Analysing the travel trends, patterns, and behaviour of outbound tourists from South Korea over one decade (2010-2019)

[1]Geetika Agrawal, [2]Vikas Madhukar, [3]Ruchika Kulshrestha

[1]Research Scholar, [2]Pro Vice Chancellor, [3]Assistant Professor
Amity Business School
Amity University
Haryana, India.

***Abstract* - This paper aims to study the travel trends, patterns, and behavior of Korean outbound tourists over one decade from the year 2010~2019. The study focusses on the pre-covid 19 period as post that the travel market got deeply affected in the pandemic and is still in its recovering stage. The study is based on the secondary research where the researcher has collected the annual tourism data for 10 consecutive years from Korea Culture and Tourism Institute in South Korea. An in-depth analysis is done on the outbound part of the National Tourism Survey conducted by Korea Tourism Organisation. This analysis portrays a clear picture of the travel trends, patterns and behaviours of Korean tourists to various outbound destinations. The study would help the travel stakeholders to understand the pattern and changes in travel outbound industry of South Korea which can in turn help them to plan the travel and attract the Korean tourists with appropriate marketing strategies.**

Index Terms: **travel trends, travel behaviour, travel patterns, outbound tourism, South Korea.**

I.Introduction

South Korea is widely acknowledged as a major and highly sought-after travel destination in the Asia Pacific region. The country's land area measures 99,678 square kilometres, which is 33 times smaller than India in terms of land area. South Korea, while being small in size, has established itself as a recognised global leader in several technology and innovation-focused fields. The nation proudly possesses the eleventh largest economy globally, measured by nominal GDP. In 2010, it achieved global acknowledgment as the first Asian nation to lead the G20 and host the G20 Seoul Summit National Flag (Worldbank, 2022). Furthermore, it is noteworthy that the country is a member of both the Development Assistance Committee and the Paris Club, as designated by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. According to data from the World Bank, Korea's per capita GDP saw a significant rise, reaching around USD 33,346 in 2018. This progress has firmly established the country as a middle- income nation.

According to the 2019 Korea Tourism Statistics, more than half of the South Korean population, i.e. approximately 28.7 million people were engaged in international travel. Until the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Republic of Korea witnessed a significant upsurge in its outbound tourism industry, characterised by a commendable average annual growth rate of 12%. (OECD, 2022).

When analysing the historical context of outbound tourism in South Korea, it is significant to highlight that until 1989, the Korean government implemented purposeful measures to restrict the extent of international travel undertaken by its people. The measures included many factors such as restrictions on age, time duration, foreign currency conversion and the purpose of the journey. Individuals were required to deposit a substantial amount of money (more than US$2,500 in 1983) to government authority before indulging in international travel. The primary objective of this plan was to increase the country's financial reserves (Kim, 2003). During this period, Taiwan stood out as one of the few known tourism destinations for Koreans. Despite the geographical proximity of China, Koreans were subject to travel restrictions that barred them from visiting Communist nations. Consequently, China, Vietnam, and the Soviet Union were subject to prohibition. The Korean government voiced considerable concern over the possibility of Koreans being drawn to communist ideologies when traveling abroad. This led to the implementation of compulsory anti-Communist education, which remained in place until 1992 (Son, 2014). During that time frame, the government focused on promoting domestic travel by devoting significant resources to improve the infrastructure of the tourism industry. As a result, there was a significant increase in domestic tourism, which then led to a growing preference for traveling abroad (Kim E. Y., 2008). Over time, as Korea's balance of payments situation improved and the demand for overseas travel increased, restrictions gradually became less tight and were completely abolished on January 1st, 1989. The number of people leaving the country increased to 1.2 million in the first year after complete liberalization, indicating a growth rate of 67.3% compared to the previous year. The number consistently grew throughout the years, exceeding 5 million in 2000 and 10 million in 2005. Since 1995, the number of Korean tourists traveling abroad has consistently surpassed the number of foreign tourists visiting Korea, except for the period between 1998 and 1999 during the Asian financial crisis (Yarmy, 1992). The number of Koreans visiting overseas has increased due to rising disposable incomes, a gradual expansion of vacation time, increased globalisation, and a greater awareness of world events beyond the Korean Peninsula. Korean consumers' confidence has steadily increased, resulting in a rise in discretionary spending on activities such as international business and leisure travel. According to a survey from the World Travel and Tourism Council, South Koreans who go abroad spent more than US$30.6 billion in 2017 and are projected to spend over US$53 billion in 2028. Excluding the COVID-19 period, this number has been steadily increasing since 2012 at an annual rate of over 6% (WTTC, 2022).

Despite South Korea's substantial contribution to the global tourism industry, there is a scarcity of scholarly research on the travel patterns of South Korean tourists visiting other countries. Though there are some individual studies trying to understand the travel behaviour of Korean tourists to some particular destinations, this particular study investigates the trends, patterns, and behaviour of Korean tourists traveling overseas from 2010 to 2019. This analysis will facilitate travel stakeholders in comprehending the patterns and modifications inside the South Korean outbound tourism industry. Consequently, they will be equipped to design outbound travel strategies and captivate Korean tourists through appropriate marketing methods.

