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Understanding Blackness in South Korea: Experiences of one Black Teacher and One Black Student

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I. Introduction

There has been an increasing presence of Blacks in the South Korean mainstream media and music industry in recent years. In the summer of 2016, South Korea (hereafter, Korea) held "Asia's largest Black music festival," titled "Seoul Soul Festival" featuring "Soul" artists such as Eric Benet and MAXWELL (Song, 2016). The same year, Joseph Butso, a Black American exchange student from Ohio, became the winner on a Korean television singing competition show called "I Can See Your Voice" (Yuen, 2016). Despite the growing media representation of Blacks in Korea, discriminatory treatment against Blacks and anti-Black racism continue to be apparent in various industries. Discrimination and inequality against Blacks are not only subtle and systemic, but blatant. Relatively few studies have specifically examined discrimination against Black people and the meaning of Blackness in Korea.

One of the fields that presents Blackness, or the absence of Blackness in Korea, is in the field of education. Very little discussion has focused on what it means to be Black, specifically in the Korean educational context. In a country that is heavily committed to education as Korea, unequal treatment towards Black educators and students are evident. Students who are Black are not only being denied entry to academic programs, but teachers and instructors have been excluded from teaching opportunities due to their skin color. Because most Korean recruiters require photos on resumes, most Black teachers are not even given a chance before going to Korea (Hazzan, 2014). To this end, It is important to examine what Blackness means in the Korean culture, as well as the deeply embedded racism and colorism related to it. Why is there still only a small Black population in Korea despite the increasing multicultural population? How is Blackness constructed in Korean culture? It is also important to understand how anti-Black sentiments specifically affect Black educators and students in the country. What are some of the experiences Black educators and students have in education in Korea? How do Black educators and students contribute to the dialogue of racial identity and multiculturalism in Korea? The current study addresses these questions.

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II. Framing Ideas and in Forming Literature

Three framing ideas derived from the literature provides a basis for understanding the multifaceted construct of Blackness in Korea as well as better understand the experiences of Black educators and students in the country.

a) Critical Race Theory (CRT)

Critical Race Theory (CRT) is a framework that developed primarily to challenge the existing social injustice and racial oppression in the United States. According to Delgado and Stefancic (2001), there are three major premises to Critical Race Theory. The first is the proposition that "racism is normal, not aberrant, in American society. Because racism is an ingrained feature of our landscape, it looks ordinary and natural to persons in the culture" (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, p.xvi). Race as a social construct and racism in Korea can be better understood through the framework and main themes of CRT. Racism in Korea is "normal" and "ordinary." In fact, at the core of Korea's "ordinary" racism, we find Korean supremacy, which is much like the concept of White supremacy of CRT. CRT interprets Whiteness as the default racial identity in the US, we may see that 'Korean(race)-ness' is the default racial identity in Korea. Koreans view themselves as a racial entity as much an ethnic entity. The racial hierarchy created in Korea puts *Koreanness* as dominant, and other national and cultural groups as secondary.

The second premise of Critical Race Theory is based on Bell's (1980) concept of interest convergence. Bell (1980) argued that advances in racial equality, including political ones, come about when the self-interests of the White elites are promoted. In other words, different minority groups are racialized differently by the dominant society in response to shifting needs such as the labor market. Popular images and stereotypes of minorities may shift according to the needs and conditions of the majority group at the time. In the Korean context, we may see how the society responds to the different needs of the Korean elites and how minority groups are racialized differently. For example, before the mid-1990s, Chinese or Japanese immigrants in Korea were discriminated against for their non-Korean racial background, physical appearance, and language. However, with the plummeting birthrate and increasing cost of labor, Korea experienced a large influx of foreign immigrants from Southeast Asia during the mid-1990s. Since then, the images and stereotypes of foreigners from China or Japan shifted to be more favorable than those of Southeast Asian descent, because they had lighter skin and were closer to being 'Korean.'

