

## Developmental changes in the use and perception of Japanese Mass Culture(video games) in Korean children and adolescents

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### <Abstract>

The development of mass communications due to computer technology accelerated the globalization of Korean mass culture. Recent official opening of Japanese mass culture especially marked a turning point in Korean mass culture: Despite the fact that Japanese mass culture has been in Korea for decades, historical relations between Japan and Korea have prevented the open-door policy for Japanese culture. This study surveyed 1,107 students from elementary school to college on the use and perception (emotional and cognitive) of Japanese mass culture(video games, animations/movies, comic books/magazines, clothes/accessories/stationaries, pop music) among young generations in Korea with 83 items. Here only the data on video games were presented. It was found that the contact/use of Japanese product increased with age from elementary school to high school. With more contact with the Japanese products, users perceived Japanese products more favorably and had better ability to distinguish foreign products from Korean. With age, the guilty feeling decreased. The perception and cognitive appreciation of Japanese products did not change much with the gender of the subjects, regional differences, or SES including parents' education and the income level of household. Analyses of correlation between parent's responses and their children's revealed that there were only a few weak correlations between them. It seems that young people have their own way of perceiving foreign products independent of their parents. Therefore, for better accommodation of Japanese mass culture in young Koreans, policies or education just for these generations need to be developed.

## 일본 대중문화(비디오게임)에 대한 한국아동/청소년의 수용도와 지각발달

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### <요 약>

컴퓨터와 인터넷을 대표로 하는 미디어의 발달로 대중문화의 세계화가 가속되어 외국문화가 물밀 듯 밀려오고 있다. 특히 최근 공식적으로 개방된 일본문화의 유입은 또다른 전환점을 마련하였다. 일본대중문화는 이미 수십년전부터 국내에 유입되고 있었으나 한일간의 역사적인 관계로 인하여 공식적인 개방은 미뤄져 왔다. 따라서 일본 상품이나 문화는 한국인에게 양가적인 감정을 유발시킨다. 본 연구에서는 1,200명의 초등학생부터 대학생을 대상으로 일본 비디오게임, 만화영화/영화, 만화/잡지, 의류/엑서서리/문구, 그리고 대중음악 등 5가지로 분류된 일본 대중문화상품에 대한 83개 문항의 설문지를 배부하여 1,107명의 자료를 최종 분석하였다. 이중 비디오게임의 이용과 지각만을 보고하는데 아동/청소년기 동안 일본 비디오게임의 사용은 연령이 증가함에 따라 증가하였다. 일본 비디오게임에 대한 이용이 증가할수록 그에 대한 정서적인 반응은 긍정적이었으며 인지적 지각도 더욱 증가하였다. 적어도 아동/청소년기 동안 연령이 증가함에 따라 일본 비디오게임 사용시 느끼는 죄책감은 감소하였으며 외국제품을 구분하는 능력은 증가하였다. 일본 제품에 대한 인지적, 정서적 지각에 있어 성차는 없었으며 부모의 교육과 수입정도에 따른 SES의 차이도 없었다. 끝으로 초등학생의 경우 부모에게도 같은 질문지로 조사한 내용과 비교했을 때 부모자녀의 정서적, 인지적 지각도간에 매우 낮은 상관만이 나타났다. 따라서 일본 대중문화에 대한 젊은 세대의 지각은 부모세대와 분리되어 있으며 젊은 세대를 중심으로 한 올바른 대중문화교육이 필요함을 시사하였다.

### Introduction

Koreans have experienced foreign cultures more rapidly than any other country. Korea evolved from a traditional confucian country to a modern industrial country within one century. Historically the period of 1870-1910 is referred as the opening period(Yu, 1992). However, after 36 years of Japanese occupation of Korea from 1910 to 1945, and the civil war from 1950 to 1953, Korea has achieved an incredibly rapid development from 1960s. During this rapid development and industrialization, foreign cultures mostly from U.S.A. and Japan almost invaded Korea(Kim, 1997). The

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development of mass communications due to computer technology accelerated the globalization of Korean mass culture: Internet users are estimated as over a quarter of the total population(12,000,000) in Korea.

