

Master's Thesis

Emergence of the “Korean Wave” and Its Influence on

Bangladesh

By

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Abstract

Over the past decade, Korean popular culture has been seen to spread throughout the world. Along with the globalization of Korean culture, cultural hybridization is also happening simultaneously. The rapid popularity of Korean wave in recent years and its influence all over the world are impossible to avoid. The recent influence of Korean wave is also highly noticeable in Bangladesh where the wave has started to spread its impacts. The study investigates how far Korean wave’s influence has reached in Bangladesh focusing on Bangladeshi youth as they are the major consumers of the Korean wave.

This paper follows the qualitative method and uses participant observation and in-depth interviews to look into the possible behavioral changes like fashion, make-up, language use, following certain values etc. of Bangladeshi youths influenced by Korean wave. The study argues that hybridity of Korean culture that has similar historical and cultural backgrounds and also shows contemporary modernity are promoting the popularity of Korean popular culture in Bangladesh. The study further argues that the continuous consumption and the increasing attraction towards Korean culture are creating a blend of Korean and Bangladeshi culture which is leading to cultural hybridization.

Keywords: Hallyu, Hybridity, globalization, Cultural Hybridization

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Declaration of Originality

I, Shally Shahina Akter (51117002) hereby declare that the contents of this Master’s Thesis are original and true. The content of this paper has not been submitted at any other institutions.

All the ideas, information derived from other published or unpublished sources has been properly cited and acknowledged. I hereby, submit this thesis to the high degree committee of Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Masters of Asia Pacific Studies (Society and Culture).

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

“Hallyu — the Korean wave — is rolling over Asia with pop music, TV dramas and movies that dazzle audiences from Tokyo and Beijing to Seattle” (Dickie, 2006, Seattle Times).

It has been over a decade since Korean popular culture has gained popularity in East Asia and other Asian countries. The outflow of Korean culture across borders has attracted many scholars to do their research on the phenomenon. The increasing popularity of Korean culture has been termed as ‘Korean wave’ which is also known as “Hallyu” or “Hanryu” (Huang 2009). This particular term is referred to Korean popular culture such as dramas, movies, pop music and Korean cultural products which are gaining popularity in other Asian countries. Since the 1990s, Korean popular culture has been spreading its popularity over China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Singapore at first. Later on, it started to spread over Southeast Asian countries such as Vietnam, Thailand, Malaysia, and Indonesia followed by the popularity in Japan, Mongolia and even beyond East Asia (Yang 2012). In recent years, it has been seen that the Korean wave has been gaining popularity in Europe and the United States as well. The popularity spread of the Korean wave is becoming massive day by day in Western countries.

Even though the Korean wave has been spreading in South Asia, it did not reach Bangladesh until 2009. In recent years, it has been seen that Korean popular culture is rapidly gaining recognition in Bangladesh. Although numerous researches have been done

by scholars on Korean Wave in different regions, Bangladesh is still a new area to explore the impacts of Korean Wave. This study will focus on giving new information to Korean wave research. This paper aims to study the rapid growth of Korean Wave in Bangladesh and how much influence it has over the everyday life of its consumers. Furthermore, the research will try to find out whether the consumption is slowly changing the local culture by mixing it with Korean culture and leading to cultural hybridization.

This study will aim to make the contribution in the field of Sociology, media and Asian Studies by providing information on the consumption of Korean-pop culture and its impacts on the lifestyle of people in Bangladesh. Moreover, it will look into the process of cultural hybridization through the Korean wave.

1.2 Research Question

In this study I answer the following research questions:

1. Why Korean Wave is gaining popularity in Bangladesh?
2. How Korean Wave is leading to cultural hybridization?

1.3 Methodology

The study has used qualitative research method of semi-structured interview and participants observation. The interview was attempted on a specific group- the youth, as they are the most dominant consumers of Korean Wave. The data has been collected by taking interviews from Facebook fan groups of Korean popular culture in Bangladesh. As the interviews are semi-structured and follow open-ended questions, it gives the

opportunity to collect diverse opinions of the participants on specific topics without restricting their opinion with pre-set structure. The questions consist of asking the participants for their opinion on Korean entertainment and their interest in Korean-pop culture.

1.4 Significance of Study

The purpose of the study is to determine the impact of Korean Popular culture in Bangladesh. The study aims to find out whether the popularity of Korean popular culture is influencing the Bangali community to adopt Korean culture and mixing it with their own culture, thus, leading to cultural hybridization. Data gathered from the participant observation and in-depth interviews with the active Korean popular culture fans from the Facebook fan page group, this study shows how the consumers of the Korean pop culture is influenced to adopt Korean culture to feel more connected and to create a new cultural identity. The researcher argues that the overwhelmed fascination towards accepting Korean culture is the consequences of continuous consumption of Korean pop culture.

Chapter 2: Background of the Study

Bangladesh is a small country (area 147,570km²) with dense population and it currently is holding the eight places as the most populated country in the South Asia region; located next to India and Myanmar. Majority people of Bangladesh are Muslim (World's third largest Muslim majority country) and other religion followed by Hindu, Buddhism, and Christianity. Over time, Bangladesh has developed a media connection with the rest of the world and the influences from foreign media in Bangladesh is relatively very high than any other South Asian countries. During the major festivals like Eid and Puja; most of the clothes design is influenced by Bollywood movies or dramas until recent past years. Recently, the number of viewer or fans of Korean wave or in other words known as Hallyu is rapidly increasing. The impact is so huge that Bangladeshis have started to import Korean goods like foods, cosmetics, cards or posters of Korean music Band groups. Clothes and fashion styles are also being followed by Korean pop culture fans. As a result of high demand from the Korean popular culture admirers, many online clothing stores, as well as stores in shopping malls, are keeping Korean style apparels collections. Moreover, the rapidly growing popularity of Korean music, movie, and drama among the youth of Bangladesh has encouraged the South Korean Ambassador of Bangladesh to organize few events like musical concert, K-pop contest in recent years. Mr. Ahn Seong-doo the current South Korean Ambassador in Bangladesh hoping that through Korean music; Korea and Bangladesh hope to build a stronger relationship among both countries and understand the culture in between the countries deeper (Sun Online Desk, 2017).

On social networking sites like Facebook, Twitter; many groups have been created for the enthusiastic fans of Korean popular culture from Bangladesh. These social media networks are used as a platform for the devoted viewers of Korean popular culture so that they can share their thoughts and fondness of Korean culture with each other. Among them, the most highlighted group named as “BTS army of Bangladesh (Official)” which is not only actively showing their utmost love and support for the boy band BTS and Korean popular culture but also participated in social responsibility activities. 'BTS Army of Bangladesh' has celebrated their 5 years anniversary in December 2018. To celebrate this milestone, the group members have collected donation to build the largest digital billboards in Dhaka to show their support and love to BTS. The members of the fan group have also donated a portion to a medical student who is suffering from Acute Myeloid Leukemia in short AML as a small charity work (Jahan, 2018). This initiative by the fan group has certainly been encouraged by the boy Band BTS; a South Korean pop music band which currently regarded as one of the top K-pop boy band group in the world. BTS has also formed a partnership with the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) to raise awareness against anti-violence for children and teenagers around the world. Besides, a few years back when there were rarely any Korean foods found in Bangladesh; are now widely available at almost all the superstores in Bangladesh. More surprisingly, Bangladesh a country where eating food with chopsticks is hardly practiced; has been adopted by the youth generation recently. Some are expecting more cultural changes among this youth generation from the influence of the Korean music industry.

2.1 What is Hallyu or Korean wave?

The Korean wave or Hallyu refers to the increasing international visibility of South Korean popular culture. The term “Hallyu” (in Korean) or “Korean Wave” (in English) was first coined by the Chinese media more than a decade ago to describe the sudden popularity of Korean pop culture in China. The fast-growing popularity started with the export of the Korean soap operas (Korean Drama) to China in the late 1990s (Korean Culture and Information Service, 2011). Hallyu refers to Korean dramas (K-drama), Korean music (K-pop), films, games, fashion, food, beauty, and tourism.