The third premise of Critical Race Theory presented by Delgado (1995) is the use of storytelling and counter storytelling as a methodological tool that allows the experiences of the margins of the society to be told. The purpose of storytelling is to "analyze the myths, presuppositions, and received wisdoms that make up the common culture about race," and the counter stories challenge the dominant discourse that "constructs social reality in ways that promote its own self-interest (of that of elite groups)" (Delgado, 1995, p. xiv). In the Korean context, the voice of the Korean male elite is dominant due to the historical and cultural background. However, increasing outlets have reflected the voices of the non-dominant groups of Koreans, including the political sphere. For example, Jasmine Lee, a Filipino immigrant to Korea, was made congresswoman in 2012 of Saenuri party, one of the major political parties in the country. Despite the criticism Jasmine Lee received, she has been one of the important actors at the forefront of cultural and social transformation, providing outlets for non-mainstream Koreans' voices to be heard (D. H. Kim, 2015).

b) Literature on Blackness

There have been prior studies regarding how Blackness is constructed in the global context. Sterling (2011) argues there are four main trends in literature on Blackness around the world that gives insight into how Blackness is constructed around the world: a) scholarship on global and transnational Blackness that developed from scholarship on the African diaspora and the Black Atlantic; b) scholarship on the claiming or reassertion of African-descended identities; c) literature on Blackness in East Asia; and d) literature on 'the Afro-Asian' which explores the interchanges between both the African and Asian diasporas. In his study, Sterling shows how the discourses of global Blackness share circumstances of their production, while containing locally particular cases. Specifically, Sterling examines how Blackness was constituted in Japan—a space in which few Black people have historically lived—and how Jamaican culture in Japan encaptures the many discourses of global Blackness.

Theorizing Blackness as an identity in Korea is complex due to the history of the Black population in the country which is deeply intertwined with the political and economic spheres. Although Korea had cultural exchanges with foreign countries prior to the 20th century, migration of people to and from Korea was limited. The first wave of non-Korean residents in Korea occurred during and after the Korean War (1950-1953). At the time of the Korean War, there were more than 36,000 American soldiers that were sent to Korea to aid the country (CNN, 2016). Many American soldiers continued to reside after the Korean War ended as well at the U.S. military bases in the country. Due to this reason, one of the predominant stereotypes of Black people in Korea is "American soldier." Since then, despite the fact that there has been a substantial number of biracial Black-Koreans in the country, it was only until the mid-2000s that Korea started addressing the racially diverse population in the country. Even though awareness of a "multicultural" population has grown, the images and stereotypes of Blacks are still limited, which also affects how the construct of Blackness is constructed in the country.

There are various aspects that constitute Blackness in Korea. One aspect of Blackness in Korea centers around a neoliberalist, consumerism-based core. According to Sterling (2011), the representations of Black people are essential zed to make Blackness "sensorially accessible to the consumer" and to be used in "heightened consumer-driven reflexivity" (p.167). In this sense, the growing popularity of hip hop, rap, reggae, blues, and jazz—dubbed "Black music" in Korea—may be understood. Despite the fact that the music genres historically stem from different times and places, they become accessible for Koreans to consume. Another aspect of Blackness in Korea stems from national and international media, as represented in television stations, news outlets, fashion magazines, and other such sources. In Korea, the media plays a powerful role in shaping the public opinion and images, especially after the dictatorial withdrawal in the late 1980s. Before the 1980s, the images and representations of Black people in Korea were limited to slaves, poor people, or tribal Africans. From the 1980s, media images began to include American media and Hollywood influences that focused on Black criminality,

violence, and drug use (N. Kim, as cited in Hazzan, 2014).

c) *Education in Korea*

It is crucial to examine the educational sphere because Koreans put a lot of emphasize on education, so much so that their fervor and passion for learning has been labeled the "education syndrome" (Kim-Renaud, Grinker, & Larsen, 2005). Some scholars refer to this passion for learning as "*kyoyukyul* (education fever)" or "preoccupation with education" (Seth, 2002). With globalization and and international migration, the demand for English education in the nation grew rapidly as well. By 2006, Korea ranked first in the world in regard to the estimated consumer expenditure on private education of English language, reaching 10 trillion won (approximately US $8.6 billion) (Ma, 2007). It was also reported that every year the amount that Korean parents spend on their children's English education increases drastically (Chang, 2008).

At the core of English education in Korea lies ideologies of race, language, and capitalism that create a hierarchical system. This is true with hiring practices of English educators in Korea, where White English teachers are preferred over native English speaking teachers of color. In fact, employers in Korea are often "casually, and openly, prejudiced", to the point where recruitment advertisements require applicants to submit their photos and state "Need: White" on the list of required qualifications (Barnes, 2014). In both public and private education institutions in Korea, the opportunities Black educators have is limited due to their skin color. Even though Black educators may be far more qualified than their non-Black counterparts, Koreans would look down on them asking questions like, "How did you go to school and become a professor when you are Black?" and also refuse to accept them because they had a "No Blacks" stance (Kang, 2008).

