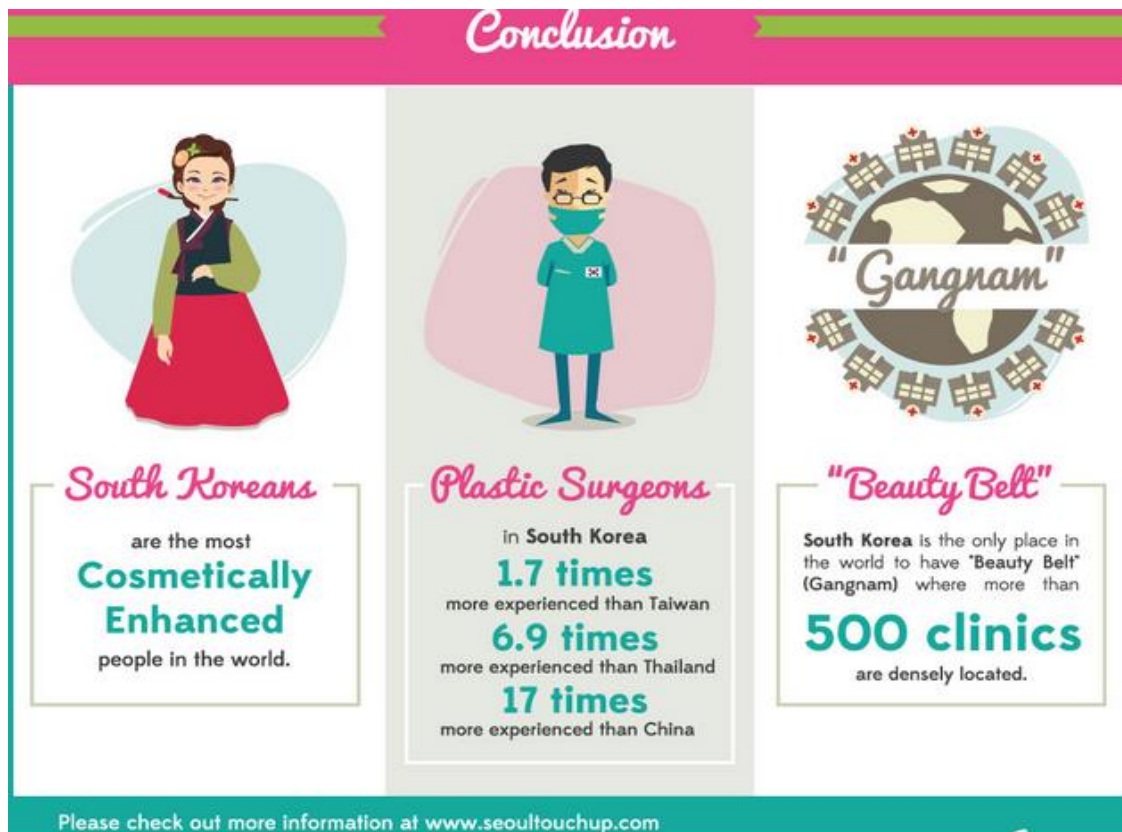


Figure 6 South Korean Cosmetic Surgery Number

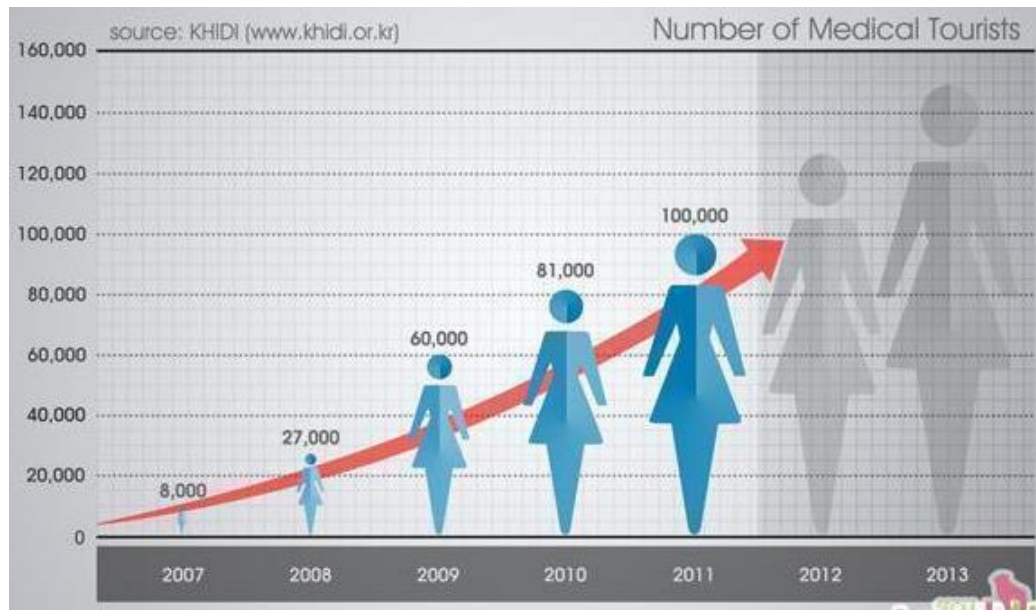


Sources from: [ibid](#)

The actual figure for cosmetic surgical procedures per capita in Korea is believed to be much higher than many of these charts indicate, as argued in the research publication by Ruth Holliday and Elfving-Hwang (*"Gender, Globalization"*, 1). They assert that the clinical data included in the ISAPS's figures only takes into account surgeries performed by accredited surgeons and that a significant number of surgeries have gone unrecorded. There are many procedures unaccounted for in these statistics that

aren't present or as popular in other countries; many Korean beauty salons, spas and "health clinics" offer smaller cosmetic procedures such as facial fillers, blepharoplasty and mole removal laser surgery, which are not recorded by ISAPS as surgical procedures and thus are not included in the survey data above. There is also no official data on how many cosmetic surgery clinics in total there are, because aesthetic surgery clinics are privately owned and not covered by its national health insurance.

Figure 7 The Number of Medical Tourists to South Korea



Source from: <http://www.seoultouchup.com/korean-plastic-surgery-statistics/>

With the highest per capita rate in the world, Korea is known as the world "Beauty Capital." It also attracts millions of medical tourists who fly to Korea to take advantage of its affordable, high-quality surgery. *The Richest* reports that South Korea

racked up \$187 million in revenue from medical tourists in the first eleven months of 2013, which is up 35.3% from the \$138 million earned in 2012. Moreover, the Korean government is expecting to have medical tourists climb to over 1 million with about \$3.2 billion in revenue by the year 2020.

Such lucrative medical revenue and the startling common practice of aesthetic surgery in Korea also have invited tremendous western news media attention. Reporting journals from *The Economists*, *New York Times*, *ABC News*, to *Business Insider*, *the Atlantic* and *NBC* have all dedicated several reports to a spectrum of topics on the cosmetic surgery boom in South Korea. For Instance, *The Economists* cited ISAPS graph to show that South Korea topped the rank of aesthetic procedures practiced in South Korea (Figure 7 above); CNN released several news articles exclusively reporting on the subject of South Korean cosmetic surgery, such as “Welcome to the Plastic Surgery Capital of the World”, “Asia’s Ideal Beauty”, “10 Things South Korea Does the Best”. In these reports, the statistical fact that “one in five South Korean women aged between 19 to 49 have undergone cosmetic surgery” has been repetitively used to demonstrate how normalized such aesthetic medical operation has become (*CNN.com*) in Korea.

South Korean “Beauty Belt” is another manifestation of its saturated cosmetic surgery industry. In South Korea’s capital city, Seoul, the Apgujeong-Gangnam district has its entire area clustered with more than 300 aesthetic surgery clinics (Figures 8 and 9). The “Beauty Belt” is considered to be the magnetic field drawing medical tourists into

Korea. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, up to 750,000 US residents travel abroad for medical care each year (*cdc.gov*).

Figure 8 Gangnam District



Figure 9 Clustered Surgery Clinics



Source from: <http://abcnews.go.com/Lifestyle/south-koreas-growing-obsession-cosmetic-surgery/story?id=24123409>

These surgery clinics are catering to both domestic and international patients. The number of foreigners travelling to South Korea for medical treatment has been increasing by an average 37 percent a year since 2009 and totaled more than 210,000 in 2013 (*medicalexpress.com*). The number of overseas patients that South Korea received in 2012 was 159,000 and is predicted to be three times that in 2015 (MacLeod, *usatoday.com*). In its official report, the KTO (Korea Tourism Organization) states that Korea is expecting to have its medical tourist numbers reach 589,000 in 2015 and 998,000 in 2020 (*imtj.com*).

Therefore, no matter the overall ranking of aesthetic surgery procedures per ten thousand people, or number of patients aboard seeking appearance enhancement, South Korea has won all statistical competitions to be the best in the world. It is thus worthwhile to trace the causes for such obsession with appearance in this country. Digging into its historical development, the next chapter will debunk the notion that having cosmetic surgery is “Korean/Asian’s pursuit towards westernized features” that is claimed or believed by general news reports.

Chapter 3

HISTORICAL CAUSES

Anti-Japanese Nationalism

The first major historical factor that has propelled cosmetic surgery practice in Korea is anti-Japanese nationalism which was formed during the Japan colonial period (Lee, Chong-Sik 98). In the period between 1910 and 1945, Korea fell under the full control of Japanese colonists and experienced heavy exploitation. Many Koreans became victims of Japanese brutalities during this period. As many as 200,000 women were forced to be “comfort women” to Japanese soldiers while men were enslaved and forced to perform manual labor (*amnesty.org*). Japan intended to fully integrate Koreans and totally assimilate Koreans to Japanese culture. “The [Japanese] government began to enlist Korean youth in the Japanese army... Worship at Shinto shrines became mandatory and every attempt at preserving Korean identity was discouraged” (Savada, et. al, 21). Koreans were forced to speak Japanese as they were Japanese colonized subjects; students were not allowed to speak Korean and were only taught in Japanese (Savada, et. al 23).