The increasing popularity of Korean wave can be traced back to 1997, when the drama called “What Is Love All About” was broadcasted on the Chinese television, CCTV, which initiated the outbreak of Hallyu in China (Lee, 2011). Since then, the fame of Korean popular culture has increased significantly in the neighboring Asian countries and South Korea has emerged as a new center for the transnational pop culture production (Korean Culture and Information Service, 2011). According to Korean culture and Information Service, from 2011 Korean pop culture began to spread its comfort zone from Asian audiences to more global audiences in the Middle East, Africa, Europe, and America (Korean Culture and Information Service, 2011). The phenomenon has also spread its success to South Asian countries like India, Bangladesh, and Bhutan. More recently, this phenomenon has been gaining vast popularity all over the world followed by the popularity of K-pop boy band called BTS. According to Vox Media (2018), BTS are the most popular K-pop band in the universe now taking the Korean wave to the next level of becoming a global phenomenon (Romano, 2018).

The Korean Wave has been received by different cultures in various ways. According to Jang & Paik (2012, p. 198), “Americans find Korean dramas relaxing and cheerful, and Europeans find the plots uncomplicated and romantic. Asians, meanwhile, discover lifestyles and trends they wish to emulate”. Jang and Paik (2012) further mentioned that the Middle East and Muslim countries find the dramas ‘safe’ to watch without overt sexuality (p.198). This study aims to give an update on the advances of the new Korean wave and its influences on the audiences.

2.2 History of Hallyu

In spite of having entered our lexicon a decade ago, the neologism Hallyu or the Korean wave has become quite familiar. More recently, the Korean wave has become more global with the efforts of K-pop boy band BTS or Bangtan Boys in 2018. According to TIME’s Magazine (2018), BTS is breaking new grounds and taking over the world after the huge popularity of PSY’s “Gangnam Style” which took the world by storm in 2012 (Bruner, 2018). The advancement of Hallyu has been broken into stages as Hallyu 1.0, 2.0 and 3.0.

➤ Hallyu 1.0

The Korean wave or in other word known as Hallyu states to increasing fame and unique identity of South Korean entertainment and culture throughout the world. Hallyu transformed the entertainment industry; creates a significant impact on people’s taste of listening to music, watching drama and playing games on smart devices especially in the twenty-first century. A recent study by Hwang and Epstein (2016), states that the birth of

Hallyu emerged in the late 1990s with the renowned drama “What Is Love?” which was telecast for the first time on Chinese Central Television (CCTV); a foreign national television channel for the first time at any foreign channel. Later, the drama gained spectacular popularity in China with the viewer rating of 4.2. This was the beginning of the long journey for Hallyu which later spread in neighboring countries. A few more South Korean dramas in the late 1990s which gained enormous popularity contributed a significant impact in the South Korean economy growth; exporting television program from 5.5 million in 1995 increased to 27,4 times; an astonishing amount of 150.9 million in 2007 which it was a record back in the days (Jin, 2012, p. 5).

Soon after introducing the Korean drama in China, Korean music was also broadcast on the Beijing-based radio show named as “Seoul Music Studio” which also gained popularity among the youth generation (Hwang et al., 2016). During the late 1990s and the early 2000s the Korean wave or Hallyu was widely famous in the East Asian regions like Vietnam, Taiwan and China which revolutionized in the development of cable TV network and satellite broadcast media to meet the increasing demand of South Korean drama, music and movies (Hwang et al., 2016). A report by Hwang et al., (2016) state that two significantly influencing dramas in the early 2000s are Winter Sonata and Jewel in the palace went through viral not only in East Asia regions but also in South Asia, Eastern Europe, the Middle East, and Africa which later added popularity in Korean music and film.

➤ Hallyu 2.0

During the mid-2000s, the Korean wave or Hallyu has shown promising in “K-pop” music. The word “K-pop” describes specifically the dance music of a group of idol singers. K-pop music went viral through the growth of the internet; especially two media networking sites YouTube and SNS or social networking sites gives the edge that K-pop music required to spread globally. However, K-pop music did not make significant popularity in the early Hallyu 2.0 era in global music until recent years. Despite slow growth in K-pop music in this era, Korea has successfully exported \$80.9 million worth music in 2010 (Jin, 2012). In this era, Korean drama has continued growing its popularity beyond East Asia regions.

Due to differences in culture and history; local dramas were struggling to find success, especially in overseas countries. Despite the differences and challenges, Korean dramas display the authenticity and rich Korean culture, traditional foods and clothing and adding to that inspirational universal storyline took the Korean drama into a new height globally. Besides, as days pass by Korea has developed new smartphones, introducing SNS and online gaming has played a vital role in the evolution of Hallyu 2.0. A report by Jin (2012), found that with the rapid growth of internet speed and modern technologies in smart devices, Korea has exported \$102 million value of the game in 2000 which rapidly increased to \$1.6 billion in 2010.

➤ Hallyu 3.0

Hallyu 3.0 period starts from the early 2010s onwards. This era represents the combination of K-pop, K-culture, and K-style targeting the entire citizens of the world. As the audiences and geographies are kept increasing of Hallyu, the government of South Korea is taking several initiatives to promote the Korean culture through Hallyu on a global scale. A report by Hwang et al., (2016) states that a cultural promotion taskforce name as Hallyu Culture Promotion Taskforce was created on 30th January 2012 in order to unveil a plan linking K-pop with Korean culture in general which will present as K-culture. In 2012, the sensational Korean superstar name PSY; renowned for his humorous videos and stage performances, soon after releasing his first music video name “Gangnam Style” went viral all over the world, remained #2 position at the Billboard chart and broke the record of most viewed K-pop video on YouTube with more than 583 million views (Jin, 2012). In today’s world, Korean music is recognized for its strong beats and appealing sounds. The sound quality is regarded as one of top sound quality which compares as the same level of American and European pop music. A report by Hwang et al., (2016) states that in the year 2011, Korean pop music videos were viewed 2.3 billion times on YouTube which is around 800 million views more than the year 2010.

2.3 Characteristics of Korean Wave

In the Academy of Korean studies press’s book (2016, 31-32), it is mentioned that openness is the crucial driving factor of spreading the wings of this wave. Korea has always accepted the cultural differences that came across their paths from the beginning of time

from northern to western roads. This can be seen in their music, dramas, and cultures.

Historical dramas, music, places, and sites are just as popular as the most modern pieces of works and people enjoy watching both the versions regardless.

Originality (goyuseyong) is another driving force when it comes to the topic of the Hallyu wave. Although Korean culture is mostly influenced by some other cultures which they tend to follow, but yet with the highest form of creativity and newly added dynamics, they produce well-accepted drama's like Jewel in the Palace, Winter Sonata etc.

Again, when it comes to compatibility (gongjonseong), it is said that Koreans embrace and adopt overseas cultures, and they believe multiple cultures can coincide in one nation and maintain their harmony thus following the concept of cultural hybridization among themselves.

According to Kim (n.d.), the characteristics of the Korean or the Hallyu wave can be divided into three parts. The first wave is limited to K-Pop and K-dramas only. The existence of YouTube, Netflix, and other video streaming sites has helped mass people to select watching music and drama in their free times. These are the platforms where K-pop and k-dramas got the chance to become a worldwide phenomenon.

The popularity of Hanguk drama or K-drama which are mostly in the format of mini-series is taking over the daily life of the people seeking entertainment regularly. Earlier in 1997, the Chinese TV channel CCTV started airing a Korean family drama “What is love?” which was the beginning of the Hallyu era in the late 1990s with a 15 percent of TV viewer rating which was actually the second highest record of that time (Do

T. 2012, 20). The whole exports of the drama industry escalated from \$12.7 million to \$37.5 million within a timespan of only 4 years by the end of 2003 (Shim 2006, 28).