Hand in hand with discrimination against Black people in the English education industry is also discrimination against Black students from foreign countries who plan to study in Korea. Students from African countries in particular have experienced gate keeping from Korean education institutions for the color of their skin. On one interview Ghanaian actor Abu Dad shared his journey of trying to apply for medical school in Korea only to be rejected for being Black (Donga Digital News Team, 2014). In a separate interview, Kenyan international student Stanley Hawi, who studies computer science at one of Korea's top universities, said that he would receive comments such as, "Go back to your country. Why is your skin Black but your teeth so white?" along with mean glances (M. Kim, 2013).

III. Methodology

Qualitative case studies are utilized when exploring a single person, a program, a group, an institution, a community, or a specific policy, as the unit of analysis (Merriam, 2009). According to Merriam (2009), a qualitative case study is "an in-depth study of a bounded system in which meaning and understanding of the phenomenon of interest are sought" (p. 457). Qualitative case study design is used when the researcher to closely examine the contextual conditions relevant to the phenomenon under study as a preliminary step in guiding future research. Yin (2003) explains that a qualitative case study design should be considered when: (a) the focus of the study is to answer "how" and "why" questions; (b) you cannot manipulate the behavior of those involved in the study; (c) you want to cover contextual conditions because you believe they are relevant to the phenomenon under study; or (d) the boundaries are not clear between the phenomenon and context.

Case studies are of a single bounded unit, so "documents" are invaluable sources of information and insight about the case (Merriam, 2009). Not much information was available regarding Blackness in the South Korean education context because of the small number Black educators and Black student in Korea as a whole. Hence purposive sampling was used for the selection of the cases because they yielded information that could best address the study's purpose; in this instance, to understand the experiences of Black teachers and Black students in the South Korea. Both individuals of this study had gone to Korea initially for educational purposes - whether to learn or to teach - and both had made an impact in the Korean society and beyond. The written, oral, visual, public records, personal documents and other types of documents (such as TV interviews and vlogs) of both cases were an invaluable source of information the for this study.

The data for this study was collected using two major sources. First, I used document analysis of news articles, public documents, Korean government studies and reviews, web pages, papers available online, and excerpts and clips from Korean media outlets including television, radio, and podcasts. I specifically looked into Black students and teachers in the Korean education field that were being noticed to Korean nationals and foreigners in the country. Second, I used blogs, vlogs (video blogs), and articles of a Haitian American writer, host, and producer, Wilkine Brutus, who documented his experiences as a Black individual living in Korea and as a former educator who taught English in Korea as well. I also used video clips, TV shows and articles about Sam Okyere.

In order to analyze my data, I used open coding method. Saldaña (2009) says that coding is cyclical, and that each cycle of coding "further manages, filters, highlights, and focuses the salient features of the qualitative data record for generating categories, themes, and concepts, grasping meaning and/or building theory" (p. 8). Open coding encourages

analysts to take a thematic approach to breaking down the texts into pieces, examining, comparing, conceptualizing, categorizing data to grasp meaning or build theory. (Boeije, 2010; Strauss & Corbin, 2007). The data that was collected in this study was read very carefully and divided into fragments. At the first level of coding, I read through my data several times and looked for distinct concepts and categories in the data, which formed the basic units of my analysis. As I read through the interview transcripts and articles, I broke down the data into first-level concepts and second-level and third-level categories. One of the main sources of codes were the concepts derived from the framing literature and theories (Boeije, 2010). The first-level codes that I used were derived from literature, my conceptual framework, and the research questions. The subset of categories within each code were derived from the interviews and articles. After going through all the data in four cycles, I then transferred the final concepts and categories into a list of codes ('coding scheme') on a data table.

IV. The Construction of Blackness in Korea

My data showed that there were three main sources that constructed Blackness and anti-Blackness in Korea which were not mutually exclusive and often overlapped and interacted with each other simultaneously. The first source that constructed Blackness in Korea was ignorance. Merriam-Webster (2017) defines ignorance as "destitute of knowledge or education...lacking knowledge or comprehension of the thing specified." In this sense, the two Black male individuals in my study both encountered Koreans who were ignorant, or lacked cultural knowledge about Black people. While it may not be possible to distinguish ignorance from racism, part of Blackness that is formed in Korea is locally-specific and historically-bound. Much like Japan, historically, there have not been many Black people living in Korea. Hence some Koreans may not have had much opportunity or experience being exposed to cross-racial or cross-cultural encounters.