Such full-scale enslavement during the colonial period contributed to fueling anti-Japan Nationalism and Koreans’ hatred of the Japanese. Henceforth, Koreans’ eagerness to differentiate themselves from the Japanese became one of the most prominent aspects of its nationalistic complexity. This point is illustrated by Ruth Holliday and Elfving-

Hwang in *Gender, Globalization, and Cosmetic Surgery in South Korea*: “national identity politics in South Korea are complex, and cannot be understood without reference to the Japanese colonial period from 1910-1945” (Holliday, Hwang, 11).

Focusing on *un-Japaneseness* and being *real Koreanness*, Koreans sought for national identity, termed as *Han’ gukillon* or as “who are the Koreans” (Pai, *Constructing “Korean” Origins*, 258). In understanding this period, one must mention Yi Kwang Su, the most celebrated literary scholar of the early Japanese colonial era, who presented Koreans as *sonmin* or a “good race”, synonymous to “virtuous”, “high-class”. *Sonmin* is directly opposite to the word for Japanese race, *chosenjin*, which implies “inferior,” “backward” and “servile.” Yi Kwang Su’s declaration clearly reflected Koreans’ “undisputed belief in the evil nature of all Japanese” (Pai, 259).

To differentiate themselves further from the Japanese race, Na Se-jin, the most quoted physical anthropologist, claimed:

The Korean is of medium to tall height, among many races of the world. The neck is thin and long, and because of the superior development of the Korean’s body and muscular structure, the posture is straight and erect. The calf is long, and since every part of the body’s measurement is very even, the Korean head shape is dolicephalic... The face is elongated, unlike the characteristic wide-faced features of the Mongol races... The cranial capacity is on the large side, and the brain weight is also heavy. Therefore, the Korean, who has strong legs, arms, and

body, is taller and stronger than either the Chinese or the Japanese and in addition is very brave (Pai, 260).

Na praised the average Korean for being superior in looks, brains, bravery, stature, and strength to the Chinese or the Japanese. He also made efforts to distance the Korean race from its traditional affiliation to the Mongoloid race by stating that the average Korean physical features more resemble those of western “white” Americans and Europeans.

Korea’s most frequently performed surgery—double eyelid surgery demonstrates the same ideology that Koreans attempt to disassociate with the stereotypical Asian image. Eyelid surgery, known as oriental blepharoplasty, was first popularized in the 1950s in Korea by Dr. David Ralph Millard. He was a commissioned plastic surgeon of the U.S. Marine Corps stationed in 1953 in South Korea. Millard performed a wide variety of reconstructive procedures and had pioneered many facial repairing surgeries of injured soldiers. In his 1955 article “Oriental Peregrinations”, Millard wrote of his Korean translator who requested to be “made into a round-eye” in order to avoid being perceived as a “communist” (Thompson, 98). Millard recorded his view of Korean bodies:

The [eye] lid, hanging as a thick curtain from the supraorbital ridge, is tented toward the nose and held relatively immobile by the bridling action of the epicanthic fold... Yet this shutter action is completely hidden behind the loose

padded oriental fold and takes place without so much as visible crease of evidence. (Palumbo-Liu, 102)

The description suggests a stereotype of discrete, sneaky, hidden-away image of the Asian eyes as Millard continues:

Due to the drop of the upper lid, only the lower half of the eye iris is exposed. This gives the effect of an expressionless eye sneaking a peep through a slit (Palumbo-Liu, 100).

With study and research, Millard thus determined that “the flat nose and the oriental eye were the two features which seemed to lend themselves to the most striking change with the least radical form of intervention. A change to the nose cartilage producing a corresponding effect on the prominence of the epicanthic fold of the neighboring eye” (DiMoia, 179). Millard also said he began to receive similar requests from other Korean patients requesting a round eye and heightening of nasal bridge. Especially as eyes are considered as windows to the soul, or as revealing to a person’s inner feelings and thoughts, to have problematic eyes is more likely to be regarded as having a problematic soul. Therefore, Millard’s “round eye” surgery stirred the first possibility for his Korean military community to break away from the primary marker of Asianness/Asian traits. Koreans’ eyelid alteration and enlargement are means of correcting this mis-reading. Rather than a desire to be white, this is a rejection of conforming to what *Japaneseness* and *Asianness* came to mean.

Figure 10 Double Eyelid Surgery Patients



Figure 11 The Close-Up image of Eyelid Surgery



Source from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bhq-W0itoKM>

Regarding facial features, western females generally have higher cheekbones and a more square-shaped, prominent mandibular angle than the shape possessed by general Asian people. If Korean women intend to imitate western features entirely, Korean cosmetic surgery would not practice the jaw-shaving surgery to make patients face a small, doll-like shape with a “V” chin. Therefore, the standard beauty features that Korea plastic surgery models patients upon are more of the desired, attractive appearance by itself, rather than Koreans’ imitation of western women’s features.

From such a standpoint, Koreans’ pursuit of body image is reinforcement to its self-characterization and self-identity, not an imitation of the western beauty standards. Anti-Japanese nationalism played a significant role in Koreans’ readiness to consider western ideals of beauty standards. Since the Korean liberation in 1945, much effort has gone into highlighting *Korean* self-identity and changing appearances as a way of differentiating themselves from the Japanese. Rather than a pure imitation of western features, people in Korea who have become obsessed with physical perfection, are defiant of any similarity to Japanese physiques and of psychological aversion against Japanese colonialism. “The body has been used as a site for negotiating and reinforcing national identity, showing that Korean’s anti-Japanese nationalism has played an important role in changing how Koreans view their bodies” (*beyondhallyu.com*). In this sense, the pursuit of a bigger rounder eye, with double eyelids, skinniness, and whiter skin is based, to some extent, on the superiority that Koreans claim to have over the Japanese.

However, it is not simply to achieve an unbending superiority against the Japanese colonial historical scar that has led Koreans to undergo cosmetic surgery. Another big contributor is Korea's social competition, which can be traced back to the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis.

IMF Financial crisis

In 1997, the Asian financial Crisis dealt a painful blow to the Korean economy, leading to bankruptcies in major corporations. This crisis is also named the IMF Crisis, referring to the Asian International Monetary Fund. According to the journal article on the causes of the Asian Currency and Financial Crisis that was published by Corsetti, Pesenti, and Roubini, the significant impact of the IMF crisis has had several major consequences (Figure 12):

High Interest Rates—Korea First Bank had to offer interest rates of up to 30% on corporate bonds to attract takers, compared with the rate of 13% in November 1997, three months before the outbreak of the Crisis. The vast majority of Korean manufacturers owe about \$ 300 billion of Won-denominated debt to Korean local banks. In December 1997, the country saw a big deterioration in its business climate, in which 123 companies on the average failed each day, a 1,000% increase from a year earlier.

Figure 12 Macro Economic Indicators in Korea

Macroeconomic Indicators in Korea: 1994–8					
	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Real GDP Growth Rate (%)	8.6	8.9	7.1	5.5	-5.8
Unemployment Rate (%)	2.4	2.0	2.0	2.0	7.0
Inflation Rate (%)	6.2	4.5	4.9	4.5	7.5
Current Account (US \$ in billions)	-4.5	-8.9	-23.7	-8.2	-40.0
Capital Account (US \$ in billions)	-	-	23.3	1.3	-4.0
Foreign Debt (US \$ in billions)	89.0	120.0	164.0	158.0	154.0
Won/Dollar Exchange Rate	789.0	775.0	844.0	1,415.0	1,215.0
(Appreciation rate, %)	2.4	1.8	-8.2	-40.3	16.5
Yield Rate on Corporate Bond (%)	12.9	13.8	11.9	13.4	9.0

Source: Korean Development Institute.
Notes: Figures for foreign debt, exchange rate, and bond rates are for the end of the year.

Source from: <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/journal/09221425/11/3>

Currency and Debt Crisis— the Korean to US currency conversion rate rose up to 1400 won to a dollar in 1997, comparing with 800 won to a dollar in 1996. The weak Korean currency loaded Korean *Chaebols*² eight billion dollars extra burden on interest payment to foreign investors.

² *Chaebols* in Korea refers to a family-controlled industrial conglomerate in South Korea (*merriam-webster.com*).

