

*International Journal of Korean Humanities and Social Sciences*

vol. 10/2024

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.14746/kr.2024.10.06>

# **LANGUAGE AND CULTURAL CONTACT IN CASABLANCA: EXPLORING SOUTH KOREA'S INFLUENCE ON MOROCCAN SOCIETY**

**FATIMA MELLOUK, PhD**

Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences

University of Mohammed First, Oujda, Morocco

Phone: +8613061290973/ +212604881740

Email: [fatimamellouk17@gmail.com](mailto:fatimamellouk17@gmail.com)

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0009-0324-7598>

**Abstract:** Morocco has been home to many foreign cultures for decades. Language contact involves the mutual influence of languages between interacting individuals. East Asian people, among the many foreigners in Morocco, have contributed to various practices that attract young people. South Korean culture, in particular, is becoming increasingly popular due to the global reach of its entertainment sector. Consequently, a significant number of young Moroccans are influenced by Korean pop culture, which is

evident in their behaviors. They watch Korean TV shows, listen to Korean music, dress in Korean fashion, and adopt Korean expressions and gestures. These influences contribute to a new, blended culture that isn't entirely Moroccan or Korean. Despite limited academic research on this topic, understanding these cultural exchanges is crucial. This article will focus on Casablanca, with research conducted through questionnaires and interviews distributed online and in person, targeting individuals exposed to Korean culture.

**Keywords:** Language Contact, Culture, Korean, East Asian, Foreign, Young Moroccans, Casablanca

### 카사블랑카에서의 언어와 문화의 접촉 : 모로코 사회에 끼친 한국의 영향력 탐구

**초록 :** 모로코는 수십 년 동안 많은 이질적인 문화의 본거지였다. 언어 접촉은 상호작용하는 개인들 사이에서 발생하는 언어의 상호 영향을 의미한다. 모로코에 거주하는 많은 외국인들 가운데 동아시아인들은 젊은이들을 사로잡는 다양한 문화를 선보여왔다. 특히 한국 문화는 엔터테인먼트 분야의 글로벌 진출로 인해 점점 더 많은 인기를 얻고 있다. 그 결과 상당수의 모로코 젊은이들이 한국 대중문화의 영향을 받고 있으며 이는 그들의 행동에서 분명히 드러나고 있다. 모로코의 젊은이들은 한국의 TV 쇼들을 보고, 한국의 음악을 듣고, 한국 패션을 입고 그리고 한국식 표현과 제스처를 따라한다. 이러한 영향들은 온전히 모로코적인 것도, 한국적인 것도 아닌 새로운 혼합된 문화를 형성한다. 본고의 주제 관련해 선행 학술연구는 아직 부족한 바, 이러한 문화 교류를 이해하는 것은 중요하다. 본고는 카사블랑카를 중심으로, 한국 문화에 노출된 젊은 이들을 대상으로 온라인과 오프라인에서 배포된 설문지와 인터뷰를 통해 연구를 진행했다.

**키워드:** 언어 접촉, 문화, 한국인, 동아시아인, 외국어, 젊은 모로코 인, 모로코, 카사블랑카

## **1. Introduction**

Morocco has a longstanding history as a melting pot of diverse ethnicities and cultures, where people from various races and backgrounds coexist harmoniously within the country's welcoming borders. With a wide variety of Indigenous cultures, including the prominent Berber heritage, Moroccans have a tradition of adaptability and amiability when it comes to living alongside foreigners. Moroccans are famous for their hospitality, a quality enhanced by the flourishing tourism industry that consistently brings together people from all over the world. Thus, Morocco's history of embracing diversity and harmonious coexistence with individuals from different backgrounds is a defining characteristic of the nation. This adaptability, built upon a foundation of multiculturalism and historical interactions, remains a defining feature of Moroccan society.

In recent years, Morocco has actively embraced elements of Eastern Asian cultures, with a particular focus on the influential countries of China, Japan, and South Korea. This infusion of East Asian cultural influences is a testament to Morocco's evolving cultural landscape and its openness to global interactions. Notably, the rich tapestry of traditions and practices from these countries has enriched aspects like cuisine, fashion, art, and even entertainment. Moroccans now enjoy various dining experiences, ranging from Chinese dishes to Japanese sushi, while also exploring K-pop music and other Asian art forms. This cross-cultural exchange reflects Morocco's ever-expanding cultural horizons and its ability to integrate diverse elements from both East and West into its societal fabric.

Korean culture is widely popular and has a good reputation. It is increasingly gaining international recognition and its influence is growing stronger, thanks to its intriguing cultural elements. Many people may associate Korea with its advanced technological innovations and its competitive position among the top global leaders, which is a source of pride and fame for South Korea. However, this

recognition tends to be more prevalent among older generations, often overshadowing what captures the interest of younger generations.

South Korean pop culture, often referred to as "Hallyu" or the Korean Wave, has made a significant impact on younger generations worldwide and is now a prominent player in the world of pop culture. The entertainment industry in South Korea has achieved considerable success on the global stage. Therefore, it begs the question; why not explore this phenomenon more in academia? Why not consider it a remarkable facet of contemporary culture that South Korea has shared with the rest of the world, including Morocco? This cross-cultural exchange deserves more attention and examination within the academic realm as it sheds light on the evolving landscape of global cultural influence.

This article serves as a gateway to highlighting the significance of this phenomenon and provides valuable insights into a topic that remains relatively less known to many. Furthermore, the theoretical framework laid out finds validation in a case study conducted primarily online in the city of Casablanca, chosen due to its substantial population.