When Korean dramas became popular, Korean music also started to flow into China, Hong Kong, and Taiwanese audiences. Their radio stations started to play Korean band song and numerous concerts started to hold on these countries as well (KOCIS 2011a, 30-31). With the debut of Seo Taiji & Boys, a new era of K-pop was born in 1995 and big entertainment companies like SM and YG entertainment along with many small companies were founded and the whole K-music industry started to have a revolutionary outbreak. All of them have produced so many idol groups and made a unique genre of their own. When gradually K-pop started to pave their way to Billboard Chart where weekly international popular songs are listed, and popular music is easier to find, people started to notice them more.

Undoubtedly, Psy’s “Gangnam Style” released in 2012 was the beginning of this unique era that the world is facing these days. This song was written based on the lifestyles of one of the posh cities of South Korea and had a unique, catchy vibe and dance to go with it. Psy’s success led an interest to other artists performances and people all over the world started to find out about music groups like Big Bang, Girl’s Generation, Super Junior, to the latest worldwide hottest trend “Bangtan Sonyeondan” aka “BTS” who even left the western artists behind with their fame now a days (Embassy of the Republic of Korea in People's Republic of Bangladesh Website, 2018). Behind the fame of K-pop, there are amazingly catchy songs, attractive looking artists, their ability on their vocal performance

and mind-blowing on-stage dance moves, makeup, accessories, the brand of clothes they wear.

The second wave contains various computer games, fashion statements, Korean movies etc. some famous Korean movies that took over the world by storm are Train to Busan (2016), My Sassy Girl (2001), A millionaire’s first love (2006), the king and the clowns (2005) etc. Lastly, the third wave includes Korean food, tourism, Korean products, Korean language, traditions, and cultures etc.

For the Hallyu wave to go global, the contribution of the drama “Dae Jang Geum” aka “Jewel in the Palace” is tremendous. This drama singlehandedly paved the way towards the Chinese, Japanese and the Southeast Asian soap opera market and went beyond in other countries. It was a historical drama, and the story was based on the Joseon era (16th century). After its successful run in Korea, it went to Taiwan, Hong Kong, and China simultaneously and faced a similar high TV rating, and not only that, Chinese mass media was having a hypothetical “jang geum fever”. Moreover, in Hong Kong, people chose to see this drama over the 2003 football match between Hong Kong and Spain. As a result, Korean cuisine started to gain sudden astounding appreciation in above mentioned countries.

Similarly, in Iran, the identical incident started to occur. With ratings of 86% nationwide and more than 90% in Tehran, the capital of Iran, this show became a nationwide hit and people’s approach towards Koreans as a whole changed tremendously, according to a Korean newspaper called The Chosun Ilbo. At the last day of the

broadcasting in 2011, government officials who had high rankings had a function at the Korean embassy in Tehran which indicates the impact it had nationwide. Likewise, this show was also aired and popularized in various other countries like Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Egypt, Malaysia, The Philippines, Singapore, Indonesia, Vietnam, Thailand, Brunei, India, New Zealand, Turkey, Australia, Israel, The United States, Nigeria, Canada, Romania, Peru, Hungary, Colombia, Bosnia, Sweden, Russia etc. and that's how the world started to look for what Korea has to offer further. (The Korean Wave: A New Pop Culture Phenomenon, 27-29).

Chapter 3: Literature review

3.1 Influence of Korean wave in receiving countries

Hallyu wave is not only limited towards soap operas or pop music and movies, rather it is spread across mobile apps, games, language, animations, comics, fashion trends, foods, cosmetics, tourism and what not. A global Korean phenomenon which started around the 1990s from Japan, China, Taiwan to Latin America, Middle East, The United States and bits of Europe is still ongoing. Now with the nonstop success of the boy band BTS who broke all the stereotypes the craze is spreading like wildfire.

There are several reasons as to why there is this huge success in this sector. As cited in Agustina & Lukman (2017), the success of Hallyu trend is highly dependent on K-beauty trend. The flawless and beautiful Korean woman and Korean idols have mesmerized people the most and influenced them to follow their beauty regime and buy beauty products they use. People, especially the youth who have access to YouTube, search for Korean makeup tutorials on a daily basis or right after their favorite girl groups' new music video comes out. K-beauty trend not only is associated with the makeup products but also with skincare products and cosmetic surgery terms as well. Koreans, regardless of men and women, wants to look forever young, glowing, dewy, natural, fresh, simple and in a simple word, like mythical flawless beauty. This trend in fashion has always been appealing to people around the world and no wonder they were caught up to this trend so quickly. Plus, Koreans tend to use ingredients which are noticeably harmless for the skin, and their

product packaging scheme is also very much appealing, thus these beauty products quickly entered the global market (ITA, 2016).

Research shows that in Taiwan, around 52% of random citizens' likes Korean music, 40% of them like Korean soap operas. Around 16% of people agreed to learn the Korean Language just because they were interested in that culture so much. Another figure shows that they buy Korean electronics, foods, and clothes the most after being influenced by the Hallyu wave. Again, Korean Tourism rate also got higher because of it. The Korean government has made roaming inside Korea inexpensive so planning for a short vacation in this beautiful country is always within budget for Taiwanese people (Siyi, Zakai, & Yuyu, 2013).

According to Guo Yuchen and Li Wei (2017), Korean cuisines are taking over Taipei city like never seen before. Famous Korean foods which are shown in dramas like Kimchi, Jajangmyun, Ramyun, Dakgalbi, Tofu, Bibimbap etc. are becoming available in Korean style restaurants which are growing everywhere in Taipei. All kinds of social media are giving them news coverage and new business section is being open because of it. Not only the food, but also the fashion industry is hugely influenced by the K-media nowadays, and most teenagers are mostly affected by this wave. For instance, it was cited in the same book that in 2015, idol G-Dragon from Big Bang was the very first Korean artist who was invited to the Paris Fashion Show held by Chanel and was courted by Karl Lagerfeld, the chief designer of Chanel himself (Liberty Times, 2015). What impact it had was, he opened a door which was thought to be held for western celebrities only. As a result of this event,

people from Asian subcontinent started to feel more connected towards the path they only dreamed of having, now they could follow their daily fashions, wardrobes, choice of brands, and imitate them to satisfy their needs. More than 80% of Taipei’s senior high-school students purchase products are greatly influenced by what their favorite Korean idols are using or endorsing. As cited in Wei and Yuchen (2017), it is the females who watch more k-dramas, k-music videos, and Taiwanese dramas than men, and are highly inspired by them (大紀元新聞網, 2015).

The interest that Chinese fans take in the Hallyu wave is also tremendous. From *Winter Sonata* (2002) to *My love from another star*, *Descendants of the sun*, *Goblin* – each and every hit drama is impressing the viewers and attracting a huge consumer base alone in a single country. Zhang Wen (2014) in an intensive article said that viewers of China are very fond of Korean artists, actors and family-based soap operas which lead back to Confucian values that are the cultural root of both of the countries. The young generation of China is getting more addicted to café that are copying Korean ones. Even plastic surgery skills are having higher demand nowadays because of the Hallyu wave. Boy Bands like EXO, TVXQ, and Super Junior each had large Chinese fan bases of their own. These certainly have a socio-economic effect on Chinese culture as well. Kim & Ryoo (2007), analyzed the speedy consumption of South Korean Cultural exports in Asia. According to their research, the success of Hallyu was a result of cultural proximity which can be described as a common historical and cultural legacy. In East Asia, cultural proximity is reinterpreted as the sharing of present-day modernity. Korean popular culture is also accepted in places like China, Japan, and Taiwan because it offers a blend of western

cultures and Asian Values. As mentioned in Huang (2011), it is the hybrid modernity of cultures that makes popular culture acceptable to these regions. Moreover, the rapid growth of industrialization, tourism, intra-regional trade and the development of information technology in the 20th century played a huge role in spreading the popularity of Korean culture (Kim & Ryoo, 2007).