Figure 13 Financial Conditions of Korean Chaebol

Financial conditions of top 30 Korean chaebol at the end of 1996 (in hundred million won and %)^a

Chaebol	Total assets	Debt	Sales	Net profit	Debt/equity ratio
Samsung	508.6	370.4	601.1	1.8	268.2
Hyundai	531.8	433.2	680.1	1.8	439.1
Daewoo	342.1	263.8	382.5	3.6	337.3
LG	370.7	287.7	466.7	3.6	346.5
Hanjin	139.0	117.9	87.0	-1.9	556.9
Kia	141.6	118.9	121.0	-1.3	523.6
Ssangyong	158.1	127.0	194.5	-1.0	409.0
Sunkyong	227.3	180.4	266.1	2.9	385.0
Hanhwa	109.7	97.2	96.9	-1.8	778.2
Daelim	57.9	45.9	48.3	0.1	380.1
Kumho	74.0	61.2	44.4	-0.2	477.9
Doosan	64.0	55.9	40.5	-1.1	692.3
Halla	66.3	63.2	52.9	0.2	2067.6
Sammi	25.2	25.9	14.9	-2.5	3245.0
Hyosung	41.2	32.5	54.8	0.4	373.2
Hanil	26.3	22.3	13.0	-1.2	563.2
Donga Construction	62.9	49.1	38.9	0.4	355.0
Kohap	36.5	31.2	25.2	0.3	589.5
Jinro	39.4	39.0	14.8	-1.6	8598.7
Dongguk Jaekank	37.0	25.4	30.7	0.9	210.4
Lotte	77.5	51.0	71.9	0.5	191.2
Kolon	38.0	28.9	41.3	0.2	316.5
Haitai	34.0	29.5	27.2	0.4	658.3
Sinho Jaeji	21.3	17.7	12.2	-0.1	489.5
Anam Industrial	26.4	21.8	19.8	0.1	478.1
Dongguk Muyok	16.2	13.6	10.7	-0.2	587.9
New Core	28.0	25.9	18.3	0.2	1224.0
Bongil	20.3	18.3	8.7	-0.9	920.5
Hansol	47.9	37.1	25.5	-0.1	343.2
Hansin Kongyong	13.3	11.5	10.6	0.0	648.8

Source from: <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/journal/09221425/11/3>

Bankruptcy

South Korea's third-largest car maker, Kia Motors, asked for emergency loans in July 1997 and was eventually bought out by Hyundai Motors in the beginning of 1998; Samsung Motors have lost \$5 billion venture due to the crisis; Daewoo Motors, the

second largest company at that time, collapsed in 1999 with debts of about \$84.3 billion. Large companies went down while those who managed to survive had to face the scalpel of the Korean government ordered by IMF. In June of 1998 alone, the Korea Ministry of Finance ordered 55 large companies to shut down.


Massive Layoffs

The national economic breakdown and large government-owned corporations filing for bankruptcy did not simply mean the employees of that organization lost their jobs. It also ignited a ripple effect to smaller companies—originally dependent on the big company, they were forced to go out of business as well. The reason behind this ‘Domino Effect’ is that the Korean organizational structure prior to the IMF crisis was modeled on a “top-down pyramid hierarchy” (Potrzeba Lett, *In Pursuit of Status*, 51), in which there was a series of “authoritarian leaders and families run conglomerates (or chaebols)” [McFarlin, et, al., 212], and these chaebols had close ties to the government, which in turn had a large influence over the ways the companies operated. For all the faults of such top-down interdependent structure, i.e. lack of flexibility, less likelihood of promotion and constant corruption, it helped to guarantee the Korean employees job stability and a low rate of unemployment. However, with the devastating Crisis, the nation witnessed massive layoffs. The unemployment rate skyrocketed from 2.5% before the crisis to 6.8% by the end of 1998, creating the unprecedented number of 1.6 million jobless people in

Korea. With the absence of a government welfare system as in the U.S. and European countries, the Korean public fears the gloomy future.

To be a Korean is to be a competitor, of which one must fight intensely to win university admissions, jobs, and even marriage partners, and many other things. The pressure to compete against others originated from Confucianism, the social/moral belief in Korea. Confucianism puts a strong emphasis on academic and career success, which encourages people to strive for at least a baseline level of achievement and respectability. Yet, facing the harsh employment challenge, the question of “how to win the competition from hundreds of equally qualified applicants” was overwhelming to numerous Korean job-seekers (Tudor, 78). Such an issue was exacerbated by the fact that the Korean job application sheet always has a space for the photo of the applicant (Figure 14), a practice which is illegal in the U.S. and many European countries. What would violate the U.S. law—holding candidates’ appearance against their chances of being selected turns out to be an expected, legitimate criterion for job applicant selection in Korean. It indicates that if a candidate’s look is deemed to be ‘not pleasant’, the odds could go against him or her before even being called to an interview. Therefore, cosmetic surgery came into the picture. Coined as “survival surgery” in Korea (*therichest.com*), this practice is regarded as a long-term investment in oneself, helping to improve one’s chances of winning the competition and future success in all fields.

Figure 14 Sample Korean Resume

	이 력 서		
	성 명	조지 브라운 @	국 격
	생년월일	1985년 2월 15일생 (만 27세)	
주 소	서울시 종로구 종로2가 84-6 고려빌딩 7층		
연 락 처	집	02-732-1128	전 자 우 편 greenkls@naver.com
	핸드폰	010-32XX-15XX	
기 간	학 력		발 령 청
2004	2	멜버른 고등학교 졸업	
2004	2	멜버른 국립 대학교 입학	
2008	2	멜버른 국립 대학교 졸업	
기 간	경 력 사 항		발 령 청
2005	5	OO 회사 아르바이트	
2006	4	OO 회사 인턴	
기 간	자 격 증 및 면 허		
2009	2	그린한국어학원 한국어과정 수료	
2007	9	운전면허	

Source from: http://www.greenkorean.co.kr/culture/recruit_en.html

Surgery as Psychological Therapy

South Korean culture places a heavy emphasis on appearance, but not necessarily in the same ways that western cultures do. While both cultures have a provable effect of appearance on success and people's perceptions, Koreans view it much differently than those in the west. Their culture considers facial features to be a direct representation of a person's inner virtue, and that this appearance-to-virtue relationship directly connects to one's luck and success. Such perception results in people feeling both more driven to undergo cosmetic surgery, as well as more confident and satisfied after the surgery operation is done. They often sense that their lives have experienced positive changes from the surgery, as judging someone by their appearance is considered normal in Korea, while the west considers it to be taboo (Stewart, *jezebel.com*).

The effects on one's life post-surgery are very tangible in Korea, as people can truly sense how differently they are treated by others after appearance-enhancement operations. Many Korean patients describe their post-surgery life positively, and consider the procedure a "healing" experience (Huss-Ashmore, 29). This view of personality and appearance being intertwined is circular; not only do Koreans feel that better looking people are better people, but they feel that improving their own appearance could actively lead to the improvement of one's psyche.

The author of "*The Real Me*", Rebecca Huss-Ashmore, finds that the process of cosmetic surgery is described by recipients as having restorative effects between self and

psyche, the body and image. Huss-Ashmore argues that such spiritual restoration occurs through the creation of the “new” appearance, in which the “me I really am” and the “me I want to be” are brought into physical process of surgery and recovery.

The idea that facial features are as an indicator of someone’s disposition and social class have existed in Korea for a long time. For instance, light pale skin is one of the most pursued female beauty standards since the ancient dynasties in Korea. The pursuit of white skin in Korea is due to the fact that people believe such a feature shows the female’s inner virtue as transparent, innocent, pure, elegant, and free of any corrupted thoughts. The historical basis behind such preference can be found in Marianne Bray’s report, in which she argues that a fair white complexion has been historically associated with high-class and wealth in Asian countries (“Skin Deep”, *CNN*). Other researchers also state that the rich class used to “wash their faces with peach flower water to make their skin clean, white, and transparent” during the Keyro dynasty (Eric Lee, et al., 445).

Figure 15 Auspicious Eye Shape



Source from: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-2378854/Bigger-eye-bags-New-Korean-trend-puffy-eyes-aegyo-sal-make-surgery-filler-fat-grafts.html>

In addition to the cultural belief that appearance ties into social status, another practice--physiognomy, or face reading--has made the connection between appearance and the person's fortune even closer. Based on writing by *New York Times* reporter Su

Hyun Lee, there has been an increasing amount of people in Korea undergoing surgery “so that a new nose with a straight bridge and distinct nodules, a slightly wide and protruding forehead, or sufficient cheekbones will bring wealth and the drive to take charge of their lives” (Lee, Su Hyun, *nytimes.com*). Auspicious facial features also include big, expressive, smiling eyes (Figure 15 above) and a thin V-shaped face that indicates delicate youthfulness. In his report, Su quotes plastic surgeon Lee Won Suk’s comment, saying, “one in ten of my patients asks me to operate on them [the features they think need to be fixed] based on what they believe would bring good fortune in the future.”

A documentary video by *Vice* journalist Charlet Duboc, titled *Seoul Fashion Week*, also exposed such a belief. Charlet confirmed that Koreans generally hold that having an appealing face means there will be more chance to change one’s destiny. Therefore, the most-requested faces are heart shaped or V-shaped. “Even though it is artificial, they still believe they can better their fortune by the route of plastic surgery,” Charlet said (*youtube.com*). Her documentary also presented the real experience of how popular K-pop culture has swept the nation to propel the cosmetic surgery boom. It highlights the relationship between K-Pop culture and the beauty-making industry in the Gangnam district, which is called the “beauty belt” in Seoul (*Vice, youtube.com*). “...The look here is all about flawless perfection”, Charlet observes, as she intends to discover how far people are willing or expected to go in pursuit of perfection.

In the process of interviewing people during the documentary making, she was invited by a local plastic surgery clinic, Seo Jae Don Clinic, to witness a few real-time cosmetic operations. Dr. Seo told Charlet that “many patients come into the clinic for surgery, hoping that the change to more appealing appearance would bring better luck,” but to surgeons like himself, “cosmetic surgery treatment is to help the patient to make the most of their abilities, to help them overcome the obstacles” (*youtube*).

Surely, face-reading may be regarded as pseudo-scientific through the lens of scrupulous research, but the widespread notion that one’s facial features are directly or indirectly responsible for the good or bad outcome of his or her life may have been very influential in the large acceptance and normalization of invasive surgery in Korea.