The study had three key research questions. It looked at how much foreign culture, especially South Korean pop culture, affects people's lives in Morocco. It also explored how these foreign influences blend with local cultures to create something new. Lastly, the study examined how these influences affect young Moroccans' choices in entertainment, fashion, what they buy, and what this means for their lives and their consumption in general.

## **2. Literature review**

This paper will introduce how Korean culture affects and influences Moroccan society in different ways, which is all based on the theories of globalization, cultural exchange, media and internet influences. It

will explore how the media content that Moroccans are exposed to shapes their perception along with their engagement to the culture itself, its history, and its other cultural elements.

Judging by the geographical location of Morocco, one would predict that it is a meeting point of different cultures altogether, European, Asian, American, and African. Historically, these cultural influences have shaped Morocco which exists today, along with globalization. However, when someone thinks about globalization, the first thing that comes to mind is the main influence of the United States over the rest of the world, but beyond this, there was a significant wave that also spread everywhere and became very popular and attractive, people embraced it, and it soon became widely known. How would such a far and small country as South Korea make its way to a North African country that was not known to have any significant shared history with the former? Two very different cultures came into contact and created a mixture of a newborn culture that the young generations seem to love and admire.

South Korea is a country full of fun traditions and colorful festivities and its entertainment sector is bigger than ever. If you were to ask anyone in the world about one of the music bands, or of some famous figures, or even the country's technological products you would get a positive answer. Of course, at the beginning, it did not reach the whole world but this is what it went through.

K-pop is different. First, it has enjoyed a continued run of success for the past 15 years - a longer span of time than the golden years of the Hong Kong movie industry (from the late 1980s to late 1990s) or the Japanese J-pop wave (during the 1990s). Second, it has drawn in huge audiences in Japan and across Southeast Asia since the early 2000s, paving the way into the rest of Asia and other parts of the world since the late 2000s. Last, but not least, a significant number of K-pop groups have achieved regular chart hits around the world, prompting Billboard to launch a global chart entitled "K-pop Hot 100". Furthermore, YouTube created a specific K-pop entry to its existing musical entries. All combined, these trends give the impression that the popularity and success of K-pop are developing into a true global force. (Messerlin & Shin, 2017)

Looking at how K-pop started to become popular in neighboring countries before it spread to all the other continents, surely shows how strong and influential it is. *Billboard*, an American magazine known for featuring global artists and music albums, was predominantly filled with artists from the US or other English-speaking countries. However, the immense global popularity of K-pop eventually led *Billboard* to start featuring K-pop bands and singers. This shift highlights how K-pop's influence transcended language barriers and achieved remarkable success. Despite being sung in Korean, a language that many listeners do not speak, the universal appeal of music made this success story even more significant. Now, many people are learning Korean and diving into the culture through their love of K-pop.

### **3. Morocco's Historical-Cultural Influences**

The original inhabitants of Morocco were the Berber people, also known as the Amazigh. This indigenous Amazigh population laid the foundations of Moroccan culture, contributing to its richness and complexity. The customs and traditions of the Amazigh are what give Morocco its unique and vibrant cultural identity. According to Stirling (1870-1871), "The races of Morocco may be arranged under the following names: Berbers, AI Ryf (the Ryf-men), Arabs, Bohara troops, and other negroes, or half-breeds, and the Jews." This historical diversity reflects how Morocco has been shaped by various races and cultures over time.

Another major influence on Morocco began in the 7th century with the Arab conquest, which introduced Islam to the region. Along with the religion, the Arabs brought their language, traditions, and customs. Over time, the Moroccan people integrated these elements with their own, creating a unique cultural synthesis that continues to

define Morocco today. This blend is evident in various aspects of Moroccan life, including architecture, cuisine, religion, and language.

The Arab conquest of Morocco in the late 7th century encountered significant resistance from the Berber tribes. Despite this opposition, the Arabs ultimately succeeded in establishing their control, leading to the widespread adoption of Arab culture and the Muslim religion among the Berbers (Morocco.com, 2021). Moroccan Arabic, though influenced by various foreign languages, remains primarily rooted in Arabic.

Another significant influence on Moroccan culture comes from its European and Mediterranean neighbors. The geographical proximity and shared history have facilitated a rich exchange of cultures, ideas, and arts. These interactions have left a lasting impact on Moroccan culture, contributing to its diverse and multifaceted nature.

Another notable influence on Moroccan culture comes from Africa. Morocco has historically played a major role in trade, with routes connecting it to the rest of Africa. This facilitated the exchange of cultural practices and introduced elements of African culture into Morocco's already rich cultural fabric. Today, many Sub-Saharan students and immigrants live in Morocco, though their influence on Moroccan culture might seem modest.

However, the rising global popularity of Afro-music has led some Moroccan artists to incorporate this genre into their work and engage with it extensively. While this influence may not be historical, it represents a contemporary shift in Moroccan culture, highlighting the ongoing exchange of cultural influences. Morocco was also home to Jewish communities in the past, but their influence on Moroccan culture is minimal.

The colonial era in Morocco brought significant changes, particularly in urban planning, language, and administration. French culture had a profound impact on Moroccan society. As noted, "The French culture has left a strong impact on the culture of the Moroccans. One aspect of the French culture that shows the effect of imperialism is the French language." Additionally, the education system was

notably affected by French and Spanish influences. “The school system was another part of Morocco that was influenced by the French and Spanish. During the colonization of Morocco, new schools were established that differed from the traditional Moroccan schools” (Colonization of Morocco, n.d.).