On a different tone, people from Thailand want to take note from Hallyu wave and create Thai wave so that their economy can also get a boost and follow Korean’s path (Potipan, Worrawutkeerakul, 2010). As mentioned in that book, South Korea applied Hallyu wave as a policy so that they can expand their socio-cultural diaphragm and recover their country profile to make more Gross National Income (Asian Social Science, 2009). It also simultaneously helped to amplify their GDP of tourism and culture industries (Dator & Seo, 2004).

Another important factor which is greatly influenced has been language. All the people who have been affected by Hallyu fever have been admitted that they more or less adopted the Korean language in their day to day life. Plenty of case studies could be found on the internet regarding this matter. A particular one was conducted on Algerian fans by Batoul Touhami (2017) in Jordan recently on 139 participants. According to the study, 98.5% applicants admitted that they use adopted Korean words within their everyday English words, uses inside jokes from Korean idol’s lives and k-drama’s stories, and uses Korean expressions like “Hwaiting/fighting” as a form of encouragement to one another, or “aigoo” to express sorrow, “aish” to express annoyance, and so on. Some Korean words are

developed to make smarter and some are made shorter to make new meaning or just the sake of it. As mentioned in Batoul Touhami (2017), any fandom uses some specific set of words and sentences which are difficult for the outsiders to understand are termed as Lexis (Potayroi, 2014, p. 123).

3.2 Korean wave and Hybridity

According to Huang (2011), after the Japanese trendy drama craze, came the Korean cultural wave which spread like a wildfire in the adjacent countries. As cited here, this Hallyu wave is aided by the Government of Korea itself so that they could enhance their cultural industry (Ryoo, 2008). There are mainly three contradictory arguments as said by Shuling Huang which clarifies why cultural products are accepted in the international territory; those are cultural transparency, cultural differences, and hybridization. To begin with, cultural export that targets the global market are seldom seen culturally specific. Their openness towards the global market gives an opportunity to the international audiences to insert their local values, beliefs, and rituals (Olson, 1999: 5–6). That is the reason why Hollywood movies are so popular across the world as they appeal to people’s common habits. Furthermore, cultural differences can also attract international demand. If presented correctly, the national heritages can also become attractive for the people of other countries. Lastly, in Robertson (1992)’s words, products and services can be personalized to the taste of a specific market which is also termed as global localization. The exporters use this method to modify their product and services to the tastes of the targeting market. This process helps foreign marketers to connect with local communities. Moreover, copying

overseas concepts can ultimately result in the hybridization of national culture (Huang, 2011).

It is an ongoing misconception that local cultures are swiped away by influential foreign culture, rather it is proved that encounters like this can boost up native creativity. As mentioned in Huang (2011), East Asian cultural industries have already established an export growth model which followed western growth models for ages and built their own style (Keane et al., 2007). Japan’s strategic hybridism is the prototype of this model, which is based on the theme *wakon yosai* (means Japanese spirit and Western technologies), which is, in other words, domesticating western cultures produces Japanese national identity.

According to Kim (2013), Being pressurized by IMF and WTO, many Asian countries had to open their cultural markets earlier in 1990; s and media products began to have a free flow among these countries, and tactical Korean industry took the best out of this opportunity. The Motion Picture Promotion Law was enacted by the Korean Govt. in 1995 which encouraged rich entrepreneurs to invest money in the film industry. South Korea is probably the pioneer of forming official policy and taking initiatives to become a reliable civilization for artists (Dator and Seo 2004).

Nowadays people from one community uses the digital platform to sustain communication between each other which not only ties bond to their own society but also to the entire world. People from any part of the world can be part of any community if they have access to certain digital networks like the internet, smartphone, or computer etc. The

reason why this topic is related is recent; numerous countries around the world are now affected by the South Korean community and are swept away by the ever-growing Korean or Hallyu wave culture. The 21st-century boys and girls are called digital mobile generation for a reason. They are free to search for entertainment sources and recently they do not care whether it's only American or European content or not (Kim, 2013).

As mentioned in Kaisii (2017), the Hallyu wave became famous worldwide because of several reasons. Firstly, the social similarity of taste in people of the South-East Asian countries with which the audiences can relate closely. Their social concerns, lifestyles, habits, humor are almost similar and relatable. Secondly, these people share almost the same religious values, and the views are realistic and sensible in most of the cases. Family oriented people love to watch Korean drama's because the stories are touching and clean, unlike western culture which is indifferent to vulgarism and violence. Thirdly, K-pop and K-drama both are the epitomes of perfect rhythm and momentum. In pop music, the dance moves are fast, consistent, yet fun to watch; they are addicting. Again, in drama, they are short in number, so their storyline is short and precise, and have the perfect balance of emotion without having too much of an emotional drag. Fourthly, the Beauty of the idols and the artists with fair skin, light makeup, and modern fashion sense never fails to catch the eyes of the viewers. It is safe to say that most of the people are addicted to Korean wave just because their favorite idols are either pretty or handsome, and viewers feel like they came straight out of their favorite fairytale. Lastly, youth inquisitiveness which makes them want to know fashionable trends as soon as possible via media, and this wave is the fastest route for them to discover more. (Kaisii, 2017).

The impact of Hallyu wave has become so strong that it's leaving strong effects on economy and sociologists, economists, psychologists. Business insiders have now started doing researches and development programs based on Hallyu. Hallyu wave is huge and is here to stay for long.

3.3 Theoretical framework

3.3.1 Cultural Hybridization Theory

Various Scholars such as Bhabha (2014), Tomlinson (1991), Rowe & Schelling (1991), Werbner (1997) etc. have defined Hybridization in their own way but none could make it less complex. The most recent and clearer view was given by Bhabha K. Homi (1994). He declared that the term hybridization is used to explain the rise of a new and unique culture which is the outcome of the intertwining elements between the colonizer and the colonized, which tests the legitimacy of a deeply rooted local cultural identity (Li, 2016). Bhabha says that all cultural statements and systems are built in a space that he calls the 'Third space'. He applies the term especially to cultural identity and argues that hybridity can be understood as the strategic setback of the process of domination through negation (Bhabha, 1994).

Globalization paves the path to cultural hybridization and cultural adoption. As mentioned by Kaisii (2017) there has always been this fusion of culture going on since the beginning of time, and with that in mind. Moreover, Bruke (2009) mentioned that the modern world is nothing but full of cultural collaborations. You can only expect to have this cultural amalgam once contact and exchange have been done.

The process of globalization is rampant over the centuries. The major sign of understanding globalization is the globalizing trend that gets faster and wider over time with the flow of information revolution shifting the media image to abundance (Kaisii, 2017). Along with the progress of cultural globalization, cultural hybridization is also happening continuously. Globalization can lead to cultural hybridization, where globalization encourages different cultures to blend through the availability of cross-border exchange (Kaisii, 2017). Appadurai (1990) mentioned, “The central problem of today’s global interaction is the tension between cultural homogenization and cultural heterogenization” (Appadurai, 1990). According to him, the results of these two extreme opposite ends is the reason for cultural hybridization. Hybridization is the consequence of globalization. Hybridization of culture helps to promote the growth of globalized trends (Kaisii 2017).

Hybridity means the interaction of people from different culture exchanging system from each other in a culturally diverse world leading to a blend of cultures together. Hybridism is a communication-based phenomenon which is spread by mass communication (Kaisii 2017). In the contemporary world, the process of cultural contact and exchange leads to the ultimate result of cultural hybridization. Korean wave is a blend of Korean tradition and western ethos, which is an outgrowth of cultural hybridization (Kaisii 2017). Although, cultural hybridization keeps the local cultural ethos alive but promotes cultural diversity.

Holton (2000) says that all the results of hybridization lead to three basic yet unresolved arguments, firstly, the polarization thesis which hypothesizes cultural wars between western globalization and its rivals, secondly the homogenization thesis where globalization meets cultural convergence, and thirdly the hybridization or syncretism thesis, where globalization inspires the merger of the available diverse cultural selections through cross-border exchange (pg141).