Chapter 4

KOREAN POP AND THE COSMETIC SURGERY INDUSTRY

Korean Pop has been instrumental in spreading the image of Korean beauty, which has in turn stimulated the boom in aesthetic medical tourism. Korean Pop refers to Korean popular culture, termed as “*Hallyu*” in Korean or K-pop in brief. K-pop became increasingly popular towards the end of the twentieth century. It consists of film and television shows, pop music and dance, fashion and cosmetics (Walsh, “*Hallyu* as Government Construct”, 14). To understand why K-pop sells its cosmetic surgery to the global market, it is necessary to reveal a brief historical background prior to the full-bloom of the K-pop industry.

Origin of K-pop

During the IMF Crisis in 1998, President Kim Dae-jung saw the GDP plunge by 7%. He took action to salvage the Korean economy by issuing a governmental intervention, called *Presidential Proclamation on Culture*. This act subsequently established the Korea Institute of Design Promotion as well as the Korea Creative Content Agency and also gave priority to the cultural industries in the government budget (*Hallyu: Korean Popular Culture in Japan*, Kuwahara, 216). The administration further

identified *Hallyu* as a tool of soft power, issuing large grants to various organizations that introduced Korean popular culture to other countries (“Hallyu, Yeah!”, *economist.com*). The private entertainment companies utilized the resources provided by the government-- they worked together to promote a joint brand, the brand of Korea, across different products and sectors. The purpose of developing entertainment was to deliberately foster Korean economic development and global popularity.

K-pop Frenzy

In order to encourage other countries to accept Korean popular culture, the Korean star marketing system began to sell and promote their own TV series. Well-known shows, such as *Winter Sonata* and *My Sassy Girl*, are pioneers that accelerated K-pop global expansion. After the successful sale of TV shows, K-pop singing and dancing shows began being heavily marketed. Its stage performances, albums, and music videos have been hugely successful, being spread virally via the internet and on YouTube videos. It is reported that there were over 900 Korean entertainment music videos made in 2011. These videos have earned more than 500 million hits from Asia alone—this is before the release of PSY’s *Gangnam Style* music video (Madeleine Han, *newamericamedia.org*). After the Music Video of *Gangnam Style* debuted in 2012, K-pop swept internationally and gained a huge fan base. It is reported that PSY’s *Gangnam Style* held 1.4 billion views on YouTube in 2013 (*SBS Dateline*), making it the most viewed video on the site and expanding K-pop to an even larger global audience.

K-pop and Cosmetic Clinic

The K-pop industry features flashy performances, dancing, celebrity stage shows, which very much resemble Hollywood in the US. The core components on the stage, the stylish K-pop idols, not only sell the singing and dancing, but also their flawlessly chiseled appearances. Large scale media advertising in South Korea has been reinforcing the importance of appearance, molding Korea to an image-obsessed society. It has been heatedly discussed by fans and audiences about which star has or not has had any plastic surgery (Figure 16, 17, 18).

Figure 16 Before and After Surgery: Actress Kim Nam Joo



Source: <http://zafirahoney.blogspot.com/2013/07/korean-actress-that-admit-having.html>

Figure 17 Before and After Surgery: Actress Park Min Young



Source: <http://zafirahoney.blogspot.com/2013/07/korean-actress-that-admit-having.html>

Figure 18 Before and After Surgery: Singer Kwon Yuri



Kwon Yuri SNSD (Girl's Generation)

Source: <http://blog.asiantown.net/-/16060/makeup-and-plastic-surgery-do-real-wonders--korean-stars-before-and-after>

In reality, all but a select few have refused to get any “face work” done (“Korean Actresses Who Admit to Having Plastic Surgery,” *ohkpop.com*). Almost every K-pop star has gone through cosmetic surgeries from the minor double-eyelid operation, V-shape chin shaving, to skin and body shape fixing. Like a living billboard, K-pop culture fuels the public pursuit of perfection. Cosmetic surgery’s “before” and “after” photos, flyers, and advertisements are ubiquitous through subways/bus-stations, billboards, and TV commercials (Figure 19, 20). These extremes highlight that living in Korea is to live in a country where one is surrounded by images, dazzling tight dresses, slim body shape, and seamless facial features that these stars present in the media.

Figure 19 Cosmetic Surgery Advertisements are everywhere



Source from: <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2013-09-29/gangnam-style-nip-and-tuck-draws-tourists-to-seoul-s-beauty-belt>

Figure 20 Subway is the hub of clinic advertisements



Source from: http://cs4160koreanwave.blogspot.com/2014/03/onscreen-and-offscreen-plastic-surgery_11.html

With such substantial K-pop images marketed via news, TV, movie, billboard, subway posters, and magazines, Korean middle and high school students are heavily exposed to a series of strict beauty standards, including big eyes, double eyelids, V-shape face and slim body. Professor Sharon Heijin Lee from the Department of Social and Cultural Analysis at New York University remarks, “the stars of K-pop culture are getting younger and their fans are getting younger” (Sharon Lee, “*The (Geo)Politics of Beauty*”, 110).

Yet, rarely has it been questioned why certain features such as V-shape face (shown in Figure 20) came out to be ideal in the first place. What people have witnessed is how much welcomings, flowers, and compliments that these ‘beautiful’ K-pop celebrities receive by possessing such a feature. Since beautiful celebrities are so well loved by the audience, the idolization has inevitably spurred the desire for individuals to look as perfect as the celebrities. People are willing to go to extremes to imitate their idols’ appearance, in order to earn others’ acceptance and admiration.

Figure 21 Facial Contouring Products

The image shows two Japanese advertisements for facial contouring products. The left advertisement is for the '26 アグリストラック パワーリベルタ' (Agri-Track Power Reverta) priced at ¥9,800. It features a purple EMS device with a power belt and a micro-current device. The right advertisement is for the '23-2B デラックスタイプ' (Deluxe Type) priced at ¥5,400. It features a pink EMS device with a gel mat and a power belt. Both ads include detailed text in Japanese describing the technology and benefits.

Source from: <http://www.ensogo.com.my/deals/RM65-OR-RM125-for-2N-Professional-V-Face-Slimming-Mask-My-Beauty-and-Collection-House-KL>

Koreans perceive physical beauty as a source of confidence, a weapon in competition--to win school admissions, job applications, promotions, marriage, etc. Hence, regardless of how many failed surgeries, post-surgery symptoms, medication, or scarring cases there might be, the desire for short term happiness still drives waves of people in Korea to undergo cosmetic operations.

Chapter 5

THE IMPACT OF KOREAN COSMETIC SURGERY INDUSTRY

As previous chapters have revealed, South Korea has become one of the most important pioneers in the field of cosmetic surgery, and for this it has earned high reputation and recognition in the world. This lucrative surgery industry, coupled with the uprising global K-pop wave, “*Hallyu*”, has created substantial impacts on South Korea in various aspects. Economically, it inspires the growth of medical tourism to Korea, creating more jobs for Koreans such as surgery consultants, interpreters, etc.; socially, it reinforces the importance of appearance and attracts a larger K-pop fanbase; individually, it encourages people to achieve their ideal images; and physiologically, it restores patients’ confidence once the surgeries are done. The discussion below will consider each aspect to demonstrate the multifaceted impact of cosmetic surgery on South Korea.

Impact I: Medical Tourism to Korea

The fame of Korea’s high-quality, low-cost cosmetic surgery has caused a butterfly effect after spreading to the world, leading people from other nations to come to Korea to alter their appearance. Therefore, South Korea’s reputation as the world’s “Beauty Capital” has inspired the Seoul Metropolitan Government to launch the Tourism Promotion Act. This Act is designed to attract more overseas medical tourists to Korea, as reported by *VisitKorea*.

With the governmental encouragement of medical tourism, cosmetic surgeons in Korea have been experiencing an increasing number of patients from all over the world. Patients, who are influenced by the K-pop culture, are convinced that the Korean surgeons have magic techniques to offer them the look they want (Figure 22). Many surgeons have told media that it is not uncommon to see patients from Southeast Asia request cosmetic operations to make them look like certain Korean celebrities (*dailytelegraph.com*).

Figure 22 Face Transformation Magic



Source From: http://www.ips-kr.com/big5/blog_detail.php?news_autonumber=526

Statistics released by medical research institutions also have shown the strong impact of Korean cosmetic surgery on its national economy. According to the Korean Ministry of Health and Welfare, the number of overseas travelers getting aesthetic treatment in Korea rose 32.5% to more than 211,000 in 2013 (*english.mw.go.kr*); Asian

patients were the biggest foreign spenders as they accounted for 26.5% of the total surgery patients and spent a combined 1.02 trillion won in Korea in 2013.

Meanwhile, the Korea Tourism Organization has reported that the number of medical tourists who visit the Gangnam District for cosmetic surgery was 19,135 in 2010 (*imtj.com*). Yet according to the census, the number of patients jumped to 34,156 by the end of 2012 in this district alone and skyrocketed to 43,000 in 2013 (*imtj.com*). Korea Tourism Organization is said to expect the number of medical tourists to Korea to reach more than 1 million in 2020, generating approximately 3.5 trillion won (US \$3.2 billion) in revenue (*businesskorea*).

The Tourism Promotion Act, along with other deliberate government encouragement, has accelerated the growth of the Korean domestic cosmetic surgery industry. The act is not limited to simply encouraging the growth of the cosmetic surgery industry, but also it includes a plan to build an all-in-one, one-stop surgery complex. Such a complex would provide tourists with transportation service, medical-care operating rooms, lodging/hotels, aftercare facilities, as well as food and drinks, shopping, sports and recreational services. The government tentatively termed this complex the “Seoul Center for Aesthetic Medical Tourism General Support”. The Center is reported to be set up as a part of efforts to develop Seoul into a global city favorable to foreign visitors and residents, which corresponds to the city government’s announcement in 2013, "Plans for the Globalization of Seoul" (*asiaenglish.visitkorea.or.kr*). Another case

in point, JK Plastic Surgery Center, is one of the country's largest clinics welcoming overseas visitors. It has already opened a hospital-attached hotel for tourists who are in need of accommodation and post medical care. The reported spending for an average single visit is \$17,675, yielding profitable revenue for the business (*nytimes.com*).