II. Data Source

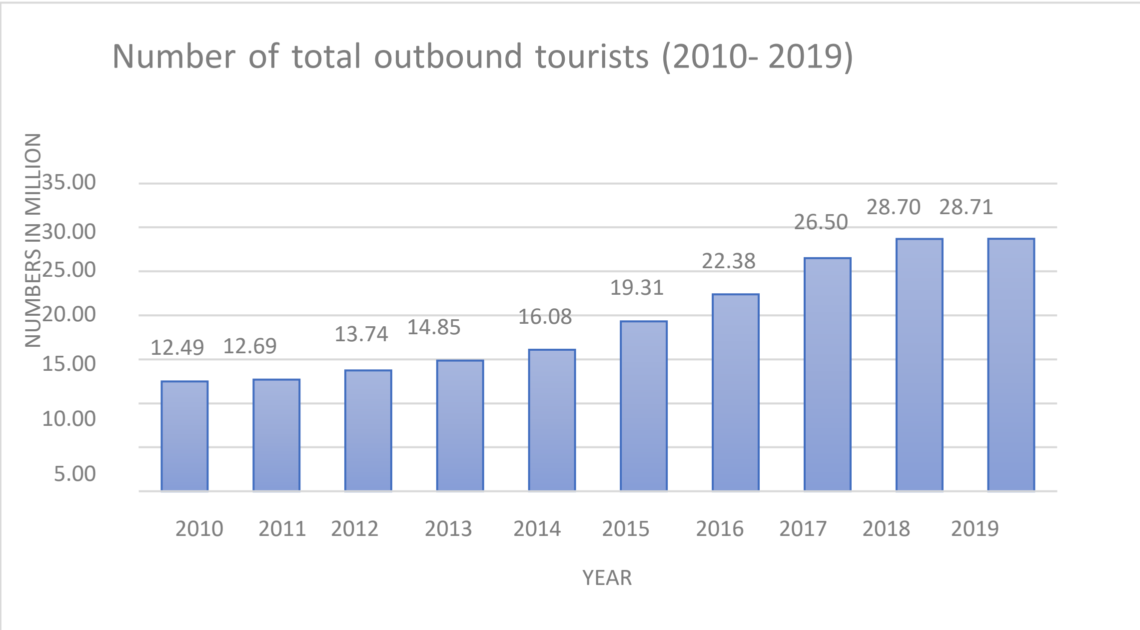
The researcher had visited Seoul, South Korea in June 2022 and has collected the secondary data published by the Korea Culture and Tourism Institute, the sole government-established policy research institution in the field of arts, tourism, and cultural industry in Korea. The institute carries out a survey on both domestic and international travel and prepare a combined report in Korean Language. The purpose of their survey is to gain insights into the travel patterns within the country as well as outside. The collected data serves as a valuable resource for policy formulation, research, and analysis in the field of national tourism. The survey is named 'National Tourism Survey' and is carried out annually. In this study, the researcher has collected the combined annual data for each year, notably from 2010 to 2019. The outbound part of the report was then segregated for each year and translated in English. As the researcher is also a certified Korean language expert, the reports were translated by the researcher herself. The translated data was then analysed for all 10 years to identify the travel trends, patterns, and behaviour of South Korean outbound travellers over the course of a decade. The study is based on the tourism behaviour theory which encapsulates the plans and actions related to tourist spending, duration of visit, attractions, destinations, accommodation, and activities. It also explores the impact of marketing methods on consumer plans (March & Woodside, 2005)

III. Data Analysation

3.1 Demographics of South Korean Outbound Tourists

South Korea ranked as the third-largest source market for outbound tourists in the Asia-Pacific (APAC) region before the COVID-19 pandemic, with 28.7 million overseas departures in 2019 (GlobalData, 2023). Figure 1 illustrates the annual growth in the number of Korean outbound tourists over the past decade prior to the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, based on data from 2010 to 2019.

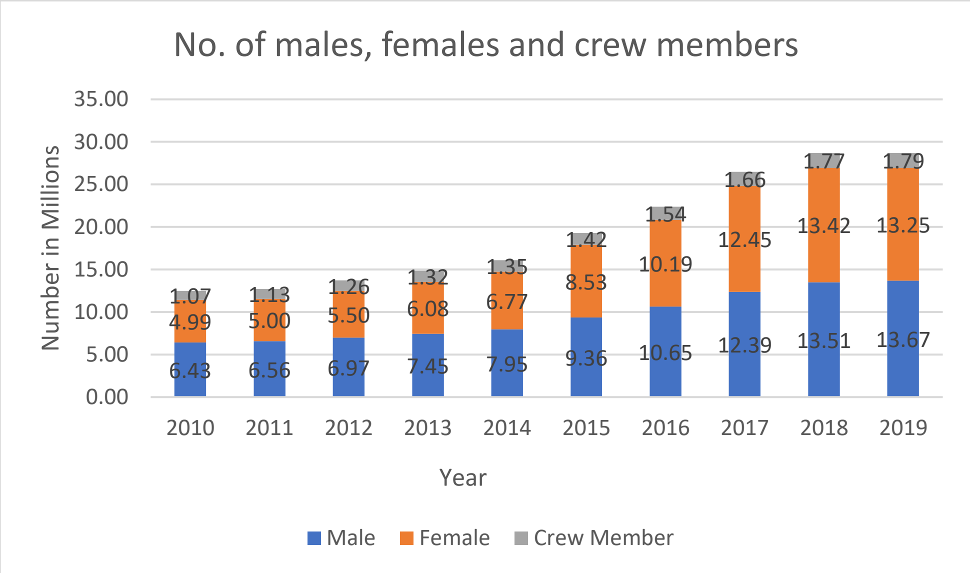
Figure 1. Total number of outbound tourists of South Korea (2010-2019)



The foreign departure from South Korea is expected to increase at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 7.3% between 2022 and 2025, surpassing pre-pandemic levels by 2024. Global Data predicts that by 2025, there will be 30.3 million foreign departures.

The bifurcation of the outbound travellers in terms of males, females and crew members is mentioned in figure 2.

Figure2. Bifurcation of outbound tourists into males/females/crew



Recent research indicates that the travel frequency of South Korean females is nearly at par with that of male travellers in South Korea. While examining the statistics from the past decade, it is evident that there was a difference of approximately 1.5 million between the number of males who travelled more until 2014. However, this gap gradually diminished over the years. Rather in 2017, there were a greater number of females travelling abroad than the males. The year 2018 and 2019 also did not observe much difference in the number of male and female outbound tourists. The same can be confirmed from the UK report which mentions that the ratio of men to women Korean travellers between 2014 to 2016 was 49% vs 51% respectively in UK (Britain, 2021). The Korean society has come out from the tag of being highly paternalistic. Earlier majority of business travellers used to be male but now representation of the women in business sector is also growing as Korean companies are encouraging gender diversity. One of the travel effects mentioned in the South Korea travel research project of Frost and Sullivan was 'Me Effect' which meant that the female business travellers in South Korea is expected to significantly increase, leading to the formation of new categories in the travel industry (Gallego, 2013). Another research examining the evolving Korean tourist industry in Japan, revealed that single women in their thirties exhibited the highest likelihood for traveling to Japan (Ryu, Han, & Lee, 2016). Hence, the participation of the Korean women traveller is bound to increase.

As per data analysis for the last 10 years, the number of crew members which includes the pilots, cabin crew staff remain almost similar, with just a slight increase over the years.