Globalization has also played a significant role in transforming Moroccan culture. It has facilitated numerous cultural exchanges, boosted international trade, and encouraged a cultural fusion that has been embraced globally. Moroccan society is celebrated for its dynamism and diversity. Interactions with various foreign cultures have been seen as a celebration of Moroccan traditions and languages, creating a crossroads where differences are celebrated and cultures blend together.

Until now, South Korea has not had significant encounters with Moroccan culture, at least not in the context we’ve explored in this article. This absence of interaction sets the stage for an intriguing discussion on the potential for cultural exchange between these two regions. In the following section, we will delve into how emerging global trends might influence future connections between South Korean and Moroccan cultures and explore the possibilities for new cultural intersections.

#### **4. The Emergence of Korean Culture in Morocco**

The initial connection between South Korea and Morocco was diplomatic, dating back to 1962 when South Korea established its first embassy on the African continent in Rabat, Morocco. This connection created an opening for a more in-depth cultural exchange, which aligns with cultural diplomacy theory. The theory suggests that when two countries are involved diplomatically, their cultural exchange is bound to expand and they often end up having influences on each other. According to Sorge et al. (2022),



The Korean embassy in Rabat is Seoul's first permanent diplomatic representation on the African continent. In addition, its economic model, based on the nexus of "planning in the industrial and financial fields/ priority to education and work" is considered with attention by Morocco, both by the official authorities and by the public opinion, with which it shares more characteristics than one might think: a long-standing identity, a role of impetus of the State in economic matters, a strong position on economic sectors. Seoul, which pursues a foreign policy that synthesizes economic internationalism and geopolitical isolationism, geopolitically sees Morocco as a privileged entry point for its investments in Africa.

Back then, Korean pop culture was not even close to its peak and had probably gone unnoticed or was nonexistent in foreign countries. However, when it reached its top, it was everywhere, and because of globalization, it made its way to Morocco as well. This is around the same time it reached many countries in Europe, Asia, America, and Africa. In the early 2000s, more people became aware of it through Korean dramas broadcast on local TV channels and dubbed into Arabic or songs played on music TV channels accessible via satellite. As time went on, the influence grew as people watched more Korean content and were exposed to it more frequently. With the advent of personal computers and affordable internet connections, facilitated by technologies like WiFi routers, there was a significant shift in how people accessed and utilized the internet from their homes, becoming more open to Korean culture in all its forms.

This reflects globalization theory, which is based on how the media acts as a connecting bridge for cross-cultural exchanges and interactions. Korean culture spread through dramas, music, and TV shows broadcast on TV and online and began to look more attractive for business. A few Korean restaurants started to open, and people began importing Korean snacks and buying Korean merchandise online. Events were held to celebrate Korean culture, communities were formed, and the community of Korean culture enthusiasts has continued to grow.

Nowadays, there are events and concerts in Morocco, talent shows, Korean singing groups, and festivals related to Korean culture. The Korean embassy in Morocco is active in fostering cultural events such as K-pop concerts, film screenings, and Korean cultural workshops. For instance, the 2019 Korean Film Festival in Morocco demonstrated this effort, showcasing Korean cinema and increasing cultural ties between Morocco and South Korea. "Three Korean films --"A Little Forest," "Assassination" and "Train to Busan" – were screened in the city of Khouribga. Other Moroccan cities like Settat, Agadir, Marrakech, Rabat, and Tangier also featured activities as part of the festival."(Korea.net, 2019). This initiative has not only encouraged people to participate and explore the beautiful Korean culture but also enhanced their appreciation for the richness of the Korean culture in the eyes of Moroccans.

In addition to traditional media, the rise of the internet has also contributed to the spread of Korean culture in Morocco. Popular online platforms allowed the fast spread of this foreign culture. The theory of digital globalization highlights how Korean content became widely accessible almost everywhere. Most of this widespread phenomenon can be attributed to YouTube. Many young people and teenagers are heavily engaged with the internet, particularly YouTube. One notable example of this is the rise of BTS fandom in Morocco, which began on YouTube.

The internet also allowed young Moroccans to create their own groups to share their passion for Korean culture without any direct involvement from Koreans. For instance, the Moroccan fan club BTS Morocco was established by a 23-year-old named Maha. Her journey into Korean music began five years ago while she was casually browsing YouTube. She came across a video by the American YouTube celebrities the Fine Brothers, which featured kids reacting to K-pop. This video sparked her interest, and despite her previous preference for hard rock and thrash metal, she was captivated by the energetic style and sound of the Korean band Super Junior. (Haddad-Fonda, 2021)

Many fans of Korean dramas and music have similar stories, with YouTube being a key platform for discovering and falling in love with Korean pop culture. Its diverse content and captivating appeal make it a prominent starting point for enthusiasts worldwide. Young Moroccans often created online communities to share their love for K-pop and their perspectives on the media content they consume, particularly through the internet. This reflects cultural hybridity, in which it shows how young Moroccans blend both Korean and Moroccan cultural elements.

## **5. The Direct Cultural Exploration of Korea in Morocco and Identity Formation**

The cultural exchange between Korea and Morocco opens up various opportunities for exploration, not only has it affected the local identities of numerous Moroccans, but it has also made its way to their ways of communication. K-pop has led its Moroccan fans to learn the language and communicate through it with each other, fostering an inclusive linguistic exchange. A situation that was witnessed by someone on a train was that a group of Moroccan girls were conversing in Korean with each other, "After speaking to them, I realized that the girls (who are native Arabic speakers) loved K-pop so much that they learned the language and decided to only speak to each other in it" (Mille World, 2019). Now this shows how highly influential is Korean culture through its Music and K-pop.