As a result, although medical tourism is not the fundamental cause that brings cosmetic surgery to life, it is definitely one of the important motivators that fuel the expansion of cosmetic surgery industry and its global influence. Its lucrative profit has been what the hospitals sought, as well as what the government is gearing as its national growth.

Impact II: Increasing Job Opportunities

For the completion of the Surgery Center project, numerous working positions will need to be created. The proposed construction opens up the need for talents in diversified fields. The Center would require multilingual counseling staff and tourist operators who are able to introduce cosmetic surgeons or dermatologists to tourists, or bring tourists to them. It may also need interpreters who can be dispatched to the medical care departments to assist the oversea clients. Aside from patient care, the Center would request a substantial amount of Information Technology resources to create everything from hardware to software, from medical equipment to lodging/recreation facilities, to maintenances of all the functions of those facilities and networks. The above needed labor sources have not even included necessary departments such as the finance, the

cleaning staff, or the sales and marketing divisions that will be designated to promote the Center to a broader global audience.

Outside of the grandeur plan in the Promotional Act, Korean cosmetic surgery also has generated the need for certain new service industries, in which Passport Verification is one. Passport verification provides the overseas patients with the official identity proof from cosmetic surgery clinics and hospitals, to assist patients going through customs smoothly. This business is brought out by the drastic change of clients' appearances which do not resemble their old passport pictures at all. The face-changing operation creates a dilemma for immigration inspectors during international-border passenger inspection, so much so that there has to be certain identity verification. As *The Blot Magazine* reports:

Plastic surgery certificates include valuable details such as the official seal from the hospital/clinic where the surgeries took place, the operating doctor's name, the hospital contact information, the patient's passport number and how long the patient had been staying in South Korea. All of this information is designed to help authorities figure out who people are, since their outward appearance no longer matches the photo document they were initially traveling on (Pettit, *theblot.com*).

Munhwa also reports that certain Korean hospitals started to issue such verifying certificates in 2011 (*munhwa.com*). Henceforth, job positions in these rising new services along with cosmetic surgery industry can create many openings for Korean job seekers.

Impact III: Individual Identity Crisis

Certainly, the rise of such a complex but lucrative industry has brought positive economic impacts to the Koreans. However, many negative effects have surfaced as well, and the crisis of individual identity is one of them. “Identity” here refers to the outside appearance that distinguishes one person from another, which can be used to differentiate oneself from another. The term “Identity Crisis” used in this context has multiple layers of meanings: a) the crisis of lost identity—the person no longer possesses his or her original appearance after the surgery; b) the crisis of identity-dissatisfaction and identity-resentment—the person is discontented with his or her born look due to *lookism* pressure and is forced to undergo surgery; c) the crisis of re-identification of oneself in the post-surgery stage—the person questions and re-adjusts him or herself, after the operation, on the issue of “who I am now, with this new, unknown face”.

The first crisis is losing one’s original identity as the surgery changes the person’s appearance. Such drastic change of appearances (Figures 23, 24) can be easily manipulated by criminals or suspects who attempt to hide their original “self” which was associated with shameful wrongdoings. Any law-violated individuals can take advantage

of the plastic surgery treatment to erase their old identity and make themselves unrecognizable by the police or victims.

Figure 23 Drastic Transformation



Source from: <http://www.businessinsider.com/korea-is-obsessed-with-plastic-surgery-2013-5?op=1>

Figure 24 Face Transformation



Source From:

http://izismile.com/2013/11/21/before_and_after_photos_of_korean_plastic_surgery_62_pics.html

For common patients, the sense of the loss of identity centers on how to accept the difference of their own “before” and “after” images. The “after” faces are often constructed to a similar version, as if manufactured by the Korean surgery hospitals. Below Figure 25 displays the almost-identical look of the contestants for Miss Korea 2013.

Figure 25 Miss Korea Candidates of 2013



Source From: <http://gawker.com/plastic-surgery-blamed-for-making-all-miss-korea-contes-480907455>

The second issue is the crisis of identity dissatisfaction and self-resentment. It is caused by the pressure of the image-based culture in South Korea. In western countries, it is exalted that each person shall be unique, because “when God made human beings, He broke the mold” and “God wants you to know how special you are, how much you matter to God” (*pbpc.org*). Nevertheless, in a society of collectivism such as Korea, the majority of people are willing to conform to a set of defined practices and standards, and appearance is not an exception. Thus, people hold up their favorite idol’s picture to the clinic doctor, requesting the doctor to mold them into a similar look as the star. The beauty standards set in the society have, in this way, suffocated the freedom of being the

unique oneself. It is, therefore, hard to accept one's own natural appearance when being constantly exposed to a conception of beauty that relies on the surgically-enhanced look that South Korean society reveres.

The third problem is the post-surgery self-identification. Some individuals, after undergoing drastic physical changes, experience psychological changes that they no longer recognize themselves as they were, and dissociate from their former identity. The effect can often transform the way one is treated by others as well. For instance, in the Korean TV show, *Let Me In*, patients recall to the audience how ill-treated and bullied they were by peers at school due to their “not pleasant” faces. Yet after the surgery, the person is respected and treated with admiration as they look attractive (*soompi.com*). In this way, the person feels that they have burned their old, bitter past, and embraced a new beginning with a beautified face. Their disassociation from their old selves is not just in appearance, but also in social status and overall quality of life.

Impact IV: Pressure and Younger Generation

Since South Korea views an attractive appearance almost as the key to happiness, cosmetic surgery becomes the route to achieve this. Even though the choice to undergo cosmetic surgery will be a personal one, the normalization of such surgery has been casting worrying effects. On the one hand as discussed above, many people go so far as to pick out a particular celebrity whose face they hope to emulate through cosmetic

operations; on the other, teenagers and young adults are more likely to feel pressured to compete with friends who have undergone surgery.

New America Media quoted Professor Sharon Lee's remarks: "Young girls in middle school and high school are talking about how they absolutely will have plastic surgery after they graduate if they can afford it, and if their parents won't pay for it, they'll work hard [to pay for it themselves]." Lee also added, "Because of the culture industry, the younger demographics are engaging in [plastic surgery] more and more" (Madeleine Han, *newamericamedia.org*).

Not only are the imitation and idolization of stars becoming a prevalent practice, but also patients are becoming younger and younger—parent give their children surgery as a gift for graduation or for passing major exams—which continues the normalization of surgery. With the propelling K-pop culture encroaching in every aspect of South Koreans' lives, the pursuit of beauty and perfection are ceaselessly expanding to younger generations. Teenagers from middle school and high school have already sensed the competition of appearance, and the pressure of fitting into this beauty trend, and they are unwilling to be left out as the ugly ones. Surgeon Park Hyun-cheol, a doctor at OZ Cosmetic Clinic in Seoul, estimates that as many as 20 percent of his patients are under the age of 20 (Madeleine Han, *newamericamedia.org*).

Regardless of the fact that the younger generations are ready for the surgery with hopes of achieving a more successful academic career and social life, such invasive surgery will not alter the genes of that individual. No matter how large the eyes are made in the operation, or how sharply the V-shape jaws are contoured, the genes that control the person's appearance will remain the same. Bearing such a notion in mind, a question crops up: what will happen if a post-surgery beautiful girl meets a post-surgery handsome boy, and they fall in love, get married, and produced the next generation? As Figure 26 shows below, "the only thing you have to worry you about after plastic surgery is the explaining you'll have to do to your children" ("Man Sues Ex-Wife Over Ugly Children", *examiner.com*). Children will inherit genes and will not look anything like their parents, who, of course, are after-surgery masterpieces themselves.

Figure 26 The Offspring and Parents



Source From: <http://rocketnews24.com/2012/05/15/209756/>

Impact V: High Risk of Cosmetic Surgery

All forms of medical operations have risks, and cosmetic surgery is not an exception. The surgery itself, first of all, has have been reported to cause various infections, coma, and death to the patients. Barcroft TV channel, for example, published an 4-episode series of documentaries on “Modern Body Issues”, in which the 4th one specifically discloses botched cosmetic surgeries and its damages to the individual. The documentary series explored the failed aesthetic surgeries that render severe physical damages or even death to the patients (*youtube.com*). From chronic nerve damages, skin

burns, bacterial infection, to excessive bleeding and death, the safety issues surrounding aesthetic surgery can be frightening.

In the case of South Korea, the risk is not to be compromised with its the high reputation of cosmetic operation quality and techniques. There are still a large proportion of patients who suffer from devastating results or life-jeopardizing post-surgery symptoms. One of the most influential local media, *Korea Times*, also has exposed that the legal appeals and formal patient complaints about botched plastic surgery procedures have more than doubled in 2013 from the year earlier. One of the high profile botched operations was that a student ended up in a coma after double eyelid and nose surgeries in a clinic in December 2013 (*eyelidsurgerymalaysia.blogspot*). *Korea Times* has stated that appeals and complaints range from overly exaggerating marketing of the magical transformation, to dodgy, unqualified doctors, who are substitutes for full-time qualified doctors and who perform surgery on unwitting, anaesthetized patients as their intern “try-out” practices.