According to Hassi and Storti (2012), the Heterogenization scenario or the polarization thesis is a controversial one amongst scholars like Appadurai (1996) & Featherstone (1995), who agreed that Western cultures have mostly originated the globalization process but, they don't agree that it only happened because of the cultural exchange from the westerns only. Heterogenization shows a procedure that takes to a deeper looking world because of the increase in cultural flows (Appadurai, 1996).

On the other hand, the Homogenization scenario states that the results of international exchange and exports of service, goods, technology, capital, and human resource are making a more standardized world culture. Nowadays, more and more countries are having interconnections and adopting the Western Euro-American lifestyle (Liebes, 2003). This setup has low cultural barriers and very likely the powerful culture always takes wins over the other ones (Ritzer, 2010). Cultural models like Americanization, global culture, McDonalidization theory etc. are based on this homogenization or convergence scenario.

Then comes the Hybridization scenario where the continental global context makes it absolute obligatory to be constantly aware of the facts about international workforce mobility, export, and import, tourism, migration, international trade, international investment etc. Appadurai (1990), while talking about the hybridization view, argued that globalization epitomizes a method that shows both differentiation and interconnection. Thus, what goes around the world should not be called as “monolithic network spreading worldwide” but a group of “partially overlapping socio-techno-cultural landscapes” (Appadurai, 1990). On this context, Featherstone (1990) expresses globalization as a merger of cultures which produces original and valuable diverse significance plus culturally compelled universal visions. Hybridization view says that external and internal cultural flows intermingle with each other to form an exclusive cultural hybrid that embraces both of their original components (Ritzer, 2010). Powerful local culture barrier will always exist who will want to protect themselves, but not enough to block them entirely.

Amalgamation of cultures will undoubtedly put doubt on the fundamentals of purity creeds of a culture which describes a cultures clean and unmixed nature. As mentioned in Hassi and Storti (2012), for example, people who want to preserve their culture and relate its purity with strength and sacredness. Sometimes hybridization does not consider taboo’s and basic ethics that a culture follows and challenges them by taking matters in international hands. Again, this fusion demoralizes ethnicity because the process happens on a large scale internationally (Pieterse, 1996).

It is the shallow and artificial elements of culture, like fashion, music, clothing, cuisine, movie, games, mobile apps etc. which are the ones that transfers the fastest across borders while the components which are rooted deep inside, like values and beliefs, are preserved more and takes harder effort and much longer time to change because every culture sanctuary their own values. Cultures get influenced and shifts through the contact of the other cultures but that does not imply changing deeply embedded elements of a culture. As mentioned in Hassi and Storti (2012), globalization actually preserves national particularities. Cultural diversity is maintained when nations are in contact with each other’s culture. The cultural elements are interpreted in such a way that they become compatible with the other cultures without losing their cultural peculiarities like values and beliefs. According to the research result of Hassi & Storti (2012), homogenization and hybridization have effects on the cultural artifacts of a given culture rather than its cultural values and philosophies (Hassi & Storti, 2012). These fusions should not be viewed as destructive because dynamic opportunities will have a chance to flourish only when chances of hybridity will be present. Cultural exchanges are not solely destructive and negative for local cultures of a nation rather they can bring more possibilities for the improvement.

In the post-colonial literature, scholar’s express hybridity as a known yet uncertain topic. He said that only the molding of cultures should be emphasized, not their distinctiveness and that is why hybridized cultures are called syncretic or creolized as the fundamentals of the mixture are taken from different backgrounds (Pieterse, 1994). For instance, Wang and Yeh (2005) mentioned in their paper that the Director of the

Hollywood film “Moulin Rouge”, Baz Luhrmann, confessed in an interview with the New York Times that his highly comical and highly tragic theme of the movie with dance numbers was influenced by Bollywood Movies (Shome and Hegde, 2002: 184). What made cultural hybridization a quick phenomenon is the availability of mass communication throughout the entire world which, Marshall McLuhan (1964) has said to have become a global village. Cultural globalization and cultural hybridization always occur simultaneously. A comprehensive view on global flow was given by Appadurai (1990) where he stated that the outcome of the movement consists of a total of five dimensions: first- Ethnoscapes or migration, second- Technoscapes or infrastructures, third- Financescapes or capital, fourth- Mediascapes or information & ideas, and fifth- Ideascapes or ideologies & images (Appadurai, 1990:296). He says globalization is the steps of growing disconnection between these dimensions.

Again, as mentioned in Kaisii (2017), there’s a growing cultural affirmation and identity-based activity happening around the world right now that appropriates and adjusts the globalization process which is called glocalization and for which, the perfect example is the Korean or Hallyu wave. Korean products and services are offered to the world in a way which is neither fully traditional Korean way nor fully westernized way but a perfect mixture of both.

Chapter 4: Data and Method

This study used a qualitative research method of semi-structured interview and participants observation. Interviews for the study was conducted within one month from 1st September 2018 to 30th September 2018 due to time limitation. The participants for the interview were gathered from two of the most popular and active Facebook fan page group of K-pop (Korean music) fans called BTS ARMY OF BANGLADESH (Official) and EXO-L BANGLADESH. The Facebook fan group named BTS ARMY OF BANGLADESH (Official) has more than 3,000 active member and more than 8,000 people like the page. While another fan group called EXO-L BANGLADESH has more than 2,000 active members. Both fan page groups have a wide range of active member throughout Bangladesh.

The two Facebook fan page group named BTS ARMY OF BANGLADESH (Official) and EXO-L BANGLADESH are closed Facebook groups. Therefore, only the official members of these two Facebook groups are able to contact the fellow members. Fortunately, the researcher is a member of these two Facebook fan page groups so it was convenient for her to collect participants for the interview. The researcher first contacted the admins of these two Facebook fan page groups and interviewed them. They were very cooperative and interested to give an interview for the research. Afterward, with the help of the admins, some other members of these two Facebook fan page groups were interviewed for the research. Some of the participants were very eager to cooperate with the interview

but could not give time due to final exams for their college. As a result, the researcher had to spend some more time to convince other members for an interview.

To conduct the interviews for the study the researcher had to visit Bangladesh in mid-August 2018. After contacting the participants, the researcher set a time schedule for each interview sessions according to the participant's convenience. Every interview session data was recorded by a phone recorder and also jotting down notes during the interview. Afterward, the researcher listened to each of these recordings and transcribed it into notes using a laptop.

The researcher conducted total 10 semi-structured interviews including 4 Masters students from Dhaka district, 2 Masters students from Sylhet district, one Undergraduate student from Dhaka district, another Undergraduate from Rajshahi district and two College students from Dhaka district. Due to having limited time the researcher could only take 10 interviews. Among the 10 interviewees, 8 of them were female and 2 of them were male. All of the participants for this study age between 10s and 20s.

Social media plays an imperative role in today’s modern world and it is also a crucial source in spreading the popularity of the current Korean wave all over the world. Hence, the researcher decided to conduct interviews of the members of Facebook fan groups as they are the most active fans who are interested in Korean pop culture and they have a lot of information regarding the popularity of K-pop and K-drama in Bangladesh. Many of the members also participate in Korean cultural events held in Bangladesh. Moreover, the researcher was able to contact more people interested in Korean pop culture

through the help of the admin and members of these fan page groups. As the interviewees were chosen from the Facebook fan page groups, it gave the researcher the opportunity to collect data from three major districts of Bangladesh to measure the popularity and influence of Korean pop culture in Bangladesh. All the interviews were taken in an informal setting giving the participants full opportunity to express their preference of Korean pop culture. The setting also helped to gather information about their daily activity and experience regarding Korean pop culture. Three of the interview sessions were conducted face-to-face at restaurants, while seven interviews were conducted by video call from Facebook Messenger. The video call interviews were taken due to time limitation and distance between the researcher and the participants.