Wilkine Brutus went to Korea as a teacher for a Korean Government Service-Learning scholarship called TaLK (Teach and Learn in Korea). This program was created in September, 2008 by the Korean government in order to decrease the English education gap between major metropolitan cities and agricultural, mountain and fishing villages. While working as an English teacher for the TaLK program in an elementary school in the island of Jeju an island that is remote from major metropolitan Korean cities, Brutus encountered Koreans who had never personally met a Black person before. In one of the festivals he went to, Brutus explained that he and his friends stood out as "the Jeju locals gave us an undeserving celebrity treatment, pulling out multiple Samsung and LG cameras and cheesing from east to west" while others stood "afar, afraid, and indecisive" (Brutus, 2016). In the video of the festival, many older Korean women come up to Brutus to touch his dreadlocks commenting, 'It is real hair.' One of the older Korean women went under his arm with his dreadlocks covering her head and took photographs with him (Brutus, 2010). Brutus described how the woman:

The old Korean lady gave a welcoming gesture, as she took a hesitant step toward me. Before I knew it, she immediately stroked my long dreadlocks, dived underneath my right arm, conjoined her Asian V-for-Victory sign with my peace sign for a close-up snapshot; and after the picture, she jumped up and down like a 5-year-old who had just discovered the meaning of life (Brutus, 2016).

The lack of cultural knowledge may go both ways. Sam Ok yere initially went to Korea in 2009 after he received a scholarship from the Korean government that allowed foreign students to learn computer engineering. He attended a Korean language institute a year before he started his computer engineering program in 2010, which he graduated in 2014. Okyere shared that when he had first applied to the Korean government-sponsored program, he applied as if he were going on a blind date, not knowing anything about the country. Even after he was selected and went to Korea at the age of 18, he was clueless about Korea, other than the fact that the government would sponsor his education (B. Kim, 2016).

The second source that constructs Blackness in Korea is misinformation of Black people that stems from stereotypes and images in popular culture and media. In Korean media, the industries which Blackness is accepted and encouraged is music and sports, much of which promotes the interests of Korean industries and companies rather than racial equality (Bell, 1980). As Lee (2016) argued, images of Africa are limited to stereotypes of developing countries, diseases, starving African children, or safaris. Okyere talked about the questions he received from misinformed Koreans about his country and people from the continent of Africa:

When I first came to Korea and told people that I'm from Africa, I received a lot of ridiculous questions like, 'Do you grow a lion at your house?' (laughs) I got it so often that from one moment, I naturally responded, 'Yes, my father raised two lions.' It's ridiculous, right? But that's how little Koreans know about Black people and African friends. (JTBC Entertainment, 2017a)

Okyere also shared an experience of when he was taking a taxi to church in Korea. He explained that the Korean taxi driver was hesitant to pick him up at first, but after hearing Okyere speak Korean, he agreed to give him a ride. The taxi driver told Okyere that usually he does would not pick foreigners up because he has the assumption that they all speak English and cannot speak Korean. Okyere expressed that certain of

stereotypes of foreigners in Korea like this also affect the way Koreans treat him (Donation for Education, 2015).

The third source that constructs Blackness in Korea is racism and racial preference. Koreans view themselves as a race as much as they do an ethnic group (Sharpe, 2003). Colorism and the preference of lighter skin also contributes to Koreans' construct of Blackness. Oftentimes, racial attitudes of Koreans towards Blacks and darker skinned individuals are expressed in fear, indifference, or anger. One of the photographs Brutus posted on his blog captures a middle-aged Korean woman who is visibly frightened and surprised when she encountered Brutus facing towards her with his dreadlocks in his right hand. Brutus wrote about this experience and explained that the fear may have come from her refusal to understand a Black person:

South Korea, like the United States, is a technologically advanced country, and does a lot of things better than other countries. It isn't always the rural areas that suffer from a lack of cross-group exposure. But the picture...shows a woman who is frightened by what she refuses to understand. (Brutus, 2016)