Certainly, with the normalization and wide spread clinics, the surgery industry requires tighter restriction on the procedures, as well as legal supervision on unlicensed doctors. *Korea Times* reports that the chairman of the Korean Association of Plastic Surgeons, Cha Sang-myun, is worried about the excessively blooming surgery industry, saying that "advertising too much has made people think surgery is nothing but a commodity. People now believe plastic surgery is like buying stuff everywhere"

(Stevenson, *nytimes.com*). True enough, it is not uncommon to find that some women have their faces wrapped in bandages while walking on the streets in Korea (Figures 27, 28), which is an indication that they are still recovering from certain face contour operations.

Figure 27 Commonly-seen Post-surgery patients



Source from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m1Yu7KSIT6A>

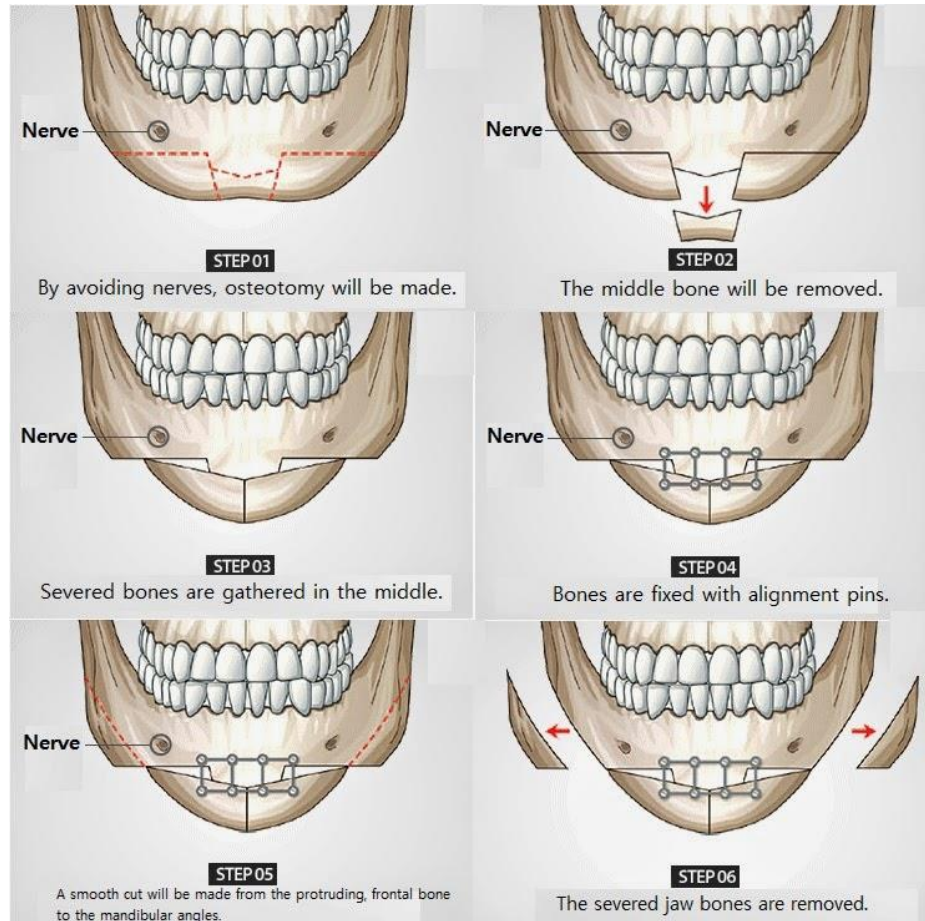
Figure 28 Patient wrapped in bandage after facial surgery



Source from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mlYu7KSIT6A>

Since Korean beauty norm exalts the V-shaped face, the second most common surgery practice is chin slimming (Figure 28). In order to achieve a slimmer jawline, many Koreans and medical tourists undergo the surgery without the awareness of its high risks. Professor Yang Byoung-eun at the Department of Dentistry of Hallym University Heart Hospital told *Korea Times* that “Around 10 percent of patients get sensory disorder right after the operation. While some patients recovered eventually, the numbness symptom continues for others, and it can last for a lifetime to some people” (Ja-young, *Koreatimes.com*). The professor continues to say that “for the victims of the surgery, many of them have died of suffocation, as their respiratory tract is blocked by sudden bleeding after the operation” (ibid).

Figure 29 Jaw Shaving Process



Source from:

http://eng.idhospital.com/brd/press_view.asp?nowPage=7&brd_id=7&bid=1761&cond1=&cond2=

Korea Times also reveals that the potential of bleeding and suffocation is caused by the physical nerve and bone structure. As the jaw is one of the most concentrated areas for complicated vessels and nerves, it has a high tendency to bleed tremendously even with a tiny cut. As blood pressure falls during surgery, but rises back to normal levels during recovery, there can be unexpected bleeding, too. Moreover, since the nasal

membrane often swells after surgery and the upper and lower jaws are fixed together for recovery, the blood can get into the respiratory tract if the patient bleeds (Ja-young, *koreatimes.co.kr*). "Unexpected bleeding can lead to difficulty in breathing, but as the jaws are bound together, the patient can't talk," the professor expressed his concern.

Lastly, I personally wonder about the shelf life of these post-surgery fixed features. The "shelf life" refers to how long can the new look done by invasive treatments be able to stay as perfect as they are. Especially along with the natural cells growth, replacement and aging, would these bettered features be able to stay the same as always? This question circles back to the natural genetics discussed in the fourth impact in this chapter. The genetic traits still remain the same, which means the cells are still going to grow at the locations where they are genetically programmed to grow. Assuming a patient has had the bone structure reduced for a more attractive slim shape, the new-generated tissues from the body would probably grow back to the old, default structure. Then more remediation procedures would need to be done to preserve this initial post-operation look. Rather than being a once-and-for-all operation, I suspect the shelf life for most cosmetic surgery is a prolonged investment, though my researches have not obtained any sources to verify that.

Chapter 6

CONCLUSION

In the global context, every culture has its own approach to achieve a more satisfying body figure as acknowledged by social norms. Western culture generally considers curvy shapes attractive, thus there is a high demand on breast enlargements and fuller-lip silicon injection procedures (Conley, *abcnews.go.com*). For drastic change of facial structure through bone shaving and cutting, South Korean cosmetic surgery practices have emerged to be the leader of the world for beauty enhancement, boasting the one-stop start-to-end surgery service, its high success rate, and numerous surgery clinics that are everywhere in the country.

Certainly, South Korea's cosmetic surgery industry has grown rapidly in the past few years. Such expansion has been fueled by a myriad of causes. On the surface, western news media claim it is due to the obsession that Koreans have to obtain Caucasian/western-like features. With the exposition and analysis, this thesis has argued that far more complicated reasons bonded with Korean historical and social evolvement are the true breeders for the birth of its surgery industry.

Historically speaking, the colonial control that Japanese seized over Korea has led to the anti-Japan nationalism and its people's resentment of any association with the Japanese. Appearance-wise, Koreans also have attempted to distance themselves from the common features that are widely possessed by the Japanese, such as slanted eyes and

mono-eyelid, which contributed to the early reconstructive medical operations. Afterwards, appearance-based selection system began to heavily influence Korean culture as the 1997 IMF financial crisis massive layoffs and made the country's employment situation gloomier than ever. Its job application practice, including the attachment of an individual's photo on the resume, is viewed as a norm in Korea but prohibited in other countries. These elements in the course of Korean historical formation have laid the foundation for its cosmetic surgery to flourish. Socially speaking, in Korea, appearance is tied closely with one's anticipated success in all walks of life. With the belief of "physiognomy", people strive to obtain auspicious facial features that are deemed able to bring fortune, luck, status and an exuberant dating life to the individual. As two torrents merging force, Korean historical and social developments have jointly increased the availability of cosmetic surgery to meet people's demand.

After the former President Kim Young-Sam (in office 1993-1998) issued the policy of Korean cultural and media export in 1994, the K-pop industry spread out and became a pervasive fashion-style wave across the globe (Rousse-Marquet, *inaglobal.com*). The perfect appearances of K-pop stars are the center of the world's attention. Reinforcing the notion of beauty and the importance of looks, K-pop is the driving force for aesthetic surgery's expansion, as its young adults and teenager fans desire to receive the same success with a perfect look. Pressure from peers also encourages more parents to persuade their children to go to clinics, hoping the surgeons will transform their children's look and luck. Internationally, an increasing number of

medical tourists are drawn to Korea through its increasing global presence, which is another factor adding to the number of cosmetic surgery patients in Korea.

The unprecedented increase of demand from residents and tourists fosters the surgery industry's growth and expansion. Akin to the supply and demand curve, the more demand there is for cosmetic surgery treatments, the bigger increased market that is provided to the clinics' availability and affordability of the procedures. This decrease in cost has, in return, generated higher consumer demand, and, along with K-pop culture's globalization luring medical tourists to come to Korea, have caused a largely self-perpetuating growth cycle for the surgery industry.

From the sociological perspective, elements of appearance-based culture feed the public desire for cosmetic surgery on the first level. These elements include: the emphasis on the direct connection between attractiveness and status/success; heavy pressure from the appearance-judging selection system that Korea has, as well as cultural stigmas about facial features indicating one's fortune and luck. Working in combination, these factors continue to stimulate people's desire for cosmetic surgery. From the K-pop entertainment side, the citizens of the country are bombarded with images of the near-perfect features of its pop stars, celebrities, actors, and actresses. Almost all of these spokesmen and women have undergone surgeries themselves, from double-eyelid surgery, to face contouring, nose heightening, Botox, and other invasive operations. Advertisements on trains, billboards, and television highlight success stories of the clinics. The procedures are often

given to teens as gifts for birthdays, graduation, or even successful testing. The pursuit of beauty perfection in Koreans' everyday life has pushed the public acceptance of aesthetic surgeries further than the rate other countries would imagine. Thus, not only the aesthetic surgery business itself is booming, but also its range of targeted customers has increased dramatically, from local Korean adults to its middle and high school teenagers, and towards an international consumer base.