Direct cultural exploration comes from a rising interest in a certain culture. Looking at the case of Korean culture in Morocco, a significant number of Moroccan youth, especially students, end up applying for Korean government scholarships or exchange programs, mainly because of their interest in exploring this culture that they were exposed to through media and the internet. Their admiration for some aspects of this culture drives their path there.

In celebration of the 60th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Morocco and South Korea, the South Korean ambassador said, “I hope what you will experience in Korea will build not only a bridge between Korea and Morocco but bridges among nations and cultures promoting diversity and multilateralism in this ever-divided world” (Latrech, 2022). This quote shows that the Korean embassy is aiming to promote its cultural aspects through scholarships and visits to the peninsula. The context in which this speech was made was after some Moroccan students were selected to go study in Korea on a scholarship through the GKS program.

The engagement with Korean culture goes beyond simple admiration. The influence it has on the identity of Moroccan youth encourages them to blend different aspects into their everyday lives. An important part of their navigation of this culture and incorporating elements of Korean pop culture while maintaining their Moroccan heritage manifests itself in different ways such as participation in different K-pop events, imitating and performing covers of Korean dances online, following Korean trends online, and creating related content on platforms such as TikTok or Instagram, and even attending events celebrating the Korean culture, as well as events organized by the Korean embassy in Morocco. All of this ultimately marks a strengthened connection to this foreign culture that has made its way to a different continent.

In conclusion, the exchange between the two cultures shows dynamic interactions that will help strengthen the relationship between the two countries and foster cross-cultural connections. Impressively, Moroccan youth seem to be embracing Korean culture through K-pop, as they are expanding their linguistic skills and capacities. Considering how captivating this phenomenon is, many are continuously seeking more opportunities to directly experience Korean culture through the exchange programs and scholarships provided by the Korean government. This interest illustrates a significant desire to embrace a new identity that blends both cultures together.

## **6. Methodology**

### **6.1. Participants and Sampling**

This research was conducted through questionnaires and surveys distributed to various people in the city of Casablanca. Convenience sampling was chosen as the most suitable method for this study. The choice of Casablanca, the largest city in Morocco, is self-explanatory: the high population and diverse communities make it a prime location, as most events related to South Korea are organized there. The targeted population was young people aged 18 to 30. This age range was selected because it represents those most likely to be familiar with Korean culture, engage in related events, and belong to communities and fandoms. The study included 75 participants.

### **6.2. Design**

The adopted approach was quantitative, as it was deemed sufficient to show the results. The goal was to determine whether Korean culture affects Moroccan people and to what extent it integrates into their daily lives. While the quantitative approach facilitates the systematic exploration of broad trends, it is important to recognize that some nuances of cultural influence may not be fully captured by this method alone. Therefore, the findings will be interpreted with an awareness of the potential limitations of this methodology and its capacity to provide a comprehensive understanding of the complex dynamics between Korean culture and Moroccan society.

### **6.3. Instruments**

This study aims to assess the extent of language contact with Korean culture among young people in Morocco. A survey consisting of ten questions was designed to gather responses on various aspects of engagement with Korean culture. The questions explored respondents' consumption of Korean music, television shows, and fashion, as well as their visits to Korean restaurants and interactions with Korean individuals. Additionally, the survey inquired about respondents' motivations for their interest in Korean culture, their efforts to learn the Korean language, and their use of Korean expressions in daily communication. Respondents were also asked about their following of Korean individuals on social media platforms and whether they felt their daily lives were influenced by Korean culture. The survey was distributed among a diverse sample of individuals residing in Casablanca, Morocco, primarily through online platforms.

### **6.4. Procedure**

The data was collected using Google Forms, with the questionnaires distributed online for convenience. Given that most people are more active on social media platforms, it was advantageous to target individuals who are knowledgeable about Korean culture through Facebook groups or Instagram communities and pages. Once the responses were collected, the same platform was used to compile and analyze the statistics. Each question's responses were analyzed individually and then integrated with other responses to form a comprehensive final analysis. This process provided a detailed understanding of the extent and impact of Korean cultural influence.

## 6.5. Demographic information

This study targeted 75 participants from the city of Casablanca, Morocco. The individuals were aged between 18 to 30. This age range was more relevant to the study since this demographic is more likely to have engaged with the Korean culture, and was more likely to be familiar with K-pop and Korean dramas through social media platforms.

### 6.5.1. Gender

Both male and female participants were included in this case study. Female participants represented the majority, as they comprised 77.33% of the sample (58 participants), whereas male participants accounted for only 22.67% (17 participants). There was a significant female presence in the sample, probably due to a higher interest in this matter, as they were more engaged with Korean culture and what it had to offer. This does not mean that male participants aren't interested in Korean culture; perhaps they are simply less active online.

Table 1: Gender Distribution of Survey Participants

Gender	Percentage	Number
Male participants	22.67%	17
Female participants	77.33%	58

## 6.5.2. Occupation

The participants included undergraduates and graduates majoring in fields like engineering, human sciences, and medicine. While this variety did not play an important role in the study, it provides additional context and insight into how these fields might influence interest in Korean culture.