It has been observed that the peak months of the South Korean tourists travelling abroad are July-August and December-January. Probably, this is the time of vacations in Korea and that is one reason that many of the travellers plan a foreign trip with their families and kids. If the average of 10 years is observed, January records highest number as 1545907, followed by August 1500356, then July with 1494287 and December 1406538. Also mentioned by (Espinosa & Kang, 2020), the maximum outbound trips in Korea are observed in the months of January, July and August, that is, during the holiday periods. Maximum visits of Koreans to UK are also made between July to September. (Britain, 2021)

Regarding age demographics, there is minimal variation observed between different age groups in terms of outbound travel. Approximately 20.2% of the tourists belong to the age group of 31 to 40 years. The following age group is 41 to 50 years old, accounting for 19.3% of the total. The mid-aged population of South Korea predominantly engages in maximum leisure, bleisure (business plus leisure), and business trips due to their business objectives and sufficient disposable money to finance international travel (Gallego, 2013). Generation Z, which includes those in their twenties, makes up 18% of the population, while the boomer generation, aged 61 and above, accounts for 11.1%. Senior citizen travel in Korea is increasing. Due to their higher disposable income and increased leisure time post-retirement, a growing proportion of South Korean baby boomers have shown a keen interest in travel and leisure activities. Nevertheless, the consumption and saving habits of baby boomers diverge notably from those of other generations (Ahn, Lee, & Lee, 2019).

3.2 Outbound travel ports and destinations

There are 15 big airports and 5 major seaports in South Korea. Incheon Airport is said to be the busiest international airport in Korea. As per worlddata.info, Incheon airport touches 131 destinations with a network of 66 airlines and an average of 521 flights run in a day. Kimhae international airport in Busan connects 24 airlines and reaches to 36 destinations followed by Jeju and Kimpo airport (worlddata.info, 2023). The data shows that around 75% of the outbound travellers make use of Incheon Airport to travel abroad, which is followed by Kimhae airport in Busan that constitutes around 9% to 14 %. After Kimhae is Kimpo airport which caters to 3% to 5 % of the total outbound travellers.

Figure 3. Topmost destination for South Korean Outbound travel

Country Travelled	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	% increase from 2010 to 2019
Japan	2,439,816	1,658,127	2,044,263	2,456,165	2,755,313	4,002,052	5,090,502	7,140,165	7,538,997	5,584,638	56.3
China	4,076,400	4,185,400	4,069,800	3,969,000	4,181,800	4,444,400	698,100	-		-	
Vietnam	495,902	535,700	700,917	748,727	832,969	1,152,349	1,543,883	2,415,245	3,435,406	4,290,802	88.4
USA	1,107,518	1,145,216	1,041,857	1,238,691	1,449,538	814,596	1,282,097	1,724,622	2,210,597	1,898,158	41.7
Thailand	815,970	1,014,292	1,169,131	1,297,200	1,096,164	1,376,925	1,464,218	1,709,070	1,612,459	1,887,853	56.8
Phillipines	740,622	925,204	1,031,155	1,165,789	662,228	997,135	1,475,081	1,607,821	1,587,959	1,783,357	58.5
Taiwan	216,901	242,902	259,089	351,301	527,706	658,757	882,030	1,054,380	1,019,122	1,081,931	80.0
Hongkong	891,024	1,020,996	1,078,458	1,083,543	1,251,047	1,243,293	1,392,367	1,487,670	1,421,411	1,009,153	11.7
Macao	331,768	398,807	444,773	474,269	554,521	554,177	662,241	874,253	812,842	743,026	55.3
Singapore	360,652	414,864	224,071	354,718	536,544	531,800	566,503	631,297	629,451	645,728	44.1
Malaysia	264,052	263,428	283,977	274,622	385,769	205,013	444,439	484,528	616,783	508,080	48.0

The destinations preferred by South Korean travellers as can be observed from the Figure 3, are Japan, China, Vietnam, USA, Thailand, Philippines, Taiwan, Hongkong, Macao, Singapore and Malaysia. The two countries where a steep increase is shown in last one decade are Vietnam followed by Taiwan. Vietnam in last decade (2010-19) has observed 88.4 % of increase in total number of Korean tourists to Vietnam, which is the highest amongst all the other destinations. As per Hanatour, the biggest stock listed travel agency in Korea, the three most popular cities of Vietnam for tourists are Da Nang, Hoi An and Hue (Song, 2019). After Vietnam, it is Taiwan which has shown a stupendous growth of 80%. Taiwan defeated Thailand to claim the top spot on the list of travel escape searches among all various traveller categories, including couples, solo travellers, families, and groups. Hualien, Yilan and Taipei were the most popular destinations searched for stays, with Hualien and Yilan appearing as new destinations in 2020 (Ji-hye, 2020). The number of Korean tourists travelling to Japan is the maximum and has shown a constant increase. Only in the year 2011, it experienced a decline due to the Fukushima Tsunami in March (Kisang Ryu, 2016). Post 2011, there has been a constant increase barring depression again from 2018 to 2019 because of the trade war between the two countries. According to the International Trade Centre, trade between the two countries dropped from $21.2 billion in the fourth quarter of 2018 to $18.5 billion in 2019, mostly due to lower Japanese exports to South Korea (Dan Kopf, 2020). This must have resulted in the decline of the business tourists travelling to Japan from Korea. Overall, within a decade form 2010 to 2019 it has seen a growth of 56.3%. Osaka, Fukoka and Tokyo are the main cities travelled in order of their preference (Song, 2019). The maximum inbound tourists in China are from South Korea. Over 4 million South Korean tourists visit China every year. In year 2016, the numbers dropped probably because of the South Korea's deployment of the US Terminal High Altitude Area Defence (THAAD) anti- ballistic missile defence system for which the China was completely annoyed. The United States is the leading non-Asian and long-haul destination for Korean outbound travellers. The U.S. is by far the most popular travel destination for Koreans, due to the variety of tourism opportunities and distinctive experiences that aren't typically offered in Asia. Travellers are also fond of American-style shopping, fine dining, theme parks, cultural attractions and golf experience, which is comparatively reasonably priced in U.S. A Korean visitor to the United States spent, on average, $4,900 per journey in 2019. This figure corresponded to more than 11 billion USD in tourist earnings from Korean visitors to the US. In 2019, Korea was the sixth largest source of inbound travel to the U.S., behind Canada, Mexico, the United Kingdom, Japan, and China (ITA, 2022). Thailand is one of the top 5 outbound destination for South Korea. From 2010 to 2019, it has shown a jump of 56.8%. Koreans like to visit Thailand because of unique experiences, proximity, being inexpensive and being a visa exempted destination for Koreans. Next is Philippines, which has also shown a growth of 58.5% in the span of a decade. Koreans dominate the tourism sector of Philippines having a lion share, with around 24.28% of all international visitors to the Philippines in 2017. Due to its proximity to Korea and affordability of its exotic scenery and attractions, the Philippines has become one of the most popular tourism destinations for Koreans (Hae-rin, 2022).