The expansion of these services in Korea is not only the result of the fierce social competition, but also from the high reputation of Korean cosmetic surgeons. As the renown of South Korea's surgery spreads, more and more international consumers have been flocking into the Korean cosmetic treatment clinics. The influx of foreign tourists coming for cosmetic reasons has been so significant that both clinics and the government have made their continued growth an important priority. Clinics offer passport verification services for those whose appearance has changed significantly, as well as translators for those who come to the country without knowing the language. The government's newest facility incorporates these, as well as many other conveniences intended to encourage additional tourists to visit the country for surgery.

While people can choose to do anything they want to their own body and face, altering, cutting, shaving the face for better outlook, the pressure for appearance that is formed by such popular practice is casting a bigger influence. Too much emphasis on appearance has been misleading teens and adults to continue believing that as long as the

face is great, their life and career will be great; as long as the person is beautiful, he or she can maintain the happy and confident daily life. For people in South Korea, plastic surgery is considered to be an almost indispensable investment in the future.

REFERENCES

- Ashcraft, Brian. "How South Korean Plastic Surgeons Make Passport Photos Worthless." *Kotaku*. 15 Apr. 2014. Web. 15 Jan. 2015.
<<http://kotaku.com/how-south-korean-plastic-surgeons-make-passport-photos-1563323919>>
- Bray, Marianne. "SKIN DEEP: Dying to be White." *CNN World*. 15, May, 2002. Web. 8 Nov. 2014.
<<http://edition.cnn.com/2002/WORLD/asiapcf/east/05/13/asia.whitening/>>
- "Breaking the Silence on "Comfort Women"." *Amnesty*. 1 Jan. 2005. Web. 2 Jan. 2015.
<<http://www.amnesty.org.nz/files/Comfort-Women-factsheet.pdf>>.
- Cai, Jingneng. "Eyelid Surgery: Beware of Bogus Korean Plastic Surgeons." Web. 1 Mar. 2015. <<http://www.eyelidsurgerymalaysia.blogspot.com/2014/11/beware-of-bogus-korean-plastic-surgeons.html>>.
- Chang, Juju, and Victoria Thompson. "South Korea's Growing Obsession with Cosmetic Surgery." *ABC News*. 20 June 2014. Web. 1 Feb. 2015.
<<http://abcnews.go.com/Lifestyle/south-koreas-growing-obsession-cosmetic-surgery/story?id=24123409>>.
- Charlet Duboc, "Seoul Fashion Week - K-Pop to Double Eyelid Surgery." *VICE*. 23 Oct. 2012. Web. 10 Nov. 2014.
<<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0wWKjxxM6q8>>.
- Conley, Mikaela. "Nip/Tuck Nations: 7 Countries With Most Cosmetic Surgery." *ABC News Network*, 25 Apr. 2012. Web. 4 Jan 2015.
<<http://abcnews.go.com/Health/niptuck-nations-countries-cosmetic-surgery/story?id=16205231>>.

- Corsetti, Giancarlo, Paolo Pesenti, and Nouriel Roubini. "What Caused the Asian Currency and Financial Crisis?" *Japan and the World Economy* (1999): 305-73. Print.
- DiMoia, John Paul. "Meet the State." *Reconstructing Bodies: Biomedicine, Health, and Nation-building in South Korea since 1945*. N.p.: Stanford UP, 2013. 177-79. Print.
- "DOCS: Cosmetic Surgery Gone Wrong (Body Image)." *YouTube*. Barcroft TV, 25 Nov. 2014. Web. 3 Jan. 2015. <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yimrr9yS00E>>.
- Dorland's Illustrated Medical Dictionary*. 32nd ed. Philadelphia: ELSEVIER, 2011. 529. Print.
- "Eyelid Surgery by Prof Dr CN CHUA 蔡鐘能." : *Beware of Bogus Korean Plastic Surgeons*. 2 Nov. 2014. Web. 27 Jan. 2015. <<http://eyelidsurgerymalaysia.blogspot.com/2014/11/beware-of-bogus-korean-plastic-surgeons.html>>.
- Francis, Jeannette. "The K-Pop Effect." *YouTube*. SBS Dateline, 13 Mar. 2013. Web. 1 Mar. 2015. <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AjWqshVF51A>>.
- Gelini, Chris. "How Has God Made You Unique." Park Boulevard Presbyterian Church. 5 Oct. 2008. Web. 2 Feb. 2015. <<http://www.pbpc.org/>>.
- Hall, Christine C. Iijima. "Asian Eyes: Body Image and Eating Disorders of Asian and Asian American Women." *Eating Disorders* (1995): 8-19. Print.
- "Hallyu, Yeah!" *The Economist*. The Economist Newspaper, 25 Jan. 2010. Web. 2 Feb. 2015. <<http://www.economist.com/node/15385735>>.

Holliday, Ruth, and Joanna Elfving-Hwang. "Gender, Globalization and Aesthetic Surgery in South Korea." *Body & Society* 18 (2012): 1-24. Print.

Huss-Ashmore, Rebecca (2000). "‘The Real Me’: Therapeutic Narrative in Cosmetic Surgery", *Expedition* 42(3):26-38.

"ISAPS International Survey on Aesthetic/Cosmetic Procedures Performed in 2011." *International Society of Aesthetic Plastic Surgery*. 30 Dec. 2011. Web. 19 Nov. 2014. <<http://www.isaps.org/Media/Default/global-statistics/ISAPS-Results-Procedures-2011.pdf>>.

Ja-young, Yoon. "Cosmetic Jaw Surgery Poses Big Risks." *Koreatimes*. 22 Nov. 2013. Web. 3 Jan. 2015. <http://koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/culture/2013/11/135_146726.html>

Kim, Violet. "Welcome to the Plastic Surgery Capital of the World." *CNN Travel*. 9 Aug. 2012. Web. 10 Feb. 2015. <<http://travel.cnn.com/seoul/visit/ideals-beauty-plastic-surgery-capital-world-389581>>.

"KOREA: Seoul to Promote Cosmetic Surgery Tourism." *Medical Tours Korea*. Web. 11 Jan. 2015. <<http://www.medicaltourskorea.com/industry/mtk-news/50-korea-seoul-to-promote-cosmetic-surgery-tourism>>.

"Korean Government Enhance Patient Protection." Korean Ministry of Health & Welfare, 3 Feb. 2015. Web. 7 Feb. 2015. <http://english.mw.go.kr/front_eng/al/sal0201vw.jsp?PAR_MENU_ID=1002&MENU_ID=100203&page=1&CONT_SEQ=317210>.

"Korean Actresses Who Admit to Having Plastic Surgery." *Oh Kpop!* 2 May 2014. Web. 2 Jan. 2015. <<http://www.ohkpop.com/154024/korean-actresses-who-admit-to-having-plastic-surgery>>.

"Kpop, Plastic Surgery, and Power in Korean Society." *Fashion Cultures Parsons*. 8 Apr. 2014. Web. 7 Jan. 2015. <<https://fashionculturesparsons.wordpress.com/2014/04/08/kpop-plastic-surgery-and-power-in-korean-society/>>.

- Kuwahara, Yasue (2014). "Hallyu: Korean Popular Culture in Japan." *The Korean Wave: Korean Popular Culture in Global Context*. Ed. Yasue Kuwahara. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014. 213-216. Print.
- Lah, Kyung. "Plastic Surgery Boom as Asians Seek 'western' Look." *CNN*. Cable News Network, 23 May 2011. Web. 25 Mar. 2015.
<<http://www.cnn.com/2011/WORLD/asiapcf/05/19/korea.beauty/>>.
- "Laws and Regulations concerning Attraction of Investors." Tourism Promotion Act. *Visit Korea*. 5 Sept. 2005. Web. 13 Nov. 2014.
<http://asiaenglish.visitkorea.or.kr/ena/bs/tour_investment_support/invest_guidance/content/cms_view_655066.jsp>.
- Lee, Chong-Sik. *The Politics of Korean Nationalism*. Berkeley, California: University of California, 1963. 98. Print.
- Lee, Su Hyun. "For Love and Money, Koreans Turn to Facial Tucks." *New York Times*, 14 May 2006. Web. 5 Feb. 2015.
<http://www.nytimes.com/2006/05/14/world/asia/14iht-face.1734557.html?_r=1&>
- Lee, Eric P. H., Hyun Jeong Min, Russell W. Belk, Junko Kimura, and Shalini Bahl. "Skin Lightening and Beauty in Four Asian Cultures." 35 (2008): 445. Print.
- Lee, Sharon Heijin. "The (geo)politics of Beauty: Race, Transnationalism, and Neoliberalism in South Korean Beauty Culture." (2012): 109-13. Web.
<http://deepblue.lib.umich.edu/bitstream/handle/2027.42/93903/shalee_1.pdf?sequence=1>
- "'Let Me In 3' Transforms Bullied Girl Into YoonA Through Plastic Surgery." *Soompi*. 15 Aug. 2013. Web. 15 Dec. 2014.
<<http://www.soompi.com/2013/08/25/let-me-in-3-transforms-bullied-girl-into-yoona-through-plastic-surgery/>>
- Liu, David-Palumbo. "Bodies and Souls." *Asian/American Historical Crossings of a Racial Frontier*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1999. 99-103. Print.