As a native speaker of Bangladesh, the researcher conducted interviews in Bangla so that the participants can be more expressive. After recording the interviews, the researcher then transcribed the recordings into Bangla and translated them into English so that it could be used in the research paper for quoting purposes. All of the interviews were conducted giving full knowledge of the study to the participants. Most of the interviews lasted between 1 hour 30 minutes and 2 hours.

Data from the interviews were analyzed using the coding method of the grounded theory approach (Glaser & Strauss, 1997). The researcher first started with an open coding process which is the first step of coding. Then the interviews were analyzed by the second step called focused coding (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011). The open coding process described the fascination of Korean pop culture fans and their satisfaction towards the

Korean popular culture. While the second phase focused coding helped to examine the experiences of the Korean cultural fans. Moreover, focused coding helped the researcher to see the transformation of habits in the daily life of the Korean pop culture fans through continuous consumption of Korean pop culture, while open coding allowed to gather the factors behind their preference of Korean pop culture.

The question for the interviews was based on three main topics. After going through the background of the participants such as age and education they were asked about their source that provided them with information about Korean pop culture. Then they were questioned to explain the reason behind their preference of Korean pop culture. Following the conversation, the researcher then asked the participants about their experiences and daily activity after becoming exposed to Korean pop culture. Many of the Korean cultural fans participate in Korean cultural events, go to Korean restaurants, try to buy Korean fashionable clothes, makeup, and skin care products from online. Therefore, they were asked if they follow Korean trends or if they have undergone through any kinds of transformation in their life due to the Korean wave.

Chapter 5: Findings and Discussion

This chapter presents the results and discussion of the data from the qualitative methods. The in-depth interviews helped to understand the continuous consumption of the Korean pop culture by Bangladeshi youths and certain changes brought by the consumption in their behavior.

5.1 Cultural values and beliefs

Cultural proximity is defined as having cultural similarities between countries or having similar cultural history or legacy that helps to accept each other’s culture (Kim & Ryoo, 2007). Culture plays an important role in spreading the popularity of the Korean wave. Korean popular culture offers a blend of western and Asian values which increases its chance of being accepted in countries that share similar values and also attracted to western culture. Thus, cultural proximity is reinterpreted as the sharing of present-day modernity.

Data from the interviews show that Korean dramas are different in many ways than western dramas. Korean dramas reflect their cultural beliefs, their way of life and values in their dramas. They show family ties such as caring for their children, taking care of their old parents, siblings love. In Korean dramas, one can also see the importance Koreans give to respect their elders and loyalty. The dramas also show the importance of education in Korea and how parents are really strict about their children study. Korean dramas also include various good quality romantic love stories for the audiences to enjoy.

The family is very important to Koreans and the family importance is successfully portrayed in Korean dramas. These cultural values are similar to Bangladeshi cultural values which is working as a supporting element to accept Korean culture by the Bangladeshi youths. Sadia Shima from Dhaka city, 18 years old, who is a college student studying business studies have been watching Korean dramas for six years since 2013. She is also a fan of Korean pop music and she is an active member of the BTS ARMY OF BANGLADESH (Official) Facebook fan page group. She shared her view of Korean soap operas as “full of Asian cultural values”. In an interview, she stated, “I like the way Korean dramas show their family bonding. They are very emotional and meaningful to learn how to treat your family in a better way”. Sadia told the researcher that she learned to value her family more after watching a lot of Korean dramas which made her realize some of her wrong treatment towards her family members.

Similar to Sadia’s statement, another Korean drama fan Anika Tasnuva, 26 years old, currently in the final year of her masters also mentioned that she can relate her family values with Korean drama unlike western drama which is good but she cannot connect with the values. Anika stated, “I can watch Korean drama all day. I feel connected with the issues of the drama and it is not so much intense like Indian drama or not so much out of Asian value context like western series”. She also mentioned that she enjoys the drama as it represents fun time with family and the dramas are very light in the sense of having less complicated relations compared to western dramas or Indian dramas.

In the context of respect, Korean drama, as well as Korean pop music Idols, show that they have respect towards their elders and family members. The respect Koreans show towards their elders is an attracting for the audiences. Anika watches a lot of Korean entertainment shows where her favorite K-pop idols like BTS, EXO, Big bang participate. She stated in the interview that she admires the idols and respects them as they show respect to their seniors. Bangladeshi people also show respect towards their elders and it is an important part of Bangladeshi culture. Anika finds the similarity of her culture in Korean culture.

Anika: “I see the Korean people in the drama or in the entertainment shows bowing their head to show respect. I like their gesture to show respect towards elders”. I sometimes want to do the bowing but it is not familiar in our culture, but I think it’s interesting”.

Arranged marriages are a very common culture in Korean society. Korean parents, especially rich Korean parents are more likely to ask their children to go through arrange marriages. In a similar context, Bangladeshi parents believe in arranged marriages as well. This cultural similarity can be seen in Korean dramas and issues that occur as a result of the decline of the marriage. Among the 10 interview participants, most of the female interviewees mentioned about this matter. According to them, it is interesting when they see western dramas, they see people are free after a certain age whereas Koreans and Bangladeshi people do not have that much freedom in that matter.

In another viewpoint regarding Asian culture, Kaniz Faizah, 27 years old, a Business study Graduate student from Sylhet district thinks that Korean dramas can be watched with family members together while western dramas are not so much applicable to watch in front of parents or younger siblings. She told the researcher that Korean dramas are ‘safe’ to watch with anyone as it is less vulgar and obscene, yet it is both emotional and appealing to watch.

Faizah: she told the researcher, “Look, we are a conservative society. Our parents do not approve of us watching any intimate scene”.

Researcher: Yes, I do agree on that matter.

Faizah: She then added, “They show some kissing or some intimate things which is all right to watch with family”. Also, my mother likes to watch it even though she doesn’t understand the language. I tell her about the basic theme and she understands and enjoys watching it with me”.

Researcher: I see. So, it helps you to spend some time with your mother.

Faizah: Yes (laughter).

Faizah has been a Korean pop culture fan for about 10 years now. After being exposed to Korean drama since 2010 she spends most of her leisure time watching Korean soap operas or K-pop. She told the researcher that watching Korean dramas while she feels troubled gives her relaxation and sometimes the comedy of the drama keeps her entertained and makes her happy. Faizah further stated, “Korean dramas consist of the maximum of 16

episodes and you can watch a good story in a short period of time. On the other hand, Western or Indian dramas are too long to finish.” In the similar point of view, Samira Muna, 25 years old, doing her masters in Korea also mentioned that she prefers to watch Korean dramas because Western dramas have become boring while Korean dramas come with fresh new stories.

Korean media is interesting and unique to develop strategies to grab the attention of foreign countries using cultural values, beliefs in a modern way. They stay realistic to the reality of life such as family ties, love, sacrifice and respect. This is one of the factors that attracts audiences towards Korean drama production and distinguishes Korean drama from western and Indian drama. The dramas focus on human nature and keep the audience to be realistic. The hybridity of Korean popular culture is appealing to the Bangladeshi consumers because they can relate to their own cultural ethos and it also contains western culture elements. Korean wave offers a perfect mixture of both western and traditional Korean culture in their products which represents the glocalization process. In the case of Bangladesh, from the collected interviews, it can be seen that the people of Bangladesh are also becoming a part of South Korea’s glocalization process.

5.2 K-pop as “full entertainment package”

Korean music contains certain themes and meaningful lyrics that attracts the audience. Moreover, the videos are well made to catch the attention of the viewers. The themes include friendship and loyalty which is very important for the young generation. They also make songs about determination and hard work to achieve something in life.

Their songs also contain love themes and family ties. In this case, K-pop presents universal values not only values that are similar to only certain regions of the world. The hybridity of Korean culture in mixing English with Korean and making the music more upbeat is more attractive to consumers. This also reflects the cultural proximity theory showing similar values and presenting it in a modernized way.