Similarly, Okyere experienced a racial attitude of a Korean middle-aged woman who expressed it in anger and hate. In one of his interviews, Okyere recalled an encounter he had when he was a university student with a middle-aged Korean woman on the subway when he was about to take a seat on the train:

I was about to sit down in an empty seat [in the subway] and a woman came really fast and sat in the empty seat...She commented, 'What is a black thing' doing here? Go back to your own country.'...Even worse, she asked my Korean friend who was next to me why he was going places with me. In that situation, what hurt me most were the Korean people who were in that spot. They were just watching without doing anything and it hurt me a lot....It really broke my heart. (JTBC Entertainment, 2017a)

Okyere also added that he did not appreciate it when Koreans refer to him as *heuk hyeong*. The Korean word *hyeong* means 'older brother' and is generally used when younger males refer to their older male brothers or older male friends. Okyere explained that some Koreans call him *heuk hyeong* - a slang term which became popular on the internet translating to 'Black bro' - but would prefer to be called Okyere *hyeong*, Okyere *dongsaeng* [younger sibling], or Okyere, which are terms that do not have to do with his skin color (D. Y. Kim, 2014).

V. Being Black in the Korean Education System

Both Okyere and Brutus expressed how their Blackness, among other social constructs and facets of identities, became salient while living in Korea and how that affected their lives as either a student or teacher. Brutus explained how working as an English teacher in Jeju made him more aware of this race and identity:

It's quite difficult to not look at my experience in Jeju island from a racial lens—it certainly exist: the dreadlocks, the "chocolate" skin, the bigger; double-lid eyes, the facial and body shape, the hyphenated-Americanism—these are new territories to take in and comprehend for the regular day-to-day Korean in Jeju island. (Brutus, 2012)

As a Black international student, Okyere faced difficulties while attending university in Korea. Although he took a year of Korean language classes at the Korean language institute, there were more challenges as a non-Korean student in a predominantly Korean university than just overcoming language barriers. Okyere reflected on his university life in Korea:

The most difficult thing I experienced during my life in Korea is when I was attending university. At the time, my Korean was very limited. If there are assignments, you need to do them with your peers, but at the time I did not have friends so I was so lonely and distressed.

Okyere's experience is consistent with many foreign students in Korea who are accepted in a university program and face challenges in terms of language, making friends, belonging in the larger student community, and facing discrimination in the mainstream society (Kim & Yoon, 2016). According to Kim and Yoon (2016), 26% of foreign university students in Korea reported they were discriminated against, with many experiencing this discrimination outside of school (23.4%) and also at the universities (15.3%). Okyere continued to explain that his experience at the Korean university took a turn when he met a Korean friend at a club he joined at the university:

I tried going to the '*heukin eumak dongari* [Black music club]' on campus. I was the very first and only Black person who ever got into that club. And in the club, I got to know a [Korean] friend...At first, that friend had a bit of resistance towards me because he didn't know how to treat an African so he didn't know what to do. And then he had an opportunity to study abroad in Canada. After he came back, he said, 'Now I know your heart, Okyere. And I will help you more.' So he and I went through the tough school life together and ate meals together all the time. Because of that friend, I was able to get through the difficult university life. (JTBC Entertainment, 2017b)

As Okyere experienced, a sense of belonging and social support - both from other internationals and people from the host country - affects international students' university life including their academic achievement and success (Chavajay, 2013; Glass & Westmont, 2014). Okyere also shared how as a university student, he applied to an English education institution as a part-time teacher, only to be rejected

because of the color of his skin. Although he passed the phone screening, he was turned down during the face-to-face interview. The explanation that the employer gave him was that they could not imagine what the parents of the students would say if a Black teacher was teaching their kids (JTBC Entertainment, 2017b).

My data showed more than the experiences and challenges of Okyere and Brutus, but how they used their experiences in Korea to continue to impact and influence the Korean society and beyond. As a teacher in Korea, Brutus tried to make an impact as an educator to the Korean students he taught. Brutus wrote that he felt a sense of responsibility as a Black teacher and 'foreigner' teaching younger students because the influence he would have on them. He was setting a foundation for Korean students to construct and reconstruct their views about Black people and foreigners:

My students: their natural disregard for most outer influences (e.g media, hearsay) actually made them seem quite mature. They were mentally open to create their own experience with me and then perhaps compare and contrast at a later stage in their lives. They certainly had formulated opinions about people of color, but in person, nothing was more apparent than the blank slate. I had the historical responsibility to shape or reshape their view about foreigners in general. (Brutus, 2012)

Brutus posted several videos of 'Q & A' sessions with Korean students and their where the Korean students asked questions such as why he decided to become a teacher, what the biggest differences between Korea and America, Korea's influence to the world and the like. The influence Brutus made in the Korean education field was not limited to only his students or the school he taught at, but also to the community as well. He also made a presentation to the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology and the National Institute for International Education of Korea about co-teaching strategies between foreign teachers and Korean co-teachers, the importance of knowing the Korean language, and his experiences in Korea (Brutus, 2011).