- MacLeod, Calum. "Medical Tourists Flock to Seoul for Cosmetic Surgery." *USATODAY.COM*. 27 Dec. 2011. Web. 25 Sept. 2014. <<http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/world/story/2011-12-26/south-korea-plastic-surgery/52236372/1>>.
- Madeleine Han, Seunghwa. "Pretty in Plastic -- K-Pop and Korea's Plastic Surgery Boom" *New America Media*. 12 Dec. 2012. Web. 10 Jan. 2015. <<http://newamericamedia.org/2012/12/pretty-in-plastic---k-pop-and-koreas-plastic-surgery-boom.php>>.
- Mahr, Krista. "South Korea's Greatest Export: How K-Pop's Rocking the World." World South Korea's Greatest Export How KPops Rocking the World Comments. *TIME*, 7 Mar. 2012. Web. 10 Mar. 2015. <<http://world.time.com/2012/03/07/south-koreas-greatest-export-how-k-pops-rocking-the-world/>>
- "Man Sues Ex-wife over Ugly Children and Wins: Daughter's Looks 'horrified' Him." *Examiner.com*. 8 Nov. 2013. Web. 2 Feb. 2015. <<http://www.examiner.com/article/man-sues-ex-wife-over-ugly-children-and-wins-daughter-s-looks-horrified-him>>
- Marquet, Jennifer. "K-pop : The Story of the Well-oiled Industry of Standardized Catchy Tunes." *InaGlobal*. 29 Nov. 2012. Web. 14 Dec. 2014. <<http://www.inaglobal.fr/en/music/article/k-pop-story-well-oiled-industry-standardized-catchy-tunes>>.
- McFarlin, Dean B., and Paul D. Sweeney. "Leading People and Teams Across Cultural Boundaries." *International Organizational Behavior Transcending Borders and Cultures*. New York: Routledge, 2013. 212. Print.
- "Medical Tourism." *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 23 Feb. 2015. Web. 9 Mar. 2015. <<http://www.cdc.gov/features/medicaltourism/>>.
- "Medical Tourists to Korea Expected to Reach One Million per Year in 2020." *BusinessKorea*. 13 Nov. 2013. Web. 14 Apr. 2015. <<http://www.businesskorea.co.kr/article/2180/medical-tourism-medical-tourists-korea-expected-reach-one-million-year-2020>>.
- Merriam-Webster*. "Chaebols". Web. 26 Jan. 2015. <<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/chaebol>>.

- Palumbo-Liu, David. *Asian/American Historical Crossings of a Racial Frontier*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1999. 99-103. Print.
- Pai, Hyung. "Nationalism and Rewriting of Past Wrongs." *Constructing "Korean" Origins: A Critical Review of Archaeology, Historiography, and Racial Myth in Korean State-formation Theories*. Harvard U Asian Center, 2000. 258-262. Print.
- Pettit, Carl. "Extreme Plastic Surgery in South Korea." *The Blot Magazine*. 23 Apr. 2014. Web. 28 Nov. 2014. <<http://theblot.com/extreme-plastic-surgery-south-korea-identity-crisis-meaning-7718504>>.
- "[Plastic Surgery] Which Korean Celebrities Possess Golden Ratio for Facial Beauty?" *Oh! Kpop*, 5 Jan. 2015. Web. 19 Feb. 2015. <<http://www.ohkpop.com/197972/plastic-surgery-which-korean-celebrities-possess-golden-ratio-for-facial-beauty>>.
- "Plastic Surgery in Korea - Eat Your Kimchi." *Eat Your Kimchi RSS*. 12 Dec. 2013. Web. 25 Feb. 2015. <<http://www.eatyourkimchi.com/plastic-surgery-in-korea/>>.
- "PSY's 'Gangnam Style': The Billboard Cover Story." *BillBoard*, 26 Oct. 2012. Web. 7 Feb. 2015. <<http://www.billboard.com/articles/columns/k-town/474456/psys-gangnam-style-the-billboard-cover-story?page=0%2C1>>.
- Potrzeba Lett, Denise. "Occupations and Income." *In Pursuit of Status: The Making of South Korea's "new" Urban Middle Class*. Harvard Univ Asia Center, 2001. 51. Print.
- "Reframing the Korean Plastic Surgery." *Beyond Hallyu*. 8 Aug. 2013. Web. 26 Oct. 2014. <<http://beyondhallyu.com/culture/reframing-the-korean-plastic-surgery-debate-pt-3-modern-history-traditional-culture/>>.

- "Research/Surveys/Statistics ." *Medical Research And Surveys*. Medical Tourism Association, 1 Jan. 2013. Web. 11 Jan. 2015.
<<http://www.medicaltourismassociation.com/en/research-and-surveys.html>>.
- Rousse-Marquet, Jennifer. "K-pop : The Story of the Well-oiled Industry of Standardized Catchy Tunes." *InaGlobal*. 29 Nov. 2012. Web. 4 Mar. 2015.
<<http://www.inaglobal.fr/en/music/article/k-pop-story-well-oiled-industry-standardized-catchy-tunes>>.
- Sang-hun, Choe. "In South Korea, Plastic Surgery Comes Out of the Closet." *The New York Times*, 3 Nov. 2011. Web. 5 Nov. 2014.
<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/11/04/world/asia/in-south-korea-plastic-surgery-comes-out-of-the-closet.html?pagewanted=all&_r=2&>.
- Savada, Andrea Matles, and William Shaw. "Korea Under Japan Rule." *South Korea: A Country Study*. Washington, D.C.: Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, 1992. 20-24. Print.
- "Seoul, a Plastic Surgery Tourism Hot Spot." *ABC News*. 12 July 2014. Web. 18 Oct. 2014. <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7ovyzkRmdVU>>.
- Slanden, Camille. "South Korean Parents Are Making Their Kids Get Plastic Surgery." *VICE*. 14 May 2013. Web. 14 Jan. 2015.
<<http://www.vice.com/gr/read/south-korean-parents-are-making-their-kids-get-plastic-surgery>>.
- "South Korea Cracks down on Foreign-focused Plastic Surgery Clinics." *Medical Express*. 13 Feb. 2015. Web. 7 Mar. 2015. <<http://medicalxpress.com/news/2015-02-korea-foreign-focused-plastic-surgery-clinics.html>>.
- "South Korea's Plastic Surgery Boom's Victims: Dodgy Doctors and Botched Jobs." *SBS TV*. 3 Nov. 2014. Web. 15 Feb. 2015.
<<http://www.sbs.com.au/news/article/2014/11/02/south-koreas-plastic-surgery-booms-victims-dodgy-doctors-and-botched-jobs>>

"SOUTH KOREA: Korea Increases Number of International Patients." *International Medical Travel Journal*, 4 June 2014. Web. 7 Jan. 2015.
<<http://www.imtj.com/news/?entryid82=442510#sthash.ygRIP44m.dpuf>>.

"SOUTH KOREA: South Korean Medical Tourism Increasing." *International Medical Travel Journal*, 21 Feb. 2014. Web. 25 Dec. 2014.
<<http://www.imtj.com/news/?entryid82=436838>>.

Stewart, Dodai. "I Can't Stop Looking at These South Korean Women Who've Had Plastic Surgery." *Jezebel*. 16 Jan. 2013. Web. 20 Dec. 2014.
<<http://jezebel.com/5976202/i-cant-stop-looking-at-these-south-korean-women-who've-had-plastic-surgery>>.

Stevenson, Alexandra. "Plastic Surgery Tourism Brings Chinese to South Korea." *The New York Times*. The New York Times, 23 Dec. 2014. Web. 4 Jan. 2015.
<http://www.nytimes.com/2014/12/24/business/international/plastic-surgery-tourism-brings-chinese-to-south-korea.html?_r=0>.

Thompson, Lana. "Is Ethnicity Bad?" *Plastic Surgery*. Santa Barbara, CA: Greenwood, 2012. 98, 332. Print.

"Top 10 Most Popular Procedures in the U.S." CBSNews. CBS Interactive. Web. 3 Feb. 2015. <<http://www.cbsnews.com/pictures/top-10-most-popular-cosmetic-procedures-in-us/2/>>.

"Tourists Flock to South Korea Surgeons Seeking Celebrity Looks." *Dailytelegraph*. 16 Apr. 2012. Web. 27 Jan. 2015.
<<http://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/lifestyle/tourists-flock-to-south-korea-surgeons-seeking-celebrity-looks/story-e6frf00i-1226327046256>>.

"True or False: Man in China Sues Wife for Having an Ugly Daughter." *Examiner.com*. 10 Nov. 2013. Web. 12 Jan. 2015. <<http://www.examiner.com/article/true-or-false-man-china-sues-wife-for-having-an-ugly-daughter>>.

Tudor, Daniel. "Democracy: Beyond Asian Values." *Korea: The Impossible Country*. Tokyo: Tuttle, 2012. 78-80. Print.

Youn, Anthony. "Asia's Ideal Beauty: Looking Caucasian - CNN.com." *CNN*. Cable News Network, 26 June 2013. Web. 1 Feb. 2015.
<<http://www.cnn.com/2013/06/25/health/asian-beauty/index.html>>.

Walsh, John (2014). "Hallye as a Government Construct." *The Korean Wave: Korean Popular Culture in Global Context*. Ed. Yasue Kuwahara. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014. 13-16. Print.

"성형외국인 출국장서 못알아봐... 병원 '동일인' 인증." ("Face Verification Certificates for International Tourists") *Munhwa*. 9 Apr. 2014. Web. 14 Dec. 2014.
<<http://www.munhwa.com/news/view.html?no=2014040901030227150002>>.