Abir Rahman, 23 years old, doing his undergraduate from Rajshahi university stated that he likes K-pop music as it has deep meanings and every song represents a story about friendship or hard work or determination which he can relate with his own life. He used to only listen to western music until his friend introduced him to K-pop three years ago in 2015. He found the music catchy similar to western music. He was also fascinated to hear good rapping in Korean language and he also found English rap in the songs which made it more enjoyable to listen. He also mentioned that many other countries do English rapping but Korean pop music sounded catchier.

Abir: “I like the rhythm of Korean songs and how they portrait deep meaningful stories through the songs and videos. I like BTS’s songs more than any other K-pop bands because most of their songs are related to their life struggles and how they stick together for each other in difficult times and through their journey of becoming successful. I can relate a lot of incident and hardship they went through to achieve their dreams.”

Researcher: I see. So, you prefer songs that are more meaningful to your daily life.

Abir: yes, “I feel more attracted and drawn to listen to music and it helps me to overcome my own difficulties in many ways.”

Researcher: How do you understand the meaning of the songs as it is not in Bangla or English?

Abir: (Laughter). Yes... “at first I used to just listen to the songs for the music but later I tried to read the meaning of the songs online.” “Music doesn’t have language barriers.”

In a similar agreement, Najimul Sarkar, 22 Years old, doing undergraduate in Sylhet district shared his viewpoint on K-pop as “full package of entertainment.” He has been a Korean pop culture fan for 8 years. He started watching Korean drama through his sister who used to watch Korean drama a lot. After watching one Korean drama he later started to watch more with a good storyline. He started to listen to Korean pop music two years later in 2013 when the internet connection started to improve in Bangladesh. He said that it was easier to get access to Korean music and drama or film through fast internet.

Sarkar: “I liked the mixture of Korean and English rap songs. Later, I was more intrigued by the story behind the songs. I like Bangla songs but I have come to love Korean songs as well”.

Researcher: Why do you say Korean pop music is a “full package of entertainment”?

Sarkar: well... “K-pop idols are very talented which is why I like them and their songs even more. Each of the idols can sing, dance, act, perform, write songs, good fashion sense. They are not just good singers but also good dancers”.

Researcher: I see.

Sarkar mentioned that his younger brother is also a big Korean pop music fan and he is perusing to be a dancer in the future. He learns K-pop dance and Korean language to sing the songs. Many of Sarkar’s friend’s male and female are also interest in K-pop music and they attend various Korean cultural events and some of his friends also go to participate in the competition to sing or dance to K-pop music. He told the researcher that in recent years K-pop has become more known to Bangladeshi young generation because of the internet and social media. There is a lot of online business to sell K-pop idol’s t-shirt, badge, ring, bag or ornaments for girls.

Sadia Nur a college student who is 18 years old stated that she also prefers the meaning of the songs of K-pop. She used to prefer listening to English songs a lot but Korean songs were not so familiar to her. She found out about K-pop boy band B2EST from the internet. She told the researcher that she liked the music videos, dance as well as songs of B2EST. So, she started to follow the boy band on social media like Twitter and Facebook. She also added that she watches a lot of shows where she could see the idol of her favorite group.

Sadia: “Interesting thing about K-pop is that you can see what they do in their real life and they always appreciate their fans”.

Sadia told the researcher that compared to western music K-pop music is more meaningful to me and I can relate my daily life with the songs and the idols. They are not just good looking but also very talented. They practice a lot to make their performance good for the fans. I admire their hard work and determination but sometimes I think “it is too much” but it makes me admire them more. Their hard work gives me the courage to do well in my life and try harder.

From the above data, the researcher found that the hybrid culture of K-pop makes the music more appealing to the audience. K-pop focuses to make the idols all-rounder entertainer make them and their songs likable to the younger generation. Many of their songs are indicated to issues regarding friendship, love, determination and how to overcome the depression of any kind which is attractive to youth not just in Bangladesh but all over the world. Through the data collection, it can be said that cultural proximity and glocalization is playing a huge role in the popularity of Korean popular culture in Bangladesh.

5.3 Language Influence

Cultural hybridization happens when there is an interaction of people from different culture exchange system from each other leading to a blend of cultures together. Although, cultural hybridization is a result of blending two cultures together it does not imply to replace the deep-rooted cultural values of a particular culture. Homi’s theory of cultural hybridization explains that the contact of two culture intertwining will give rise to a new

unique culture without losing the deeply embedded cultural ethos. He used the term ‘Third Space’ to describe this process.

Korean drama or K-pop seems to have a huge influence on the young generation of Bangladesh. After conducting the interviews, the researcher found all of the interviewees use the Korean language more or less in their daily life. They use this language to feel more connected to the Korean culture and to understand them more some of the Korean pop culture fans have started to learn the Korean language. Through the influence of Korean culture, Bangladeshi youths are adopting the Korean language which is an indication of initiating cultural hybridization.

Sabrina Farah, 21 years old, an undergraduate student from Dhaka stated in an interview that she is fascinated by the Korean language and she likes how the Korean people talk and make jokes in their language.

Farah: “IT’s interesting to hear the Korean language and it’s fun to speak in Korean”. I cannot speak in Korean, but I can use some phrases.

Researcher: Wow.

Farah: “I can understand normal conversation in Korean, but I can’t speak that well yet. I am practicing by myself now so that later I can go to Korea for my studies”.

Researcher: Really!! Why do you want to study in Korea?

Farah: “I like Korean culture a lot. I like their food, fashion style, cultural values so I would like to go there and live there for a few years”.

Researcher: I see. I am sure you can make it.

The Bangladeshi youths use the Korean language to feel more connected to understand Korean culture and to be more connected. Similarly, Famida Akter, 18 years old, who is a college student from Dhaka stated that she has learned to speak in Korean after she got to know about K-pop from her Korean friend who was living in Bangladesh for few years. She wanted to understand the lyrics of K-pop song more, so she asked her Korean friend to help her to learn the Korean language. She stated that many of the Korean phrases she learned from watching Korean drama.

Similar to Famida, Sabrina Rashid, 25 years old, a Masters student stated that she has been a Korean pop culture fan for 9 years now. She used to watch a lot of Korean drama and K-pop music. Now she mostly watches K-pop as she is always busy with her study. She learned to speak some phrases while watching dramas and also, she mentioned that she uses these Korean phrases to chat or do conversation with her friends. Moreover, Famida and Sabrina both said that they also unconsciously use some of the words in Korean when they are having a conversation. Sabrina Later stated that her university friends and classmates chat using Korean words or sometimes they use some Korean utterance with their friends.

From the data collected from the interviews shows that continuous consumption of Korean pop culture and growing interest in Korean culture is influencing the young

generation of Bangladesh to learn more Korean words or to learn the full language. The researcher also found out that even though the participant said they use a lot of Korean words in their daily life most of them prefer to use it with people who have interest in Korean pop culture like them. They also mentioned that they use social media a lot and chat with their friends from home country and international Korean fans using Korean phrases.

From the interviewees, the researcher was able to make a list of Korean phrases that are used by the Korean pop culture fans in Bangladesh.

Below given a list of Korean phrases and expressions that are commonly used by the fans:

Aiish: A vocal sound with no significance to show disappointment or poor response to something.

Appa: to call father

Andwae: A casual way of saying "It cannot be done"

Ani/Anyo: A casual way of reply "not a problem" to thanks

Annyeong: A very casual way of saying hello

Babo: means foolish or idiot.

Bogoshipeo: A casual way of saying “I miss you”

Cheongmal: means “seriously”

Chingu: means “companion or buddy”

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Daebak: to expresses the joy of a victory

Dang-yeonhaji: casual way of saying “sure”

Dongseang: refer to little brother/sister

Eodi: casually saying “where”

Eonni: refer when girls call their elder sister/friend “eonni”

Hajima: casually means “do not”

Hal-abeoji: informal way of calling grandfather

Hul: to express the lack of satisfaction.