After having received opportunities to learn and pursue his education, Okyere also committed to make change through education and helped build a school in Ghana in 2016 with Korean partners. Through funds collected through a crowdfunding called, 'Orange Act' and with sponsors who donated to the school project, Okyere built the 572 School with World Vision as his partner. Bosuso, where the 572 School was built is an area of East Ghana where the entrance rate of middle school is 25% of elementary school entrance rates and the elementary literacy rate is at 30% (Y. Kim, 2016). In the opening speech of the school, Okyere said:

I had the 'privilege' of receiving an education because of the supporters who supported me. However, education should not a privilege, but a right. Everyone has the right to education. Education is an essential element for human growth and an opportunity to achieve one's dream. I am happy that 1,000 children at the 572 School will enjoy the right to receive an education and to dream. (Y. Kim, 2016)

Okyere also started a campaign "Jollof with Kimchi" selling t-shirts and donated the funds to Ghana orphanages (B. Kim, 2016). Jollof, is a one-pot rice dish popular in West African countries and kimchi is a traditional Korean side dish made with vegetables. "Jollof with Kimchi" came from Okyere's idea that the collaboration and cooperation of two or more 'different' people may bring unimaginable power. Okyere aims to become a cultural ambassador for Ghanians and Koreans, increasing awareness of both countries and cultures to each other.

VI. Concluding Remarks

There are now over 2 million foreigners in Korea, accounting for 3.9 percent of the nation's population (Ock, 2016). Despite the growth in visible diversity of racial and ethnic groups, there have been many acts of discrimination directed towards foreigners, especially those of darker skin. Korea, despite being "rich, well-educated, peaceful and ethnically homogenous – all trends that appear to coincide with racial tolerance" was reported to be one of the least racially tolerant countries, where "more than one in three South Koreans said they do not want a neighbor of a different race" (Fisher, 2013). Exploring the meaning of Blackness and its effects in Korea uncovers how racism is "normal" and "ordinary" and endemic to the Korean society, embedded in legal, cultural, educational, and social spheres (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). Black people are only accepted and welcomed in industries that promote the interest of Koreans; otherwise, they are excluded from fields like education due to gate keeping practices of Korean institutions and employers.

This study focused on examining the essential themes from two Black individuals in Korea. Many common themes found in literature on Blackness paralleled the themes that were found in the study. First of all, this study helps understand the experiences of Black individuals in the Korean context. Also, this study engenders useful implications about the South Korean education system, where Black teachers continue to be deprived of opportunities to teach, and Black students are continued to be discriminated. Korean students need to not only have the opportunity to be taught by teachers from various backgrounds, but learn with students from diverse backgrounds as well. Although both individuals in this study initially went to Korea for educational purposes, both individuals did not remain in the South Korean education field after their teaching contract ended or they graduated their university

program. This leaves room for further research on experiences of Black teachers and students who decide to stay in the education field in South Korea longer term. In addition, while the present study mainly focuses on race as an analytical lens in the field of education, future studies may focus on how intersectionality and different social constructs such as race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, immigration, and the like interact within the South Korean context.

People of all backgrounds contribute to the social and cultural fabric of Korea. Cherry picking who to accept or deny into various industries in Korea based on race, nationality, and skin color will hinder the Korean society to grow and develop. It is crucial that people from all backgrounds, like the Black individuals in this study, are given opportunities in Korea. When more Black individuals are given the opportunity, they will be the agents of change to increase awareness, help debunk stereotypes, and make an influence in Korean communities. The insights gained from this study may expand the current dialogues of global Blackness, especially in East Asian countries. There is little research yet about the diversity within Black people living in East Asian countries, especially Korea. Future studies may explore the diverse experiences of Black people from all walks contribute to the discussion of Blackness in Korea.

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