## 6.5.3. Age

The young participants' age range was between 18 to 30 years old. This represents a dynamic age group that has more ties to the age of globalization, hence their familiarity with the Korean culture through its K-pop and its other aspects. The largest portion of participants, 40% (30 individuals), fell within the 18-21 age range. Another 33.33% (25 participants) were between 22-24 years old, while 20% (15 participants) were aged 25-27. The smallest group consisted of participants aged 28-30, making up 6.67% (5 participants).

Table 2: Age Distribution of Survey Participants

Age	Percentage	Number of participants
18-21	40%	30
22-24	33.33%	25
25-27	20%	15
28-30	6.67%	5

This study did not give much attention to additional demographic information, because the focus was on how the Korean culture impacted and influenced the lives of these Moroccans to a certain extent.



## 7. Results and findings

### 7.1. Presentation of results

Korean language and culture have made a great impact in Casablanca, Morocco. This study examines how Korean cultural elements, such as media, fashion, cuisine, and social interactions, are integrated into the daily lives of the participants. The research explores the diverse motivations behind this interest, including the appeal of popular culture, culinary experiences, and so on. This study aims to highlight the broader implications of Korean cultural influence through analyzing local engagement and perceptions, thus, enriching our understanding of cultural exchange and integration in multicultural urban settings.

#### 1. Do you listen to Korean music?

Do you listen to Korean music?

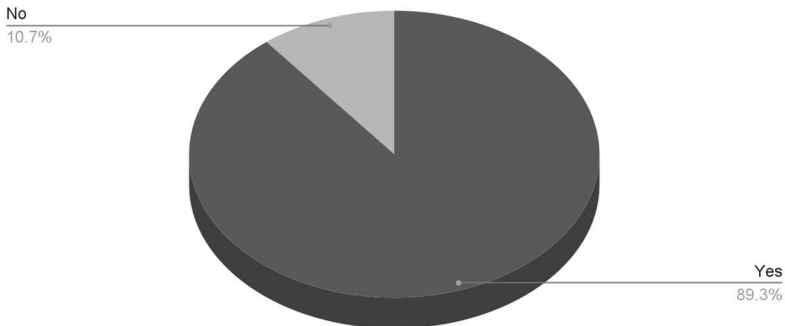


Figure 1. Listeners' Engagement to Korean Music

The question about listening to Korean music serves to assess the participants' engagement with Korean pop culture, particularly in the area of music. The results show that the majority of 89.3% of respondents actively listen to Korean music, indicating a strong connection with this aspect of Korean pop culture. This high level of engagement suggests that Korean music not only resonates widely with the audience in Casablanca but also reflects a broader cultural fascination with Korean pop culture. Identifying participants' connection to Korean music helps the study understand how Korean culture in general affects and integrates into local cultural practices and preferences. This insight is valuable for exploring the broader impact of Korean media and entertainment on global audiences.

2. Do you watch Korean TV shows, dramas... etc?

Do you watch Korean TV shows, dramas... etc?

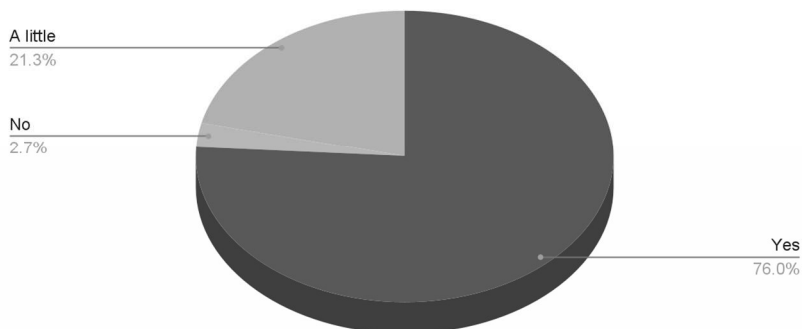


Figure 2. Engagement with Korean TV Shows and Dramas

The survey asked respondents about their viewership habits of Korean television shows and dramas. Results indicate that 76% of participants responded yes, indicating active viewership, while 21.3% indicated occasional viewership. In contrast, the rest of the

participants indicated no engagement with Korean television content. These findings highlight a substantial interest in Korean media. The interest in Korean media comes from its cultural appeal, engaging stories, and easy access. This demonstrates how Korean pop culture influences global media.

### 3. Do you follow the Korean fashion?

Do you follow the Korean fashion?

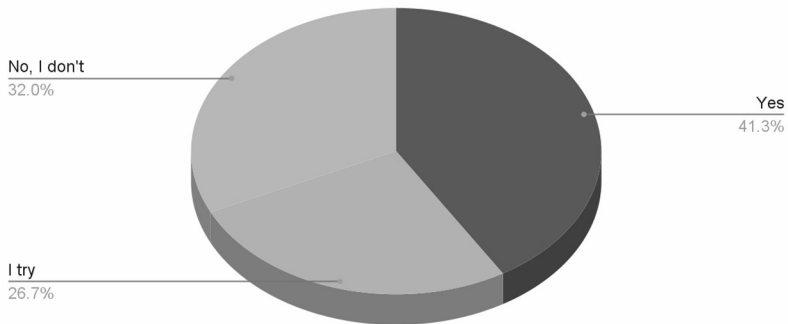


Figure 3. Interest in Korean Fashion

In terms of engagement with Korean fashion, 41.3% of respondents reported actively following these trends, while 26.7% showed modest interest or experimentation. However, an equal percentage of 32% stated no engagement with Korean fashion at all. These findings illustrate a range of attitudes towards Korean fashion within the surveyed population, reflecting both active interest and varying degrees of disinterest or neutrality. The high percentage of active followers suggests a significant influence of Korean fashion, potentially driven by media exposure and cultural appeal. The significant amount of occasional interest indicates potential for higher,

and increased adoption in the future, while the group with no engagement underscores the range of fashion preferences and cultural influences among the respondents.