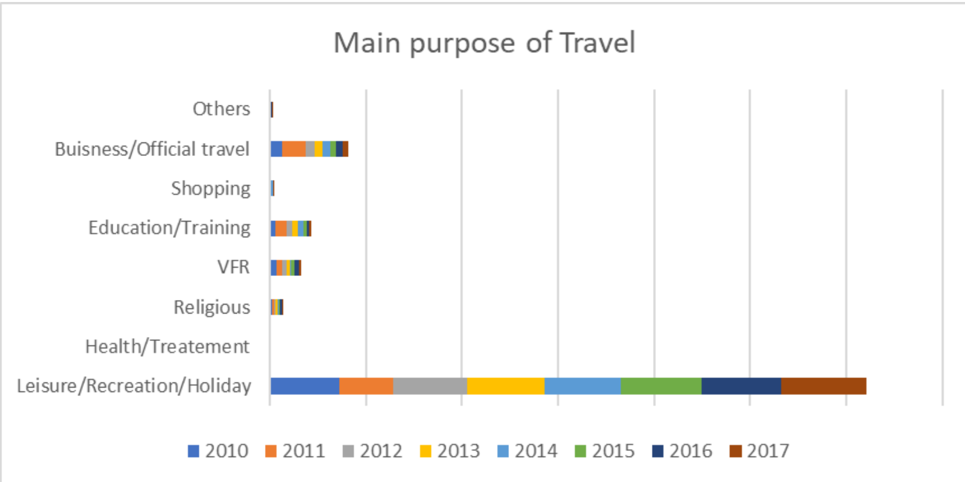
Singapore Tourism Board Marketing Insight Report of the year 2015 also highlighted that most of South Korea's outbound destinations were within Asia and the most popular international travel locations are China and Japan because of their proximity to South Korea. The United States was the only long-haul destination for Koreans, may be due to the US's reputation as an aspirational location as well as the easing of visa requirements since 2008, which have made the US more accessible to South Koreans. (STB Market Insights-South Korea, 2015)

A study was carried out to analyze the outward travel patterns of Asian countries such as South Korea, Japan, Indonesia, Thailand, and Taiwan across international borders. The study examined outbound statistics and qualitative variations in travel behavior among visitors from the nations specified above. Commonalities were seen, such as a preference for group travel over solo travel, a desire for luxury brand purchasing, and a reluctance to provide direct feedback to service providers. The distinguishing factor of Koreans is their choice for Korean-speaking guides and their great inclination towards their own cuisine. Koreans exhibit a greater inclination towards seeking adventure compared to the Japanese. In analyzing the overseas travel industry, it was shown that Indonesians are mostly influenced by trade factors, Koreans are primarily influenced by price factors, and the Japanese market is increasingly driven by consumer preferences (March, 1997).

3.3. Purpose of Travel

The survey inquired about the reasons why those who do not travel internationally choose not to do so. The predominant explanations provided were limited availability of leisure time and financial limitations. The other reasons provided were either health concerns or the absence of someone to care for the family at home. Koreans were commonly recognized for their tendency to work extended hours and for having a substantial imbalance between their professional and personal lives. The Korean government has recently announced a measure to improve the situation by reducing the maximum working hours from 68 to 52 hours per week. This modification aims to provide individuals with sufficient time for family and leisure activities (The Strait Times, 2018).

Figure 4. Main purpose of travel



Tourists were queried about their primary purpose of travel from 2010 to 2017. This question was dropped from the year 2018. According to the data, the majority of tourists indicated that their main reason for traveling was leisure, recreation, or vacation, followed by business or official trips. The majority of travellers, approximately 70-80%, travel for leisure, while business trips accounted for around 6-12% of the overall number of tourists. Only in the year of 2011, that the leisure tourism has fallen to 56.6% and business tour has gone up to 24.7%. Currently, business travellers are not limited to major conglomerates known as chaebols, but also include individuals from small and medium-sized firms, which constitute a significant sector. Additionally, there has been a notable increase in the number of female business travellers. Approximately 5.3% of individuals engage in travel specifically for the aim of education and training. A significant number of Korean students opt to pursue their studies overseas. The United States is the most popular study abroad location because it is the most familiar English-speaking place for Koreans. South Korean students account for 7 percent of the United States' international student population with more than 81,000 students studying in the United States (HomlandSecurity, 2015). The next specified objective is VFR, which accounts for approximately 4.1%. Korea has a big diaspora of over 8 million Koreans residing in USA, China and Japan, with the number of tourists visiting their friends and family with growth (Yoon, 2005). As mentioned in a Frost and Sullivan report, the number of visitors to Korea is expected to increase significantly due to the emergence of new segments, including the Visit Friends and Relatives traveller, the female business traveller, and the small business traveller (Gallego, 2013). The average percentage of people who travel for religious purposes is 1.7%, whereas the percentage of people who travel for shopping is 0.95%.

3.4 Collection of information sources for travel and internet usage

Till the year 2017 the survey for outbound tourism was done differently for the Family travel and Individual travel. The results for choosing the information sources for the travel were little different in the family and individual travel. From family travel around 40~50% people used travel agencies as the main source to collect information followed by the advice of family and relatives which constituted for around 20~25%. Average around 11-12% used Internet Sites and seek guidance of their friends or colleagues to plan their travel. Whereas in the case of individual travel, friends and colleagues also played a major role on collecting information. Though the maximum usage is of the travel agencies which is around 30% on average, friends and colleagues are at 26% average. This is followed by the usage of internet sites, around 15% and prior travel experiences which is on average 9%.