Recent official opening of Japanese mass culture especially marked a turning point in Korean mass culture: Despite the fact that Japanese mass culture has been in Korea for decades, historical relations between Japan and Korea have prevented the open-door policy for Japanese culture(Kim, 1994). This study looked at the use and perception(emotional and cognitive) of Japanese mass culture among young generations in Korea. In addition, parents' response on the use and perception of Japanese mass culture was explored as one of determinants of it in young generations.

## **Method**

### **Subjects**

1,107 students participated in the study. They were 385 elementary students(5th grade), 252 middle school students(8th grade), 225 high school students(11th grade) and 245 university students who lived in Seoul, Pusan and Ulsan in Korea. They were from families which represent the Korean population as shown in Table 1. There were 609 boys(55.1%) and 498 girls(44.9%). In addition to students, parents of elementary school- and middle school-students filled the same questionnaire as their children.

## Material

Table 1. Background information on subjects.

Variable	Category		N(%)	
Age	5th grade	Seoul	173(15.6)	385(34.8)
		Pusan	89(8.0)	
		Ulsan	123(11.1)	
	8th grade	Seoul	107(9.7)	252(22.8)
		Pusan	90(8.1)	
		Ulsan	55(5.0)	
	11th grade	Seoul	47(4.2)	225(20.3)
		Pusan	89(8.0)	
		Ulsan	89(8.0)	
	Undergraduate	Seoul	88(7.9)	245(22.1)
		Pusan	77(7.0)	
		Ulsan	80(7.2)	
Total		1107(100.0)		
Sex	Boys	Seoul	220(19.9)	609(55.1)
		Pusan	177(16.1)	
		Ulsan	212(19.1)	
	Girls	Seoul	195(17.6)	498(44.9)
		Pusan	168(15.2)	
		Ulsan	135(12.2)	
Total		1107(100.0)		
Variable	Category	Father N(%)	Mother N(%)	
Education	- 9 years	64 ( 7.3)	126 (14.2)	
	9 - 12	387 (44.1)	503 (56.6)	
	12- 14	22 ( 2.5)	12 ( 1.4)	
	14- 16	342 (38.9)	233 (26.2)	
	16 +	64 ( 7.3)	14 ( 1.6)	
Total*		879 (100.0)	888 (100.0)	
Occupation	Jobless	29 ( 3.2)	-	
	Professionals	257 (28.1)	45 ( 4.7)	
	Sales	192 (21.0)	99 (10.4)	
	Service	63 ( 6.9)	20 ( 2.1)	
	Farming/Fishing	18 ( 2.0)	14 ( 1.5)	
	Skill(Production)	164 (17.9)	49 ( 5.1)	
	Skill(Labor)	96 (10.5)	9 ( 1.0)	
	Management(Officer)	95 (10.4)	35 ( 3.6)	
	Housewife	-	682 (71.6)	
Total		914 (100.0)	953 (100.0)	
Religion	Protestant	141 (16.2)	177 (19.9)	
	Buddhism	347 (39.9)	389 (43.7)	
	Catholic	81 ( 9.3)	112 (12.6)	
	No religion	296 (34.1)	206 (23.1)	
	Others	4 ( 0.4)	6 ( 0.7)	
Total		869 (100.0)	890 (100.0)	

\* Total is different due to missing.

Subjects completed the questionnaire with 83 questions on Japanese video games, animations/movies, comic books/magazines, clothes/accessories/stationaries, and pop music. In addition they reported the family background information including parents' education, occupation and religion. Each question on Japanese products was rated with 4 point Likert scale(NEVER, SELDOM, OFTEN & ALWAYS).

## Analyses

Using SPSS-Window program, descriptive analyses as well as F tests were performed. For the Pearson correlation between parent's and children's responses and intercorrelation between responses and F tests between groups(age, sex and region), 4 ratings on the Likert scale were transformed to 1-4 interval points.

## Results & Discussion

Even though this survey looked at the use and perception of five genres of Japanese mass culture(video games, animations/movies, comic books/magazines, clothes/accessories/stationaries, pop music), here only the data on video games were presented. It was found that the contact/use of Japanese product increased with age from elementary school to high school as shown in Table 2. The perception of Japanese products became favorable with age. Except the question on using of Japanese products just because they are Japanese, there were significant main effects of age on all the other questions. With age, users perceived Japanese products were more violent, better than Korean in technical aspects, more sexually explicit, more novel and diverse, more enjoyable, more distinguishable, more fashionable and more educational. At the same time with age users worried more since Japanese products were too pervasive, used more by pressure from friends, and felt more guilty. Also with age users thought more that Korean products imitated Japanese and that Korean could adopt Japanese products as long as they were good. Of course, the ability to distinguish foreign products from Korean increased with age.

Table 3 shows the correlation of use and perception of Japanese video games in four age groups. There were positive correlations between children's perception and the use of Japanese video games among all age groups. Korean young generations from elementary school pupils to college students revealed a very similar trend: The perception of Japanese video game became favorable with experience.

Table 2. The use and perception of Japanese video games by age

Questions	Responses	Age(Grade)(N (%))				F
		5th	8th	11th	Undergraduate	
Use Japanese products	Never	87(22.7)	49(19.7)	28(12.5)	52(21.3)	8.617***
	Seldom	99(25.8)	57(22.9)	62(27.7)	107(43.9)	
	Often	112(29.5)	92(36.9)	97(43.3)	70(28.7)	
	Always	48(12.5)	30(12.0)	32(14.3)	10(4.1)	
	Don't know	26(6.8)	21(8.4)	5(2.2)	5(2.0)	
	Total	383(100.0)	249(100.0)	224(100.0)	244(100.0)	
Think Japanese products are violent	Never	23(6.0)	16(6.4)	14(6.3)	3(1.2)	5.433**
	Seldom	69(18.1)	59(23.6)	46(20.6)	35(14.3)	
	Often	159(41.7)	107(42.8)	104(46.6)	139(57.0)	
	Always	68(17.8)	23(9.2)	38(17.0)	35(14.3)	
	Don't know	62(16.3)	45(18.0)	21(9.4)	32(13.1)	
	Total	381(100.0)	250(100.0)	223(100.0)	244(100.0)	
Think Japanese products are better than Korean in technical aspects	Never	35(9.2)	10(4.0)	4(1.8)	1(0.4)	14.321***
	Seldom	55(14.5)	24(9.7)	21(9.4)	18(7.4)	
	Often	152(40.0)	115(46.4)	106(47.3)	155(63.8)	
	Always	68(17.9)	72(29.0)	80(35.7)	54(22.2)	
	Don't know	70(18.4)	27(10.9)	13(5.8)	15(6.2)	
	Total	380(100.0)	248(100.0)	224(100.0)	243(100.0)	
Think Japanese products are sexually explicit	Never	35(9.3)	31(12.6)	7(3.1)	2(0.8)	18.792***
	Seldom	80(21.2)	52(21.1)	45(20.2)	36(14.8)	
	Often	80(21.2)	72(29.1)	111(49.8)	144(59.0)	
	Always	36(9.5)	20(8.1)	35(15.7)	35(14.3)	
	Don't know	147(38.9)	72(29.1)	25(11.2)	27(11.1)	
	Total	378(100.0)	247(100.0)	223(100.0)	244(100.0)	
Think Japanese products are novel and diverse	Never	17(4.5)	18(7.2)	4(0.4)	1(0.4)	7.679***
	Seldom	49(12.9)	18(7.2)	22(9.8)	13(5.3)	
	Often	162(42.5)	112(45.0)	111(49.6)	140(57.4)	
	Always	64(16.8)	66(26.5)	72(32.1)	64(26.2)	
	Don't know	89(23.4)	35(14.1)	15(6.7)	26(10.7)	
	Total	381(100.0)	249(100.0)	224(100.0)	244(100.0)	
Worry that Japanese products are too pervasive in Korea	Never	37(9.8)	32(12.8)	20(8.9)	10(4.1)	5.871**
	Seldom	57(15.0)	67(26.8)	56(25.0)	70(28.7)	
	Often	145(38.3)	92(36.8)	92(41.1)	103(42.2)	
	Always	67(17.7)	21(8.4)	40(17.9)	44(18.0)	
	Don't know	73(19.3)	38(15.2)	16(7.1)	17(7.0)	
	Total	379(100.0)	250(100.0)	224(100.0)	244(100.0)	
Willing to use(play) Japanese products over Korean products	Never	75(19.7)	41(16.5)	27(12.1)	14(5.8)	6.732***
	Seldom	137(36.1)	57(22.9)	62(27.9)	119(49.2)	
	Often	77(20.3)	65(26.1)	64(28.8)	67(27.7)	
	Always	24(6.3)	32(12.9)	29(13.1)	7(2.9)	
	Don't know	67(17.6)	54(21.7)	40(18.0)	35(14.5)	
	Total	380(100.0)	249(100.0)	222(100.0)	242(100.0)	
Use since friends are using	Never	171(44.6)	98(39.2)	79(35.4)	74(30.3)	3.054*
	Seldom	117(30.5)	99(39.6)	98(43.9)	124(50.8)	
	Often	52(13.6)	29(11.6)	32(14.3)	36(14.8)	
	Always	8(2.1)	2(0.8)	5(2.2)	3(1.2)	
	Don't know	35(9.1)	22(8.8)	9(4.0)	7(2.9)	
	Total	383(100.0)	250(100.0)	223(100.0)	244(100.0)	
Can distinguish Japanese products from Korean	Never	32(8.4)	20(8.0)	6(2.7)	14(5.8)	7.076***
	Seldom	64(16.8)	36(14.5)	71(31.8)	97(40.1)	
	Often	140(36.6)	105(42.2)	77(34.5)	80(33.1)	
	Always	49(12.8)	23(9.2)	35(15.7)	9(3.7)	
	Don't know	97(25.4)	65(26.1)	34(15.3)	42(17.4)	
	Total	382(100.0)	249(100.0)	223(100.0)	242(100.0)	

\*P &lt; .05 \*\*P &lt; .01 \*\*\*P &lt; .001

Question	Response	Age(Grade)				F
		5th	8th	11th	Undergraduate	
Think Japanese products are always enjoyable	Never	166(43.8)	89(35.7)	61(27.5)	77(31.7)	3.023*
	Seldom	132(34.8)	93(37.3)	121(54.5)	132(54.3)	
	Often	39(10.3)	36(14.5)	25(11.3)	24(9.9)	
	Always	13(3.4)	9(3.6)	9(4.1)	2(0.8)	
	Don't know	29(7.7)	22(8.8)	6(2.7)	8(3.3)	
	Total	379(100.0)	249(100.0)	222(100.0)	243(100.0)	
Feel guilty while using Japanese products	Never	88(23.1)	91(36.4)	68(30.5)	56(23.0)	8.442***
	Seldom	89(23.4)	85(34.0)	108(48.4)	145(59.4)	
	Often	52(13.6)	17(6.8)	17(7.6)	21(8.6)	
	Always	15(3.9)	3(1.2)	3(1.3)	2(1.2)	
	Don't know	137(36.0)	54(21.6)	27(12.1)	19(7.8)	
	Total	381(100.0)	250(100.0)	223(100.0)	244(100.0)	
Think Japanese products affect Koreans' way of thinking	Never	23(6.0)	28(11.2)	15(6.7)e	15(6.1)	3.255*
	Seldom	36(9.4)	37(14.8)	49(21.9)	53(21.7)	
	Often	136(35.7)	98(39.2)	104(46.4)	121(49.6)	
	Always	43(11.3)	18(7.2)	25(11.2)	23(9.4)	
	Don't know	143(37.5)	69(27.6)	31(13.8)	32(13.1)	
	Total	381(100.0)	250(100.0)	224(100.0)	244(100.0)	
Like Japanese products more than American	Never	84(22.1)	25(10.0)	25(11.2)	20(8.2)	9.900***
	Seldom	90(23.7)	38(15.3)	63(28.1)	110(45.1)	
	Often	79(20.8)	73(29.3)	48(21.4)	35(14.3)	
	Always	24(6.3)	27(10.8)	20(8.9)	6(2.5)	
	Don't know	103(27.1)	86(34.5)	68(30.4)	73(29.9)	
	Total	380(100.0)	249(100.0)	224(100.0)	244(100.0)	
Think Japanese products are educational	Never	183(48.3)	93(37.2)	90(40.2)	71(29.5)	7.010***
	Seldom	104(27.4)	93(37.2)	97(43.3)	131(54.4)	
	Often	10(2.6)	9(3.6)	4(1.8)	6(2.5)	
	Always	4(1.1)	1(0.4)	4(1.8)	2(0.8)	
	Don't know	78(20.6)	54(21.6)	29(12.9)	31(12.9)	
	Total	379(100.0)	250(100.0)	224(100.0)	241(100.0)	
Think Japanese products are leading the fashion	Never	81(21.3)	41(16.4)	28(12.5)	26(10.7)	4.887**
	Seldom	74(19.5)	43(17.2)	56(25.0)	68(28.0)	
	Often	112(29.5)	88(35.2)	77(34.4)	99(40.7)	
	Always	35(9.2)	33(13.2)	37(16.5)	18(7.4)	
	Don't know	78(20.5)	45(18.0)	26(11.6)	32(13.2)	
	Total	380(100.0)	250(100.0)	224(100.0)	243(100.0)	
Use just because it's Japanese	Never	226(59.3)	138(55.6)	130(58.0)	126(51.9)	1.482
	Seldom	113(29.7)	82(33.1)	81(36.2)	108(44.4)	
	Often	6(1.6)	8(3.2)		3(1.2)	
	Always	4(1.0)	3(1.2)	6(2.7)	1(0.4)	
	Don't know	32(8.4)	17(6.9)	7(3.1)	5(2.1)	
	Total	381(100.0)	248(100.0)	224(100.0)	243(100.0)	
Think Korean products imitate Japanese	Never	45(11.9)	27(10.9)	7(3.1)	1(0.4)	27.139***
	Seldom	63(16.7)	31(12.5)	33(14.8)	9(3.7)	
	Often	136(36.0)	101(40.7)	101(45.3)	138(56.8)	
	Always	52(13.8)	50(20.2)	58(26.0)	83(34.2)	
	Don't know	82(21.7)	39(15.7)	24(10.8)	12(4.9)	
	Total	378(100.0)	248(100.0)	223(100.0)	243(100.0)	
Think we can imitate Japanese products as long as they are good	Never	63(16.6)	59(23.6)	29(12.9)	10(4.1)	12.029***
	Seldom	61(16.1)	47(18.8)	39(17.4)	44(18.1)	
	Often	131(34.5)	80(32.0)	115(51.3)	147(60.5)	
	Always	39(10.3)	22(8.8)	24(10.7)	22(9.1)	
	Don't know	86(22.6)	42(16.8)	17(7.6)	20(8.2)	
	Total	380(100.0)	250(100.0)	224(100.0)	243(100.0)	

\*P < .05 \*\*P < .01 \*\*\*P < .001

Table 3. Pearson correlation between the use and the perception of video game

Use(Grade) Perception	1(5th)	1(8th)	1(11th)	1(undergraduate)
2	-.149*	-.040	-.040	-.023
3	.353***	.464***	.464***	.297***
4	.187**	.363***	.363***	-.147*
5	.334***	.458***	.458***	.265***
6	-.183**	-.140*	-.140*	-.170*
7	.543***	.536***	.536***	.397***
8	.290***	.182**	.182**	.313***
9	.305***	.340***	.340***	.284***
10	.320***	.363***	.363***	.263***
11	-.042	-.118	-.118	-.157*
12	-.062	-.073	-.073	-.107
13	.376***	.470***	.470***	.313***
14	.164*	.217**	.217**	.058
15	.257***	.210**	.210**	.178*
16	.367***	.121	.121	.167*
17	.015	.204**	.204**	-.049
18	.013	-.007	-.007	.119

## a.1. Use Japanese products

2. Think Japanese products are violent
3. Think Japanese products are better than Korean in technical aspects
4. Think Japanese products are sexually explicit
5. Think Japanese products are novel and diverse
6. Worry that Japanese products are too pervasive in Korea
7. Will choose to use(play) Japanese products over Korean
8. Use since friends are using
9. Can distinguish Japanese products from Korean
10. Think Japanese products are always enjoyable
11. Feel guilty while using Japanese products
12. Think Japanese products affect Koreans' way of thinking
13. Like Japanese products more than American
14. Think Japanese products are educational
15. Think Japanese products are leading the fashion
16. Use just because it's Japanese
17. Think Korean products imitate Japanese
18. Think we can imitate Japanese products as long as they are good

As the children used Japanese video game more, they perceived Japanese products less violent. Together with the results of Table 2(that is, children perceived Japanese less violent as they got older), we can interpret that children used very violent games as they got older. Therefore despite the fact that there was a desensitization in the perception of violence with experience, users perceived Japanese video games as more violent with age. As children used Japanese video game more they perceived Japanese



products were better than Korean in technical aspects. Also as children used Japanese video game more, they thought Japanese products were sexually explicit. As children used Japanese video game more they thought Japanese products were more novel and diverse but less worried that Japanese products were too pervasive in Korea. As children used Japanese video game more, they would choose to use(play) Japanese products over Korean products and conformed to friends' use of Japanese products. Even though this study cannot look into the personal characteristics of users, it seems that heavy users of Japanese products may show high level conformity than peers. As children used Japanese video game more, they could better distinguish Japanese products from Korean and thought Japanese products were always enjoyable. As children used Japanese video game more, they felt less guilty while using Japanese products and less thought Japanese products affect Koreans' way of thinking. The more children used Japanese video game, the more they liked Japanese products than American and thought Japanese products educational and fashionable. Also as children used Japanese video game more, they used just because it was Japanese. This trend

Table 4. Correlation between parent's and children's use and perception of games

Child Parent	1a	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
1	.032																	
2		.071																
3			.063															
4				.135**														
5					.081													
6						.092*												
7							.065											
8								.053										
9									.139**									
10										.115**								
11											.133**							
12												.081						
13													.153***					
14														.128**				
15															.071			
16																.109*		
17																	.015	
18																		.050

\*P< .05 \*\*P< .01 \*\*\*P< .001

a. Same as Table 3.

was stronger in the young age group. As the children used Japanese video game more, Korean middle and high school children perceived better that Korean products imitated Japanese. But elementary school children didn't perceive that Korean products imitated

Japanese with the increase of use. Finally the opinion about the adopting of Japanese products did not change with the use of Japanese products in any age group.

The perception and cognitive appreciation of Japanese products did not change much with the gender of the subjects, regional differences, or SES including parents' education and the income level of household.

The analyses of correlation between parent's responses and their children revealed that there were a few weak correlations between them as shown in Table 4: It seems that young people have their own way of perceiving foreign products independent to their parents. This study has shown that the impact of historical relation during their parents' period is very weak in young generation especially in elementary school students. Therefore, for better accommodation of Japanese mass culture in young Koreans, policies or education just for these generations need to be developed.

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