#### 4. Do you go to any Korean Restaurants or buy any Korean snacks?

Do you go to any Korean Restaurants or buy any Korean snacks?

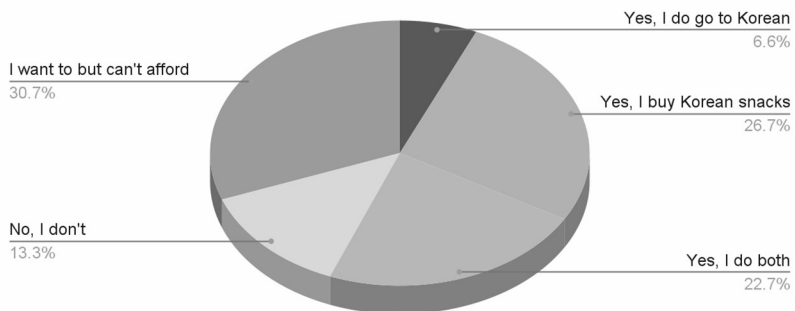


Figure 4. Participation in Korean Culinary Culture

The fourth question explored respondents' behaviors when it comes to Korean cuisine, focusing on whether they visit Korean restaurants or purchase Korean snacks. Results indicate diverse patterns of engagement among participants: 6.7% reported visiting Korean restaurants, 26.7% indicated buying Korean snacks, and an equal percentage of 22.7% reported both activities. In contrast, 13.3% stated no engagement with Korean cuisine, while a significant 30.7% expressed a desire to engage but cited financial constraints. These findings illustrate a spectrum of interest and access barriers to Korean culinary experiences among the participants. Factors influencing these behaviors may include affordability, availability of Korean food options, cultural curiosity, and personal preferences. The reason I

included the option “I want to, but I can’t afford it” is that many of these snacks and restaurants are expensive and not within the buyer’s budget. The results suggest both a growing interest in Korean cuisine and notable barriers that affect its accessibility among respondents.

5. Do you interact with Korean people in your daily life? (in person or online)

Do you Interact with Korean people in your daily life? (in person or online)

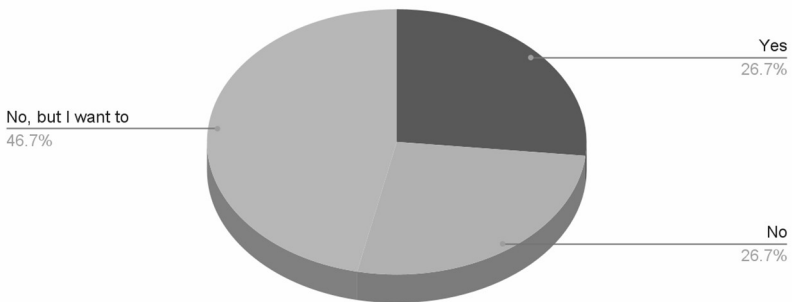


Figure 5. Interaction with Korean Individuals

The fifth question examined respondents' interactions with Korean individuals in their daily lives, whether in person or online. Results show different levels of interaction with Korean people among participants: 26.7% reported actively engaging with Koreans, either in person or online, while 26.7% have no current interactions. Notably, 46.7% expressed a desire to interact with Koreans. These findings highlight a strong interest in cross-cultural interactions with Koreans among participants, even though many are not currently engaging in

such interactions. Factors influencing these responses may include limited access to Korean communities, language barriers, opportunities for cultural exchange, and personal networks. The results suggest potential opportunities for fostering cultural exchanges and connections between individuals interested in Korean culture and Korean communities.

6. Why are you interested in the Korean culture?

Table 3. Themes, Frequencies, and Examples of Interest in Korean Culture

Theme	Frequency	Sample Responses
Music (K-pop)	19	"I love the music and the culture is rich", "I love their music and dance", "Because of Kpop"
Language	11	"I'm captivated and fascinated with the language", "The language and the food were the first thing that interested me!"
Curiosity and Interest	8	"It's interesting and fun to get to explore other cultures", "Because it's amazing"
Food	3	"The food, the language, the music", "Fun shows/movies and delicious food!"
Cultural Uniqueness	12	"I'm interested in the Korean culture because I find it unique", "it is a beautiful culture, rich and interesting."
Learning & Curiosity	1	"It opens my eyes on different horizons, ideologies, and overall a different culture I'm not familiar with."
Media (K-drama/Shows)	2	"I like to watch their dramas", "Most of the Korean culture interests me, including the K-drama"

Theme	Frequency	Sample Responses
Travel and Experiences	1	"I'm grateful I got the chance to visit South Korea. It was the best trip I've ever had."
Fashion and Aesthetics	2	"Fashion is incredible", "I like their food, clothes, and music."

The open-ended question about why respondents are interested in Korean culture revealed a range of reasons. Common ones included a fascination with Korean pop culture like K-pop and K-dramas, a love for Korean food and its flavors, admiration for Korea’s history and art, curiosity about cultural differences, and a desire to explore new cultures. Many respondents also expressed appreciation for opportunities to visit South Korea or engage with Korean culture directly. These findings show that Korean culture appeals to people through its mix of tradition and modernity, artistic achievements, and unique values, highlighting the diverse reasons behind global interest in Korean cultural exports.