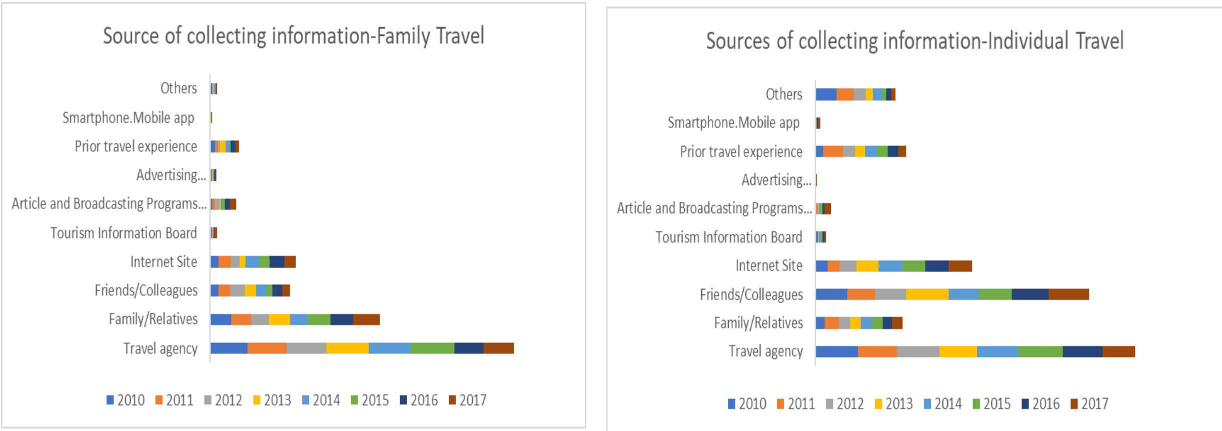


Figure 5. Sources of Collective Information (Family travel Vs Individual Travel)

In the data for the years 2018 and 2019, the survey no longer distinguished between family travel and individual travel. Additionally, the parameter of family friends was incorporated into the category of neighbourhood, which includes relatives, friends, colleagues, etc. Furthermore, the mobile app was integrated as part of the internet site. Since 2018, there has been a shift in patterns where visitors rely more on their own social circle, such as friends, coworkers, and relatives, for acquiring travel information instead of relying on travel agencies, which was the prevailing trend until 2017. The reliance on online platforms and mobile applications is steadily growing and accounts for around 25% in 2019.

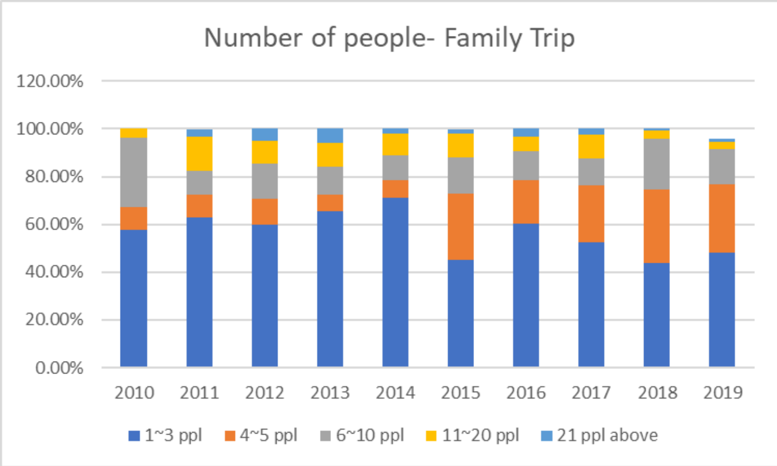
Currently, Korea is at the forefront of global Information Technology adoption, making them the most knowledgeable and skilled travellers in terms of technology. Almost all Koreans, up to the age of 50, utilise the internet, spending an average of 2 hours every day online. According to the August 2012 Asia Pacific travel report, over 66% of Korean leisure travellers make their travel arrangements online, either through a travel agent's website or directly with a travel provider. According to Statista's 2023 estimates, Korea has the highest smartphone penetration rate in the world, reaching approximately 97.4%. Koreans are noted for their expertise in utilising smartphones to make travel bookings and arrangements. Travel suppliers must ensure that their online presence is optimised for both web and mobile platforms. Social media plays a crucial role in the travel business as travellers utilise it for both research and transactions. In Korea, the popular online platforms used by a majority of the population, especially those in their 20s, are Naver, Daum, and Tistory, rather than Facebook or Yahoo. It is quite prevalent in Korea for individuals to maintain a blog or a customised homepage, sometimes known as a minihomepy.

While analysing the last ten years of data, it was noted that over 70% of tourists use web portal sites such as Naver and Daum to seek information. 9% of travellers rely on travel agents, while approximately 8% use travel cafes or social networking sites to gather travel information. Personal homepages or blogs make up approximately 5% on average, but they are on increase year after year. Also stated by (Song, 2019), 76.8% of travellers use portal sites like Naver and Daum when they are looking for information about their trip.

3.5 Type of travel

As per the tradition, Korean society is quite family centric, and Koreans travel in family groups for leisure as a part of organised group tours. It has been observed while analysing the data that in a family travel, majority consists of 1~3 people in a family. From 2015, the percentage of family travel consisting of 4 to 5 people has grown. The family travelling in big groups of 11 and above has declined with time.

