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Summary of our presentation

Our interests and start of research

- As Steven is from Hongkong and Johanna is quite interested in Asian culture, we decided to interview Korean exchange students.
- We tried to be open to any concept that could come up, so we just asked the interviewees for any experience they had living in Germany.

First interview

- One of the first things that came up was a comparison between the way people dress themselves in Germany and Korea.
- People in Germany were said to not care so much about how they dress and what they wear because society does not judge people based on this, while an important aspect from our interviewee's perspective to consider when going out is how to look appropriate
  → We kind of already knew before that self-representation is important for (young) Korean people, so we went with the topic of self-representation in order to find out more about it, which then led to our 'huh'-moment in the second interview.

Our "huh"-moment; our sensitizing concept

- In the next interview we got a broad story about the evolution of a self-image starting from high school.
  → Our interviewee had a friend in high school that was very extrovert, while she herself was introvert. Interestingly, the word "ideal" was used to describe the extrovert character traits while the word "normal" was used to describe the introvert character.
    - "Normal" meant to keep to yourself while "ideal" meant to be outgoing and make the people around you happy and laugh.

→ We translated "normal" vs. "ideal" personality into "yourself vs. the others"

What leads to the distinction between "yourself vs. the others" and why are "the others" prioritized?

1. Cultural aspect

- Korean society as harmony pursuing society: "In Korea we're always thinking about how they feel if I'm talking this word" (Interview1_4:50); always concerned about hurting people's feelings when saying one's opinion
- Korean society by our interviewees as judgmental society: "we always have the concern about others thinking" (Interview1_4:20)
  → Prioritising harmony and other people's happiness over speaking your mind and your own wants
  → Fear of being judged and therefore adapting to society

→ Society already puts the focus of social interactions more on other people than on yourself

2. Situational Aspect
- High school described as environment that does not support individualism, students wanted to comply with the rules and amount to the teacher's expectations
- Students are described as rarely being motivated to participate/form or express their opinion
  → Individual traits are not embraced which may lead you to trying to adapt yourself to what you think is better or "ideal" character as you have the feeling that your own personality is not good enough or too "normal"
- Parental expectations in terms of studying and behaviour are complied in order to be loved by them
  → Again looking for love from the outside

3. Biographical Aspect
- We thought this is relatable for many people as when we are younger, we are still trying to figure out who we are and trying different things out.

<u>What is at the core of all this?</u>
For us, all these aspects only indirectly influence the way you are presenting yourself. There is an intermediary: Self-Esteem.
When you do not have a lot of self-esteem, you are continuously looking for acceptance and feedback by others.
→ This leads us to adapt to what we think of "ideal" character traits and not embracing our own personality and care more about the opinion of others.
→ Searching for love form the outside (i.e. from others vs. love from the inside (i.e. yourself): Our interviewee tried to change her personality in the search for love from other people even though that meant she had to change herself.
→ This in turn then influences our self-representation (to come back to the start of our research).

<u>What is the takeaway from this?</u>
- We wanted to find something that was different for Korea and Germany, but we ended up with something that we think is not only true for the Korean culture – referring to the multiplicity of cultures.
- With more resources and time, you could do further research on how exactly the cultural and situational aspects influence self-esteem and therefore self-representation and could find out differences between Germany and Korea (like how they were described in our first interview).