Hwaiting: refers to show one's support

Jebal: means to request

Jaljayo: means “good night”

Jalgayo: means good bye

Jogeum: means something

Jigeum: Means “at this moment”

Komawo: casual way of saying thanking somebody

Kaja: casual way of saying “let’s go”

EMERGENCE OF THE “KOREAN WAVE” AND ITS INFLUENCE ON BANGLADESH

Krae: use when you agree with something

Kul: Means “dear”

Magnae: refers to the youngest member in a group or family

Miahnae: casual way of saying “I am sorry”

Molla: casual way of saying “not knowing or aware about something”

Michyeosseo: refers when someone say if the person is crazy or mad.

Nae: casual way of saying “yes”

Nan: means “I or me”

Omna: Means mother

Omo: means Oh My God!

Oppa: when a girl refers to her close companion or boyfriend or older brother.

Ppalli: Means “hurry up”

Saeng-ilchugha: casual way of saying “happy birthday”

Saranghae: the three magical words or “I love you”

Shirheo: I do not like to have, or I don't like

Wae: casual way of saying “why?”

Yagsok: assure someone that one will do

Yeppuda: Means “pretty or lovely”

These are the words that are commonly used in Korean drama, shows or in songs. The more the audiences consume Korean culture the more they start to understand these words and, in some cases, they unconsciously use them in their daily life as found in the data collection.

5.4 Beauty and Fashion Trend

Another huge impact of Korean wave in Bangladesh is the beauty and fashion follower which is an initiation of cultural hybridization. The youths are following Korean fashion trend and mixing it in their own cultural fashion. As a result, they are making a unique fashion trend as a part of the Bangladeshi culture keeping their own deep-rooted cultural ethos. Data collected from the interviews show that Korean wave has a huge influence on the fashion and beauty concept. The actor in Korean dramas shows really good fashion sense and every Korean pop music idol also wear trendy dresses to go out, to perform in live shows. Their fashion style attracts the attention of young people. Moreover, they are also very beauty conscious. Korean actors, idol and normal Korean people follow a strict skin care regime to keep their skin rejuvenated and fresh. They follow a 10-step beauty regime every day. Men and women both use skincare products and makeups to look good but females are stricter to maintain the regime. Korean skincare and makeup products are also famous for their good quality.

Afsana kabir, 21 years old, who is an undergraduate student studying in Architecture in Dhaka stated in an interview that she likes how Korean idols are fashionable and gorgeous looking both male and female. She added that Korean pop music idols are also very fit as they have to maintain a certain physique to look thin and pretty for the fans. Korean actors for dramas are also very good looking and fit.

Afsana: “I like the fact that they work really hard to maintain a good healthy and fit body. In Bangladesh, most of us are not that much worried about being fit and we get little opportunity to do any exercise as a girl”.

Researcher: Yes. That is true.

Afsana: “I was really inspired by the K-pop idols hard work and dedication towards their work and to achieve their success they keep working every day. I was really chubby before I started to watch Korean music but I decided to work out and get a fit body”. I followed the dancing steps of any Korean songs that I like and practiced it as the K-pop idol do. After three months I started to see results.

Researcher: Wow. That’s really inspiring.

Afsana: Thank you (laughter). Yes... “I tried really hard but it was really fun to try the dance moves and I actually became quite good at it”.

Afsana also mentioned in the interview that her friends also do the same thing and they also do videos of their dance with the k-pop songs and upload it on Facebook for fun.

Similar to Afsana’s case Sadia Nur also said that she tries to follow the dancing steps of Korean music. She wants to perform at a Korean pop music competition in Korea. She further mentioned that she likes the makeup of K-pop idols and she tries to follow the Korean natural look for her everyday makeup routine.

The interview data also shows that there are a lot of Korean beauty shops opening in Bangladesh. Many of the shops in a shopping mall or online shores are already highly demanding. Korean fashionable dresses are also becoming popular among the youths in Bangladesh. Males try to follow the fashionable dressing of k-pop idols rather than makeups as Bangladeshi people thinks makeup is only for females.

After collecting all the data from the interviews and analyzing them it can be said that Bangladeshi youths are becoming more and more influenced by the Korean popular culture. They are adopting new cultural values such as family bonding, care, friendship and respect from the Korean wave. The cultural values are more or less similar to Bangladesh culture yet very different. Young people of Bangladesh are accepting Korean culture as a modern culture. The study also found that even though Bangladeshi youth do follow a certain culture of Korea due to the Korean wave they are still not adopting some cultures that do not fully appeal to them. Homi’s ‘third space’ can be related to explain this phenomenon as it says that the two cultures will mix but it will create a new culture without losing its previous cultural values. In the case of Bangladeshi youths, similarities can be seen with Homi’s theory of cultural hybridization as they are creating a new culture rather than replacing it with their cultural values and beliefs. Three interviewees mentioned that

Korean people are very conscious about fairness but they do not follow that concept. They are more aware of the misconception of being obsessed with fairness. Thus, it can be said that cultural hybridization is happening in Bangladesh but not all of the cultural concepts are being consumed. As mentioned in the literature review above, the shallow elements of a culture such as clothing, fashion, music, movies are transferred easily in this age of globalization where the global market is not culturally specific. This gives the rise of opportunities to create cultural hybridization as cultures absorb and interpret each other's culture in a way that is compatible with them while keeping each of their cultural particularities.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

Cultural hybridization is bound to happen in this globalized world. The more globalization will occur cultural hybridization will also follow. Cultural hybridization rises from two or more different cultures blending together and creating a new one. Although cultural hybridization does not simply mean a mixture of culture rather, it means to create a new identity without losing one's own cultural values. Cultural hybridity can be seen everywhere in today's world. Almost every culture is more or less a product of hybridity which is supported by the improvement of technology. South Korea is using the improvement of technology perfectly to increase its economic development and to make Korea as a brand which can be recognized by people around the globe. The media and internet improvement in Bangladesh have given the Korean wave access to bring its cultural product and influence the younger generation.

Through the analysis of this study, it can be seen that Korean popular culture is making a huge impact on the daily lives of the Bangladeshi youth leading them to adopt Korean culture. If the increasing popularity of Korean wave in Bangladesh stays and grows more in the future then it is possible that the impact of cultural hybridization will be more noticeable. Although in recent years Korean wave is gaining global popularity through K-pop it is not certain whether it will continue in the future.

6.1 Recommendation

This research findings concludes with cultural hybridization through Korean wave influence. The paper also discusses the finding of other studies that found that the Korean wave has a huge impact in today’s world. This research encourages to do other possible studies that can be done in Bangladesh focusing on the influence of Korean wave. Further studies can be done on the influence of Korean wave contributing to the improvement of the business market in Bangladesh. Linguistic influence by the Korean wave in Bangladesh and other countries is another possible research that can be looked at, as this study also found evidence of Korean language used in the daily life of youth through its fieldwork. New researches can also focus on the role of media in spreading Korean culture.

6.2 Limitation

Despite getting rich data from the in-depth interviews there are few aspects in the paper which are to be taken with care. First, as Korean wave is a new phenomenon in Bangladesh there are only a few media articles to be found. Furthermore, the participants were only interviewed for about two hours and were observed. This type of study will be more fruitful by observing the participant for a certain period of time and find out their reactions and behavioral changes. As the researcher had only one month to visit Bangladesh and conduct the study it was not possible for the researcher to conduct more interviews and to observe participants behavioral change in that short period of time. Furthermore, as most of the participant were youth, it was difficult to arrange interviews with them as they had final exams during that month.

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Appendix

Questionnaire about Korean wave influence in Bangladesh.

1. When did you started watching Korean pop culture products?
2. How did you come to know about Korean pop culture?
3. What do you like about Korean drama or K-pop?
4. How much time do you spend on watching Korean drama or listening to K-pop?
5. Do you understand Korean language?
6. Do you use Korean language or phrase in your daily conversation?
7. What do you do as a fan of Korean pop culture?
8. Do you see any similarities between Korean culture and Bangladeshi culture?
9. Do you follow any Korean makeup style or fashion trend?
10. Do you prefer Korean pop culture over other popular culture?