Figure 6. Number of people accompanying in family trip

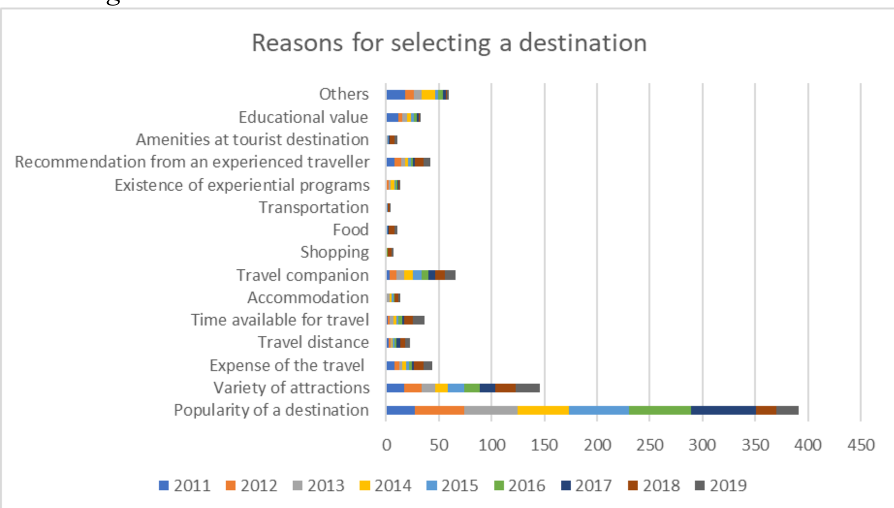


Most Koreans opt for organized travel packages when visiting foreign countries, but, a growing number of young individuals are increasingly embracing independent travel, also known as "free travel". Typically, all-in-one packages are purchased approximately 2-3 months prior to departure. There are two distinct categories of packages: the full package and partial packages. Full packages are more widely preferred. Partial packages typically comprise of transportation and accommodation (Song, 2019) . As per the data analysed, around 80 to 85% of Koreans prefer to take a full package deal. The data from 2012 to 2019 shows that on average 16% travellers used to take partial packages. 2011 data shows a little higher number of traveller option for a partial package but post that the data shows an upward trend to opting a full package travel.

3.6 Reasons for selecting a destination and activities performed

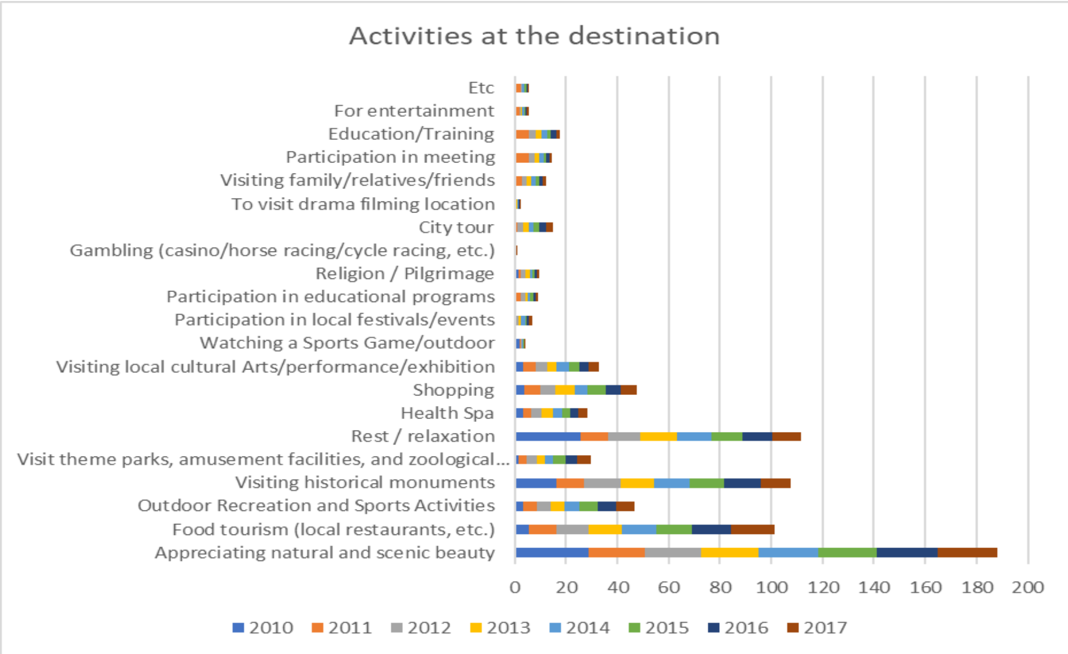
Tourist motivation is defined as a state of need that acts as a driving force for displaying various behaviours towards specific activities, forming preferences, and achieving desired outcomes (Backman, Backman, Usyal, & Sunshine, 1995). The driving force of travel patterns has been primarily motivated by the need to preserve and fulfill one's desires, as well as to enhance an individual's self-worth (Lee & Chen, 2005). When the South Korean tourists were asked about the reason for selecting a particular destination, majority of them answered as popularity of destination (average 44%) was a major factor which help them make their selection which was followed by the variety of the attractions (average 16%) the place has to offer. It also depends on with whom were they travelling that let them decide the destination. Many have selected 'others' as well which means there may be some factor which is not listed here but lead to a selection factor. 5% average of Koreans also give value to the recommendations received from others and the expense at the destination. Educational value attached to the destination and the time available with the travellers are also an item of concern.

Figure 7: Reasons for selecting a destination



Korean travellers are becoming distinctive with specific reason for travelling and with different aspirations for travel. On asking about the kind of activities they prefer to choose in a destination, an average 23% of the tourists mentioned that they enjoy appreciating the natural and scenic beauty at the destination. The second most common motivation for them to travel is to get some rest and relaxation. This accounts for around 14% of the total tourists which is followed by enjoying visiting to the historical monuments and places. Food tourism has also gained a growth of 69% in a decade which now constitutes of an average 13% of the total number of tourists. The other activities mentioned in order of the preference were shopping, outdoor recreation and sports activities, visiting local cultural arts/performance/exhibition, visit theme parks, amusement facilities, and zoological and botanical gardens, health spa, education/training, city tour, participation in meeting, visiting family/relatives/friends, religion/ pilgrimage, participation in local festivals/events, entertainment, watching a sports game, to visit drama filming location, gambling (casino/horse racing/cycle racing, etc.). While comparing the analysis with other studies it was observed that the major activities for Koreans in Britain were visiting museum and art galleries followed by dining in restaurants and shopping, sightseeing historical monuments and castles (Britain, 2021) whereas for Singapore, it was mainly for resting and relaxing (STB, 2015). Incase of Australia the major motivation is natural scenic beauty and natural environment setting (Kim E. Y., 2008) whereas for India it is visiting museums, monuments, forts, palaces and trying variety of food (Nielsen, 2016). The preferred experience during the visit to Japan was found to be "spa", followed by "food" and "Ryokan" and then followed by city tour, theme park, festival, natural tourist attraction, historical tourist sites, and shopping (Kisang Ryu, 2016).

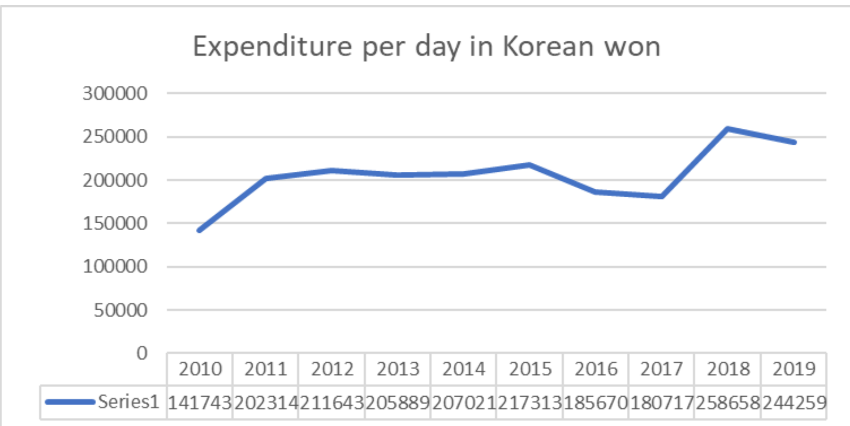
Figure 8. Activities performed at destination



3.7 Travel expenditure

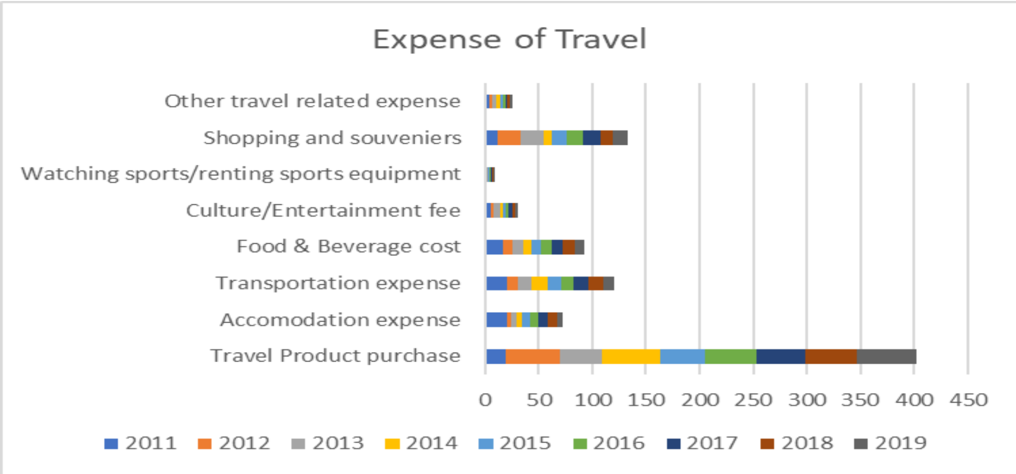
The duration of travel has reduced from an average of 10.2 days trip in 2010 to 4.79 days in 2019. The average expenditure per day amounts to be 205522.78 won which is approximately USD 157.3 per day. The average expenditure per day has shown a decline in the year 2016 and 2017 and then again took a steep hike in 2018 and 2019. As per another research on South Korean outbound tourists, South Koreans have a significantly greater average daily tourist expenditure per capita (€377) compared to European tourists. The top spenders in tourism are tourists from the Philippines (€2,782), China (€2,593), and Korea (€2,229). (Espinosa & Kang, 2020).

Figure 9. Average travel expenditure per day in Korean won



Upon analyzing the expenses incurred in travel, it reflects that the highest amount of money was spent on purchasing travel products, accounting for around 45% of the overall expenditure. The subsequent expenditure for travelers pertains to shopping and acquiring souvenirs, which accounts for approximately 15% of their total expenses. After shopping, transportation accounts for an average of 13.5% of expenses, followed by food and beverages at an average of 10.3%. The cost of accommodation has exhibited a consistent downward tendency on an annual basis.

Figure 10. Expense on travel components



3.8 Pre-Purchase Travel

In 2018 and 2019, additional variables were included in the survey, such as the number of travelers who make a pre-purchase, the time frame in which travelers make pre-purchases of products, and the patterns associated with pre-purchases. In 2018, it was noted that 65.3% of travelers made pre-purchases of products, which increased to 76.4% in 2019. Most of the travellers, around 55% make their purchase 2~3 months before their travel. Approximate around 18% make their purchase a month before and around the same percentage made the purchase 4~6 months ago. Looking at the products of pre purchase, we see that almost 100% tourists travelling abroad make a purchase of transportation means before travelling. Around 93% on average purchase accommodation before travelling. These two components were the topmost in terms of pre purchase travel products. Around 18% also purchase the services of rental cars and approximately 11% also book travel guides before travelling. Less than 10% make purchase of leisure facilities, tourist places, restaurants, cultural, concert or experiential products.

3.9 Satisfaction of Korean Tourists

The level of customer satisfaction serves as a reliable measure of how well a destination is performing. Several scholarly studies (Chea & Luo, 2008; Gounaris, Dimitriadis, & Stathakopoulos, 2010; Szymanski & Henard, 2001) have extensively examined the effects of customer satisfaction and have identified various outcomes associated with it like personal recommendations, consumer complaints and expressions of dissatisfaction, brand loyalty, continuance, recommendation, and repurchase intention/repeat visiting (Wang, 2016)

In the survey, to check the satisfaction of the tourists, three kinds of questions were asked, their rating on overall satisfaction from the trip, intentions to revisit and recommending the tour to others. It was asked on a 5 pointer Likert scale ranging from highly dissatisfied to highly satisfied. On asking about the overall satisfaction, an average 62% were satisfied from their tour and around 27% mentioned their trip as highly satisfactory. Around 10% mentioned it as average and less that 1% were dissatisfied or highly dissatisfied. The percentage of tourists responding their tour's rating as average has decreased year after year and the numbers have increased in the category of satisfied tourists. Asking on their intentions to revisit the destination, majority mentioned that they have intentions to revisit the destinations. The intent of visiting the destination again has increased with years. On an average 56% mentioned that they wish to revisit the destination whereas 27% on average mentioned that they have a very high intent to revisit the destination. Around 18% mentioned an average intent and 3% mentioned that they do not have any intent revisiting the destination. The third parameter used to assess the satisfaction was whether the tourists like to recommend their visited destination to others. On an average around 58% mentioned that they would like to recommend their visited destination to others. Around 23% on an average mentioned that they would highly recommend the destination to others. Around 18% marked it as average and around 3% mentioned that they would not like to recommend the destination to others. Overall, from all the three parameters used to assess the satisfaction, we conclude that around 75% of the tourists were satisfied, around 17% were highly satisfied, 7% mentioned the trip as average and less than 1% were dissatisfied with their travel.

Above was the average of the overall tourist satisfaction rate, researchers have found the satisfaction of Korean tourists to specific counties like the study of Korean tourists to India reflects the 13.9% as excellent on satisfaction, 44.3% as good, 28.6% as satisfied, 12.6% as poor and 0.7% as not satisfied (Nielsen, 2016).

IV. *Conclusion and Implications:*

A constant increase in the number of South Korean outbound tourists is clearly visible while reviewing 10 years of tourism data (2010-2019). It is likely to further grow with the increase in leisure time, deeper pockets, heightened technology, with concepts like work life balance and YOLO- you only live once (Kim, Jung, Seok, & 4, 2022). Tourists want to gain exclusive experiences to make lifetime memories. In case of South Korea, it is evident that the increase is not only with the male gender of the society, but women also equally participate in outbound tourism. Rather there are countries where footfall of Korean women tourists is more than men. For example, in Japan the number of Korean women tourists in the age of thirties is more than men (Ryu, Han, & Lee, 2016), in UK as well the women traveller ratio is more than men (Britain, 2021). The travel stakeholders may focus on creating women centric packages keeping in mind the interest of the women travellers like shopping, relaxation, spa and beauty etc. While reviewing the survey data, there were no major differences within the different age generation of tourists, hence the packages should be well planned for all generations of Korean society. Gen X and millennials generation came a little higher may be because of the higher disposable income and ease in use of technology. The baby boomers may be a little less tech savvy and prefer package and group tours but there is a constant increase in their numbers. South Korea is said to have the maximum internet penetration in the world and are the most tech savvy traveller (Gallego, 2013). Technological advancements, such as social media, search engines, booking sites, travel blogs, and sharing platforms, are significantly altering the competitive environment for tourist enterprises. 70% of the travellers make the use of web portals like Naver, Daum etc and also make use of travel cafes and social network sites to gather information. Travel stakeholders should make the optimum utilization of these web portals for advertising and promotion of their destination products. As per the survey, the duration of the travel has reduced from around 10 days to approximately 5 days which depicts that South Korean traveller prefers to visit the destinations in a closer proximity than the long-haul destinations. USA is the only long hall destination preferred by Koreans because of influence of American lifestyle, variety of tourism opportunities and a large diaspora which leads tourists to travel for VFR. 8 out of the other 10 outbound destinations for South Koreans lies in Asia Pacific region (ITA, 2022). The neighbouring countries Japan and China had highest number of Korean tourists, but few years have shown decline because of trade dispute and THAAD issue respectively. The inter-relationship between countries has a significant impact on the development of favourable tourism relations. Continued tourist inflow can only be achieved through strong bilateral relations. (Timothy & Kim, 2015). The country which has shown the maximum upsurge in Korean tourists inbound in one decade is Vietnam. Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City are vibrant with Korean cultural influences, while coastal resorts such as Da Nang, Hoi An, and Phu Quoc are being specifically designed to cater to the preferences of Korean visitors. (Tai, 2019). Vietnam National Authority of Tourism (VNAT) can be taken as a classic example as they have enhanced the Korean tourist flow by taking various steps like visa exemption for 45 days stay, increasing flight connectivity with important cities and strengthening cultural and tourism ties (Koumelis, 2023). The activities which Koreans enjoy doing is appreciating the natural and scenic beauty (average 23%), followed by visit historical and monument places (average 14%). Travel for food constitute 13%, which has seen a growth of 69% in a decade. Food is an important element for Korean tourists to search in for a destination. In research done on Korean Traveler's behaviour in 2020, many food-related keywords, such as 'Cafe' 'Restaurant Hotspot' 'Restaurant' 'Meal' and 'Food' were ranked very high (Sung, Kim, & Kwon, 2021) which shows the importance Koreans give to food. Around 84% of outbound travellers still prefers to use a full package deal, only 16% selected partial package. The average expenditure averages out to be USD 157.3 per day. Around 45% is spent on travel product, 15% on shopping, 13% on transportation, 10% on food, 8% accommodation, 3% on cultural & entertainment, 1% renting sports equipment and remaining in other expenses. To enhance the expenditure of Korean travellers at a destination, practitioners and destination marketers might employ strategic approaches that prioritise transportation, accommodations, shopping experiences, and recreational activities. They must propose a range of possibilities for hotels and alternative lodgings, sports and leisure activities, and shopping for travellers. Consumers are increasingly looking for customised products and expecting higher levels of service quality. A tourist's satisfaction is dependent upon the fulfilment of their expectations. Only once this happens may a tourist consider engaging in word-of-mouth promotion, recommending the place to others, or expressing an intention to revisit. In analysing the satisfaction rate of Korean tourists while travelling abroad, it was reflected that an average of 75% were satisfied, 17% were highly satisfied, 7% mentioned it as average and 1% were dissatisfied by their trip.

V. Discussions and Limitations:

This study has been done on the secondary data provided by the Korean Culture and Tourism institute which is under the Ministry of Culture, Sports and tourism. The data for the year 2010 to 2019 has been taken into consideration to assess the travel trends, patterns and behaviour. As there here has been some modifications done in few years on the questionnaire and the conduct of survey, few parameters are not alike for all 10 years, like pre purchase of travel products, time of pre-purchase etc has only been taken for 2018 and 2019. Number of outbound tourists travelled to China in 2017-19 were missing. Reasons for not travelling outbound data and the main objectives of travel were not incorporated in the year 2018-19. Source of collecting information data was done differently for family and individual travel but was combined in 2018-19. Package type was not taken into consideration in 2010 whereas activities performed at destination was not done for 2018-19. Though there were one- or two-years data missing or differently done in the various years, we could still analyse an overall trend of outbound travel, patterns, and behaviour of Korean outbound tourists. This study will be useful for the travel industry stakeholders to tailor their operations and meet the demands of the Korean outbound tourists. In future this study can be used as the basis to further research on the Korean outbound travel and trends to specific countries.

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