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Master's Thesis

**The Cultural Interaction Between
Korea and Japan: Regardless of the
Political Turmoil**
-A Combination of Both External and Internal Factors-

정치적 갈등과 무관하게 이어지는 한·일 문화 교류
-외적인 요인과 내적인 요인의 결합-

August 2023

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-A Combination of Both External and Internal Factors-

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Abstract

Korea and Japan have shared many similarities in cultural and political backgrounds. Because of this profound relationship, they seek close cooperation in international fields. Albeit essential, their relationship is far from tranquility. The Korean-Japanese relationship has been going through a conflicting time, starting from the abrupt visit to Dokdo by President Lee Myung Bak.

However, despite the turmoil surrounding Korea and Japan's historical and diplomatic conflict, their cultural exchange has been acting as one of the key passages of interaction. Namely "Hallyu", Korean culture is still widely accepted in Japanese society.

Many scholars explain the connection of cultural exchange with political bonding through cultural similarities. Nonetheless, the notion of cultural acceptance cannot be analyzed from a single perspective. In the case of modern-era cultural exchange, the transnational aspect or the active use of New Media is considered an important actor as well. This paper attempts to additionally offer another variable in cultural acceptance: Korean cultural aspects based on cultural proximity. Albeit paradoxical at first glance, the Hallyu boom in Japan is not only because of the transnationality of the cultural products but also because of the unique "Korean aspects" it possesses.

By reviewing prior research regarding cultural acceptance and Hallyu, this paper will aim to analyze several cases to contribute to the understanding of Hallyu in Japan both from the Korean drama field and the Korean Pop Idol field. However, this research does not claim the "superiority" of Korean culture. Instead, this paper attempts to offer a wider perspective in analyzing the adoration or acceptance of Korean culture in Japan.

Albeit with its limits, this paper makes an effort to bring attention to the less explored field of the spread of Hallyu by connecting cultural exchange with both cultural proximity and uniqueness.

Keyword : Hallyu, Korean Wave, New Media, Transnational Hallyu

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Chapter 1. Introduction

1. Background of Research

Korea and Japan are historically, culturally, and politically close, as they share the similar “East Asian” culture, had numerous historical exchanges, and the fact that they are both the main alliances of the United States. Because of these profound bonds, the two countries continuously seek close cooperation in international relations. Their relation was far from tranquil and composed but essential for both parties.(Sohn, 2019)

Jeong(1999) presents the Japanese attitude towards Korea divided into three stages. The first period is the period of indifference(1945~1965), the second period is the period of political interest(1965~1984), and the third period is the period of cultural interest, starting from 1984. Jeong also points out that albeit the Japanese started to consciously notice Korea around the 1988 Olympics, it wasn't until the 2002 World Cup co-hosted by Korea and Japan that the Japanese public started to consider Korea as an equal both economically and culturally. Until then, the interest in Korea was focused on political or historical backgrounds rather than modern cultural backgrounds, along with an atmosphere of overall indifference and discrimination. This change in attitude became the stepping stone for the Japanese public toward the embrace of Korean culture. Along with this change, a sense of subtle rivalry has escalated since Korea's economy grew stronger and while Japan was plunged into a long economical recession.(Sohn, 2019)

One way to compare the two countries' situation is by looking at the IMD World Competitiveness ratings. The IMD World Competitiveness rating analyses various factors such as macroeconomics and infrastructure to comprehensively evaluate national competence. According to the Federation of Korean Industries(FKI), Korea's IMD World Competitiveness rating rose from 26th to 23rd whereas Japan's rating dropped from 4th to 34th. Not only that but the Purchasing

Power Parity(PPP), which is a metric to compare economic productivity and purchasing ability among countries, shows that Korea's economy is no less powerful than Japan's. Since Korea's PPP(\$43,001) surpassed Japan's(\$42.725) in 2018, the trend is stably maintained.

Despite the historical and diplomatic conflicts surrounding Korea and Japan, cultural exchange was at its peak in the early 2000s. Especially after the co-hosting of the 2002 World Cup, the Korean Wave(한류, Hallyu, 韓流) helped spread a positive image of Korea across Japan. Because of this benevolent cultural exchange, the two countries grew closer than ever. However, the delicate balance between staying amiable and alert shattered in 2012.

Many point to the sudden visit to Dokdo by President Lee Myung Bak demanding an apology from the Japanese emperor in 2012, as the beginning of the deterioration of relations.(Sohn, 2019) The majority of the Japanese public strongly opposed the request as it was directed towards the Japanese Emperor, who is but only a symbolic figure with little to no political influence. Due to this abrupt behavior, the Japanese society protested greatly and the rejection of Korea spread widely. In 2018, the relationship froze even further when the Korean government unilaterally dissolved the “Reconciliation and Healing Foundation” which was launched under the Japanese Military Sexual Slavery agreement in 2015. This caused great distress to both parties, worsening the relationship.

To make matters even more conflicting, the dispute between the two countries accumulated, starting with the Japanese patrol aircraft low-flying over Korean airspace. As if to strengthen its hostile attitude, Japan started to regulate exports to Korea which inflicted a significant amount of damage to the Korean economy. Accordingly, Korea responded by terminating GSOMIA(General Security of Military Information Agreement) and boycotting Japanese products(“NO Japan movement”). This leads the relationship to grow even sourer.

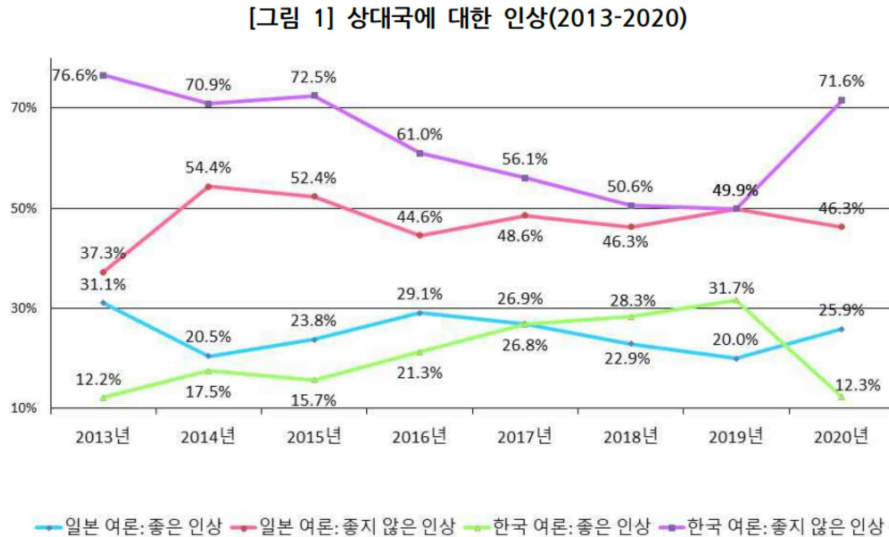
According to the 2020 joint opinion survey conducted by The Genron NPO and South Korea's East Asia Institute(EAI) think tank, the relationship between South Korea and Japan has rapidly and mutually deteriorated in a recent couple of years. 71.6% of South Koreans responded that they had a “bad” or “relatively bad” impression of Japan, which is almost 21.5% percentage points more than the result of 2019. The “good” and “relatively good” impressions of Japan decreased as well, from 31.7% to 12.3%. Also, 88.4% of Koreans perceived the current state of Korean Japanese relationship as either “relatively bad” or “extremely bad”. This is a huge leap from the 66.1% of the 2019 result.

This hostile public opinion most likely stemmed from the Korean court decision regarding forced labor during World War II and the Japanese export regulation controls applied since 2019. Also, because the Moon administration took a fairly tough and decisive attitude, this political stance contributed to the mutual distrust between Japan and Korea. It was around this period when Japan suffered a huge tsunami along with an earthquake that wreaked havoc on the whole society. Devastated, the Japanese public began to seek the cause of their current depression both economically and politically, from outside the country. Fortunately, this time period overlapped with the boost of the internet. This created a special form of chauvinism and hatred both online and offline in Japan.

The Japanese public shared a similar perspective towards the Korean Japanese relationship, as 54.7% of them answered that the current state is “relatively bad” or “extremely bad”. However, there is a noticeable difference between the two countries. In the case of Japan, the “bad impression” actually decreased, dropping from 63.5% to 54.7%. Although the majority of Japanese still have a bad impression, this result showed that the case is likely to improve. Indeed, in a joint opinion survey conducted by The Genron NPO and EAI in 2021, both countries had a slightly better impression of the other. The “bad impression” of

Japan decreased to 63.2% while the “good impression”(a sum of “good” and “somewhat good”) was boosted from 12.3% to 20.5%. The good and bad impression of Korea was relatively similar rate as 2020.

Figure 1. Perception of the Other Party



Source: Joint Korea-Japan Public Opinion Poll from The Genron NPO and East Asia Institute(2020) 제 8회한일 양국 국민을 대상으로 한 ‘한일국민 상호인식 조사

This hostile public opinion most likely stemmed from the Korean court decision regarding forced labor during World War II and the Japanese export regulation controls applied since 2019. Also, because the Moon administration took a fairly tough and decisive attitude, this political stance contributed to the mutual distrust between Japan and Korea. It was around this period when Japan suffered a huge tsunami along with an earthquake that wreaked havoc on the whole society. