

GLOBAL HALLYU
ISSUE MAGAZINE

〈한류NOW〉
한류 심층 분석 보고서

HALLYU NOW

HALLYU STORY
WITH STATISTICS
CANADA

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한국국제문화교류진흥원

HALLYU NOW

GLOBAL HALLYU ISSUE MAGAZINE

CONTENTS

004

2023 SURVEY ON OVERSEAS HALLYU STATUS A DEEP DIVE INTO HALLYU IN CANADA

- 1. Introduction: Cultural characteristics of Canada**
 - 2. The beginning and development of Hallyu in Canada**
 - 3. The acceptance of Hallyu in Canada**
 - 4. Conclusion**
-

A Deep Dive Into Hallyu in Canada



Canada tends to consume Hallyu in a way similar to its neighboring country, the United States (US), as well as to Western Europe or Australia with which it has cultural proximity. Among these countries, Canada particularly has a high favorability toward Korean culture. Canada, with its multicultural foundation, inherently embraces a welcoming attitude towards other cultures, and Korea is no exception. However, Canada's favorability toward Korea does not directly lead to consumption of Korean cultural content. Canada is characterized by a small population on a large territory, high urban concentration of the population, a cultural topography divided into English-speaking and French-speaking regions, difficulties in establishing a unified national identity unlike the US, and the overwhelming influence of US popular culture. The key to the spread of Hallyu cultural content in Canada is adapting to these characteristics. Moreover, what makes Hallyu in Canada, a multicultural country comprised of immigrants like the US and Australia, different from European countries in the West is that Hallyu is influencing the identity formation of the Korean diaspora in Canada, that is, Asian Canadians.

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1. Introduction: Cultural characteristics of Canada

To analyze the consumption of Hallyu content in Canada, we need to gain a basic understanding of Canada. First of all, Canada is a country with a small population despite its large size. Bordered by the US with a population of 330 million, Canada has a population of only 38 million. This small population relative to its vast territory makes it one of the least densely populated countries in the world, with most of Canada's population concentrated in the cities of southern Canada along the border with the United States. Canada has the 9th-largest economy in the world as of 2022, which is ahead of Korea. The high concentration of people with high purchasing power in cities may be one of the factors determining the cultural consumption patterns in Canada.

Another noteworthy fact about Canada is that it is a New World immigrant country with a multicultural and multiracial composition. However, as a New World immigrant country, Canada is different from the United States and Australia in that its white society, which constitutes the overwhelming majority of the population, is divided into English-speaking and French-speaking regions. For this reason, Canada has two official languages, English and French. The 9 million French-speaking population lives primarily in the province of Quebec, where they have different political opinions than the English-speaking population, as well as different cultural consumption patterns. With such a dichotomous mainstream white population culture, Canada relies on multiculturalism for its survival, even more so than the United States or Australia, and its pluralistic values shape its identity. Canada's multiculturalist background is a condition that allows Korean pop culture to be accepted and respected with less resistance than in other Western countries.

Another thing to consider is that as Canada borders the US and is also a society using English as the native language, it is significantly influenced by US popular culture. On the other hand, French-speaking Canadians have cultural characteristics that are distinct from those of the U.S. and English-speaking Canadians due to linguistic differences, and they also have differences in popular culture production. Therefore, being at the center of the US's cultural influence, English-speaking Canadians are familiar to US popular culture in taste, while they are also enthusiastic about and open to alternative culture.

Finally, one of Canada's diverse immigrant groups is the Korean immigrant community, which influences the Hallyu and vice versa. There are currently

about 241,750 Korean immigrants residing in Canada, which is the 4th largest group following the US(2,546,982), China(2,461,386), and Japan(824,977).

2. The beginning and development of Hallyu in Canada

Hallyu became visible in North America after Psy's "Gangnam Style" was released in July 2012 and made a huge hit on YouTube in August of that year. However, there were K-Pop fans already in Canada even before PSY. Although small in number, the devotion of fans of Super Junior and Girls' Generation was preparing the way for the subsequent Hallyu boom. There were only a few, but the dedicated activities of Super Junior and Girls' Generation fans were getting ready for the Hallyu boom that would follow. Under these circumstances, Korean entertainment companies attempted to enter the North American market and did not give up despite the failures of BoA, Rain, and Wonder Girls. Just as SM Entertainment's concert at Zénith Paris on July 10, 2011 became the catalyst for Hallyu in Europe centered in France, SM also held a concert at Madison Square Garden in New York around the same time on October 23, 2011, and then hosted *Korea Nights* at Kool Haus in Toronto the following year on March 21, 2012. After Psy's Gangnam Style, the number of K-pop concerts increased, and on October 13, 2012, K-pop fans in Montreal organized a flash mob against Korean entertainment companies to urge them to perform K-pop in Quebec.

Since then, K-pop groups have been performing in Canada by stopping in Toronto or Vancouver on some of their U.S. tours, including BTS, EXO, Seventeen, and Red Velvet. In 2018, BTS topped the Billboard charts, recognizing K-pop as an important part of mainstream popular music, and in November 2022, Blackpink performed in Hamilton.

In Canada, Korean films have occasionally been introduced through local film festivals. At the Montréal World Film Festival, which has lost its status as an international film festival since 2005 but had held international authority until then, *Adada* directed by Im Kwon-taek won Best Actress (Shin Hye-soo) in 1988, *Silver Stallion* directed by Jang Kil-su won Best Screenplay and Best Actress (Lee Hye-sook) in 1991, and *Our Twisted Hero* directed by Park Jong-won won a special prize in 1992. And at the Vancouver International

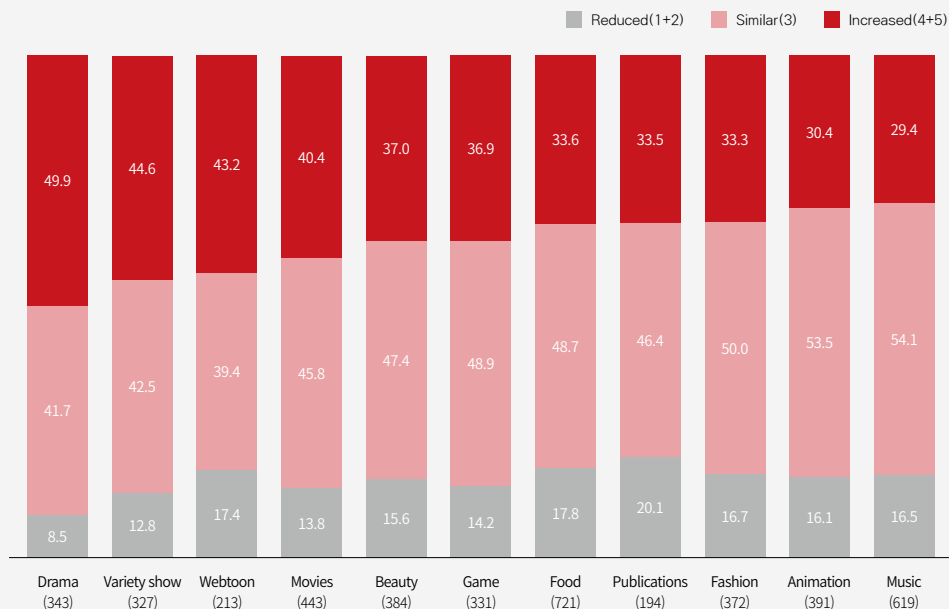
Film Festival, which has a high share of Asian films, Hong Sang-soo and Lee Chang-dong received the Dragons and Tigers Award in 1996 and 1997, and quite a few Korean films have been introduced until today through the Toronto International Film Festival and the Festival du Nouveau Cinéma (FNC) held in Montreal. In the 2000s, films by world-renowned Korean directors such as Hong Sang-soo, Lee Chang-dong, Bong Joon-ho, Park Chan-wook, and Kim Ki-duk continued to be introduced at film festivals in Canada. However, it was the popularity of films such as *Train to Busan* (2016) through global OTT services such as Netflix that made Korean films familiar to the general Canadian audience. And the success of *Parasite* (2019) directed by Bong Joon-ho put Korean films at the center of public attention even in the North American market where box office success is considered important. Anthony Shim's *Riceboy Sleeps* (2023) won awards at the Vancouver and Toronto film festivals, as did Academy Award-winning director Lee Isaac Chung's *Minari* (2020), both of which dealt with the immigration history of Korean immigrants. It is no coincidence that at the same time that Hallyu was spreading across North America, the Korean American community in North America was spreading their narratives in local popular culture. In addition, there is a growing body of research in Canada on the function of the Hallyu as a trigger for transnational identity formation among Asian communities, particularly migrant communities.

This phenomenon is also found in TV shows. *Kim's Convenience*, which is about a Korean family who immigrated to Canada, aired on Canada's national public broadcaster CBC in four seasons from 2016 to 2021, and is also available in Korea on Netflix. The COVID-19 pandemic has caused Korean dramas to spread around the world through global OTT services, and Canada was no exception. The *Squid Game* (2021) is the culmination of this trend. In the end, the COVID-19 period from 2020 to 2022 coincided with a steep increase in international demand for Korean cultural content, and it can be assessed that COVID-19 allowed the demand for culture through online media to overcome physical distance, which led to an increase in consumption of Korean cultural content.

Changes in consumption of Korean cultural content compared to before COVID-19

Base: Those who experienced Korean cultural content, n=(), unit: %

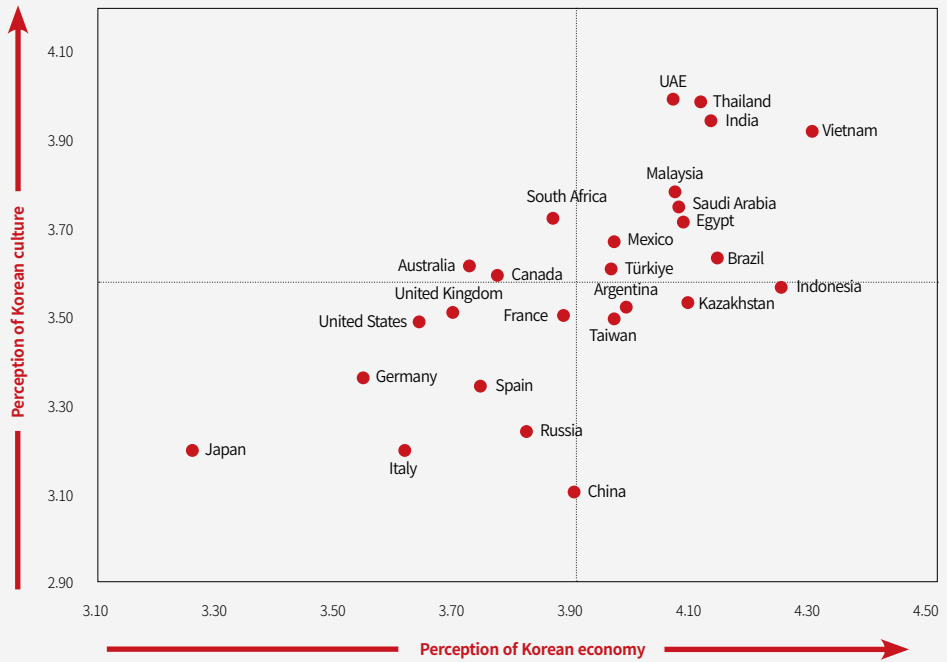
Q. How has your consumption of Korean cultural content changed compared to before the COVID-19 outbreak? (1. Reduced greatly / 2. Reduced / 3. Similar / 4. Increased / 5. Increased greatly)



3. The acceptance of Hallyu in Canada

In 2023, for the first time, Canada was included in the Korean Foundation for International Cultural Exchange’s “Overseas Hallyu Survey.” Thus, the trends cannot be analyzed by comparing the results of this year’s survey with the results from before. In order to analyze the relative position of Hallyu in Canada, it is necessary to compare it with other countries. Considering the stage of social development as well as cultural proximity, Canada’s Hallyu consumption pattern is significantly different from that of Asian or Latin American countries. It is rather closer to the US, Australia, and Western European countries such as the UK, France, Germany, Italy, and Spain, which is in fact found in a substantial amount of data from this year’s survey results.

Foreigners' perceptions of Korean economy and culture in grid



The average “awareness” of Korea is 96.9% across the countries surveyed, while Canada shows a slightly lower awareness than the average at 95.4%, which is higher than Australia(94.4%), the US(94.7%), France(94.7%), and Spain(94.2%). In Canada, the top “images” associated with Korea (based on first choice) are food(21.9%), K-pop(18.3%), and Hallyu stars(5.4%). Notably, the percentage of Canadian respondents who identified the “North Korean nuclear threat” as an image associated with Korea(4.4%) is significantly different from Germany(9.9%), Spain(9.7%), Italy(9.4%), US(9.3%), UK(7.0%), and France(6.9%).

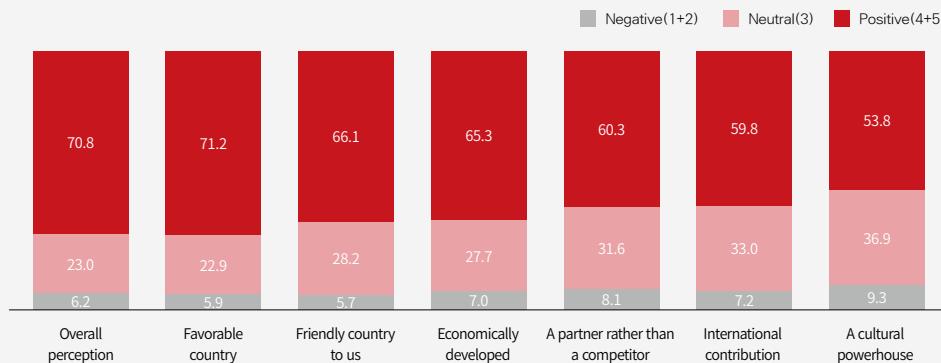
Canada(71.2%) showed much higher “favorability” toward Korea than not only the US(65.2%) but also the UK(65.2%), France(63.6%), Spain(59.0%), Italy(52.4%), and Germany(58.2%). This may be a reflection of Canada’s multiculturalism and openness to other cultures, rather than any particular favoritism toward Korea. On the other hand, Canada’s favorability toward Korean content is slightly lower than that of English-speaking New World countries such as the U.S. and Australia, and much higher than that of European countries. However, 53.8% of respondents in Canada claimed that Korea is a cultural powerhouse when asked about their “perception of

Korea,” which is higher than the percentages in other countries including the US(50.3%), UK(50.2%), and France(51.6%) except Australia(54.7%). This shows that despite the spread of Hallyu, Korea has not yet been able to instill the perception of a cultural power in North America and Western Europe.

Perception of Korea

BASE: Total, n=900, unit: %

Q. What are your general thoughts on Korea? (1. Strongly disagree / 2. Disagree / 3. Neutral / 4. Agree / 5. Strongly agree)



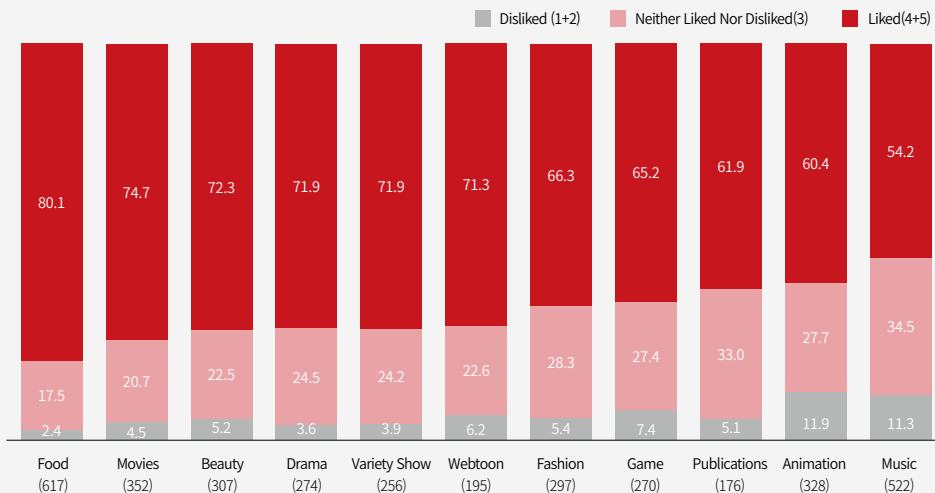
Korean culture is most commonly experienced through food(80.1%), music(68.8%), and movies(49.2%), with most Western countries ranking similarly by content. However, Canada is unique in that it has an unusually high rate of experience with Korean food. This is higher than in the United States(73.8%), which has a much larger Korean immigrant population, and significantly higher than in the United Kingdom(66.4%) and France(57.9%). This may be due to the relatively easy access to Korean restaurants in Canada due to its urbanized population.

For food(80.1%), Canadian consumers rated Korean cultural content the most favorably, compared to 81.3% in the US, 80.6% in Australia, 78.2% in the UK, 68.8% in France, and 63.4% in Italy. In Canada, the order of favorability is food-movies-beauty, while in the US it's food-dramas-variety shows, in Australia it's food-variety shows-dramas-publications, in the UK it's dramas-food-movies, and in France it's food-webtoons-movies. As suggested by the fact that the US prefers variety show and France prefers webtoons, content favorability reveals the cultural disposition of the country, in which case Canadians' preference for beauty is noticeable.

Favorability of Korean Cultural Content

BASE: People who have experienced Korean cultural content by category, n=(), unit: %

Q. How much did you enjoy the Hallyu content that you have recently used overall? (5-point scale: 1. I do not like it at all; 2. I do not like it; 3. I neither like nor dislike it; 4. I like it; 5. I like it very much)



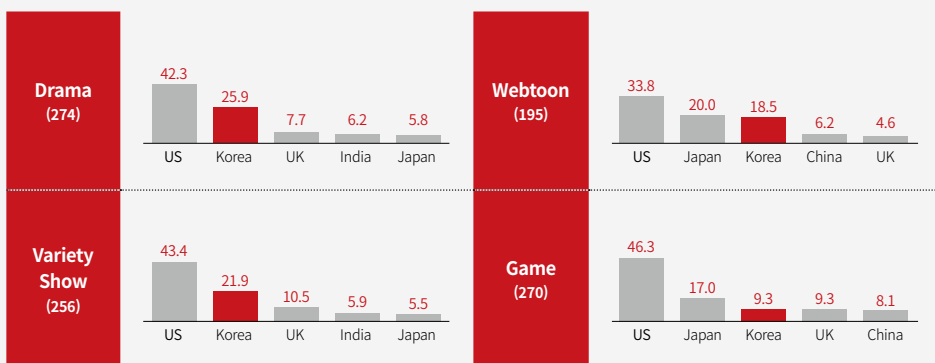
US popular culture was most popular in Canada, and Korean popular culture enjoyed high popularity in dramas, variety show, movies, music, fashion, and beauty, while food was not included in the top five. This implies that Korean food has not yet become a dominant category of consumption even though diverse food cultures are respected in Canada as a multicultural society and Korean food is expanding its base in the Canadian society where the Korean community is not very big.

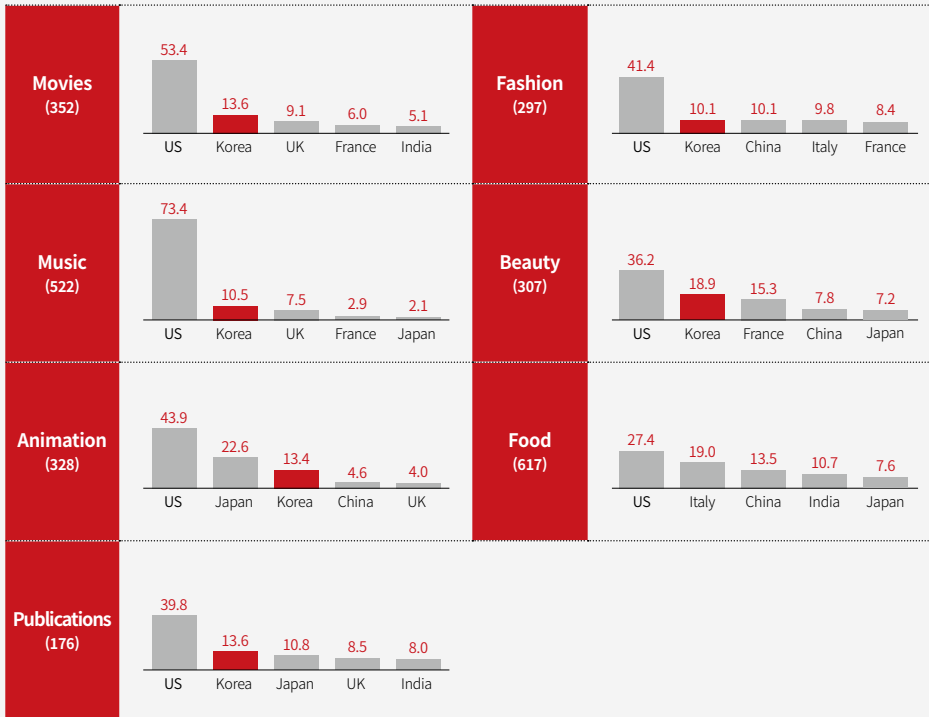
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Favorite Country for Each Cultural Content

Base: Those who experienced Korean cultural content, n=(), unit: %

Q. For each content type, which foreign cultural content is popular in your country? Please select the top three, in order.





As most countries do, Canada shows the lowest favorability for music(54.2%), which suggests that despite the phenomenal success of K-Pop based on strong fandoms, there is still considerable hostility toward K-Pop as well. In the same context, the respondents also showed the lowest intention to recommend K-Pop to others.

Meanwhile, Korean cultural content showed similar popularity in the order of food, music, and beauty in most countries of North America and Europe. The Brand Power Index of Korean cultural contents was also the highest for food, followed by music and beauty. The Brand Power Index given by Canada to all Korean cultural content was 55.3%, which was the highest among North American and European countries. On the other hand, for the amount of Korean cultural content consumed(9.7), Canada came third after the UK(11.2) and US(10.1) among 8 North American and European countries. The share of Korean cultural content consumption(19.1%) was sixth after Australia(22.4%), the United States(21.0%), France(19.4%), Germany(19.4%), and the United Kingdom(19.2%), and the amount spent(17.5) was fifth after the United Kingdom(28.0), the United States(21.6), Australia(19.9), and France(18.6).

Consumption of Korean cultural content

Base: Those who experienced Korean cultural content, n=()

Q. How much Korean cultural content do you typically watch, how often, and how much do you spend on average? (view/average expenditure-based on the last 3 months for movies and 1 month average for other content)

	Consumption ratio (%)	Amount of consumption (hours/episode)	Expenditure (USD)
Total (900)	19.1	9.7	17.5
Webtoon (195)	28.8	12.0	24.7
Drama (274)	23.9	13.9	11.6
Publications (176)	22.8	8.3	16.1
Game play (270)	22.0	11.5	19.5
Beauty (307)	21.2	-	34.0
Fashion (297)	20.9	-	26.2
Variety Show (256)	20.6	13.1	12.6
Gaming video (270)	20.3	9.0	17.1
Movies (352)	18.9	5.9	11.1
Animation (328)	17.3	8.2	8.6
Food (617)	14.5	-	28.0
Music (522)	13.7	7.7	7.5

Note 1) Movies are calculated based on the number of movies streamed/watched in the last 3 months. Other contents are calculated by surveying the average monthly usage time. In the overall average, the average number of movies was calculated by converting the average number of movie episodes per respondent into one month's worth of time. Movie time calculation formula = (Average number of movies streamed/watched in the last 3 months x average running time of Korean movies (Korean Film Council 'Korean Film Box Office Top 10' 2020 average running time 1143 minutes)/3 months)

Note 2) Movies are calculated based on the expenditures in the last 3 months, and others based on the average expenditures per month. In the overall average, movies were calculated by converting movies to 1 month per respondent.

4. Conclusion

Canada's identity as a "multicultural" country makes it a society that is open to other cultures and thus has high favorability toward Korean culture. Although not as much as in Asia and Latin America, Canada has the

highest level of favorability toward Korea among countries in North America, Oceania, and Western Europe. Nonetheless, the amount and ratio of Korean cultural contents consumed by Canada were not as high as its favorability. Furthermore, despite the success of Hallyu, Korea is still not perceived as a cultural powerhouse. In fact, it is only recently that BTS, *Parasite*, and *Squid Game* imprinted Korean popular cultural content in the minds of people around the world. In the end, it will take a long-term process to sustain the Hallyu in music, movies, dramas, and food, and to expand the scope of Hallyu to beauty, games, and webtoons.

Although this year's survey has standardized Canada as a single unit, Canada is a society with a clear division between English-speaking and French-speaking cultures. In particular, just as Korea is expanding its pop culture overseas, Quebec, a French-speaking region in Canada, is also a region that is actively expanding overseas in areas such as performance culture, video, and games. Just as the US had been divided into the South, West, Northeast, and Midwest in the analysis of the Hallyu trends in US, the Canadian Hallyu survey should at least be divided into English-speaking and French-speaking Canada, so that an accurate diagnosis of the Canadian market can be made. 🇺🇸