7. Did you ever try to learn the Korean language?

Did you ever try to learn the Korean language?

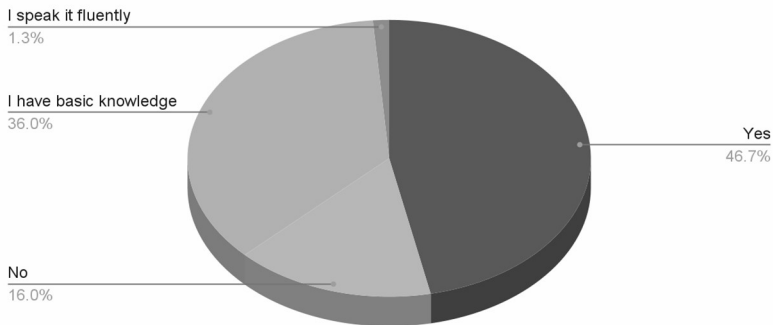


Figure 6. Attempts to Learn the Korean Language

The seventh question explored respondents' experiences with learning the Korean language. The results showed different levels of proficiency and interest among participants: 46.7% reported attempting to learn Korean, 16% stated no previous attempts, 36% indicated basic knowledge of the language, and a small percentage (1.3%) reported fluency. This reflects on the interest in language acquisition among the surveyed population, with a substantial proportion having basic proficiency in Korean. The responses may be shaped by exposure to Korean media, cultural appeal, or a personal fascination with languages. The results emphasize a strong global interest in learning Korean, illustrating its importance as a bridge to more profound engagement with Korean culture and communication.

#### 8. Do you use any Korean expressions in your daily life?

Do you use any Korean expressions in your daily life?

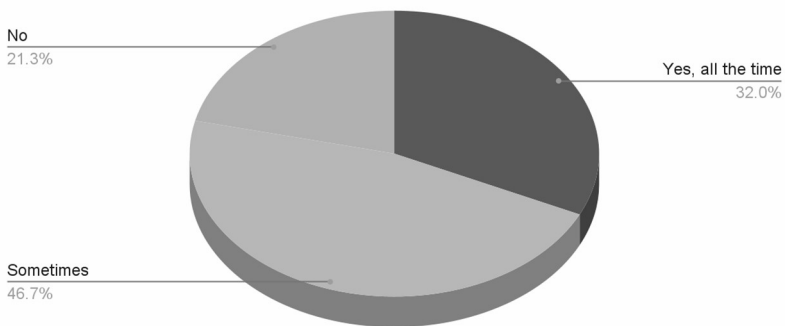


Figure 7. Usage of Korean Expressions in Daily Life

The eighth question investigated how often respondents use Korean expressions in their daily lives. The results reveal that 32% of



participants use these expressions regularly, 46.7% use them occasionally, and 21.3% do not use them at all. This indicates different levels of familiarity with Korean language elements. Frequent users likely have regular exposure to Korean media or a strong interest in the language, while occasional users have some familiarity. Non-users show minimal interaction with Korean expressions. Overall, these findings illustrate the range of engagement with Korean language elements, from regular use to minimal or no use at all.

9. Do you follow Korean people on Social Media? (celebrities and famous people included)

Do you follow Korean people on Social Media? (Celebrities and famous people included)

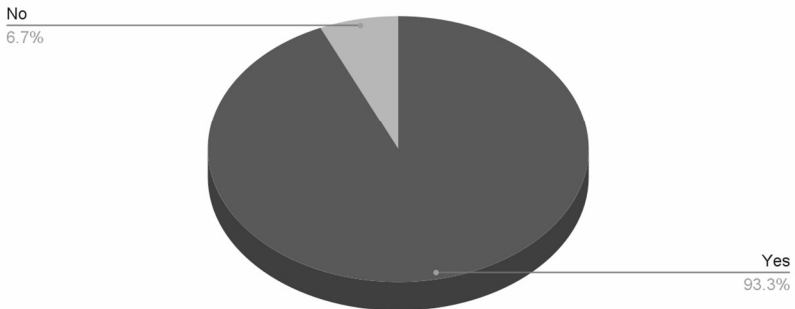


Figure 8. Engagement with Korean Personalities on Social Media

The ninth question explored how respondents use social media to follow Korean individuals, including celebrities and prominent figures. The results reveal a high level of engagement: 93.3% of participants follow Korean people on social media, while 6.7% do not. This indicates a strong interest in Korean celebrities among those surveyed. The reasons for this engagement include admiration for

Korean pop culture icons, exposure to various media, and the role of social media in shaping global cultural trends. Additionally, following these figures online can enhance users' knowledge of the Korean language and culture, potentially increasing their interest and impact. These findings highlight how social media fosters cross-cultural connections and supports global fan communities centered around Korean personalities.

10. Would you say that your daily life is influenced by the Korean culture?

Would you say that your daily life is influenced by the Korean culture?

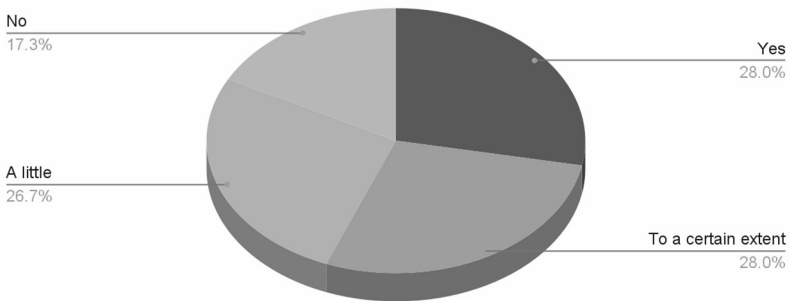


Figure 9. Influence of Korean Culture on Daily Life

The tenth and final question sought to explore how Korean culture impacts the daily lives of respondents. The results show a range of influence: 28% felt a significant impact, 28% experienced a moderate effect, 26.7% noticed a minor influence, and 17.3% reported no influence from Korean culture. These findings reveal how differently Korean cultural elements are integrated into daily routines. The responses might be shaped by factors such as exposure to Korean

media, consumption of Korean products, interactions with Korean individuals, and personal interest in Korean culture. This highlights the varied ways Korean culture touches people's lives around the world. While respondents noted different levels of influence, they may not always be fully aware of how deep this impact can be. The results emphasize the complex and sometimes subtle ways Korean culture influences individuals globally.

## **7.2. Discussion**

The results of this study highlight the significant impact of Korean culture among young adults in Casablanca, Morocco. The findings show that Korean pop culture serves as a gateway to cultural integration, especially K-pop and K-drama. Gender might influence this engagement, as females were the primary consumers of these media forms and their content.

Korean fashion was also considered a draw for many, indicating a growing trend among Moroccan youth. Nevertheless, culinary experiences faced some barriers; many participants reported being unable to explore these experiences due to affordability issues. Specifically, 30.7% expressed a desire to try Korean cuisine but could not for similar reasons.

Another important aspect of accessing a culture is contact with its people. Participants showed interest in getting to know Koreans through online platforms or in real life, highlighting the positive potential for fostering intercultural interaction. Additionally, respondents expressed a strong interest in learning the language, suggesting a desire for both cultural and linguistic exchanges.

Overall, the study reveals that Korean culture is reshaping and transforming the preferences and lifestyles of young Moroccans, eventually leading to a hybrid culture. These influences serve as a pathway toward understanding multicultural contexts. Future research

could delve deeper into specific cultural shifts and the long-term impacts of these cultural interactions.

## **8. Conclusion**

The survey highlights a significant global fascination with Korean culture, particularly through media like K-pop and dramas, which resonate widely. This reflects a profound impact of South Korean pop culture on people's lives, including young Moroccans. Respondents show considerable interest in learning Korean, trying Korean cuisine, and adopting Korean fashion, despite facing challenges such as high costs. This interest stems from a deep appreciation for Korean aesthetics and entertainment, alongside curiosity about the language and history.

The study effectively addresses its key questions: the impact of foreign cultures, especially South Korean pop culture, on Moroccan lives; the blending of these influences with local traditions to form a unique cultural mix; and how these influences shape young Moroccans' choices in entertainment, fashion, and purchasing habits. The findings reveal a dynamic interplay where Korean cultural elements are both integrated into and reshape local practices, illustrating the evolving nature of cultural exchange.

While some respondents report a strong influence of Korean culture in their daily lives, others experience it more subtly. This variation is influenced by factors such as media exposure, personal connections, and cultural opportunities. The results underscore how Korean culture enriches global diversity and fosters cross-cultural understanding, demonstrating its lasting appeal and impact. Further research with larger and more representative samples could provide deeper insights into these cultural interactions and their broader implications.

## Conflict of interest statement:

The author states that there is no conflict of interest to disclose.

## Bibliography

- Haddad-Fonda, Karima. 2021. K-pop in Morocco. *Strangers Guide*. <https://strangersguide.com/articles/k-pop-in-morocco/> (accessed January 25, 2024).
- Korea.net. 2019. Korean film festival in Morocco showcases cultural exchange. <https://www.korea.net/NewsFocus/HonoraryReporters/view?articleId=175567> (accessed September 25, 2024).
- Latrech, Omar. 2022. Morocco, Korea celebrate 60-year anniversary of diplomatic relations. *Morocco World News*. <https://www.morocoworldnews.com/2022/07/350110/morocco-korea-celebrate-60-year-anniversary-of-diplomatic-relations> (accessed July 6, 2024).
- Messerlin, Pierre-Alain, and Shin, Wook. 2017. The Success of K-pop: How Big and Why So Fast? *Asian Journal of Social Science* 45, no. 4/5: 409–39. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/44508094> (accessed February 20, 2024).
- Mille World. 2019. Arabs are obsessed with K-Pop, and this is why. <https://www.milleworld.com/arabs-are-obsessed-with-k-pop-and-this-is-why/> (accessed October 10, 2024).
- Morocco Today. Colonization of Morocco. <https://colonizationofmorocco.weebly.com/morocco-today.html> (accessed January 19, 2024).
- Morocco.com. 2021. Cultural Diversity in Morocco: An Omnipresent History. <https://www.morocco.com/blog/cultural-diversity-in-morocco-an-omnipresent-history/> (accessed March 4, 2024).

- Sorge, Helga, Abdallah Alami, Rachid Benali, and Samira Ezzahra. 2022. Morocco-Korea: An Afro-Asian Partnership Under Construction. *Policy Center*. <https://www.policycenter.ma/interviews/morocco-korea-afro-asian-partnership-under-construction> (accessed March 12, 2024).
- Stirling, James. 1870–1871. The Races of Morocco. *Journal of the Anthropological Society of London* 8: clxix–clxxiii. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3025183> (accessed February 15, 2024).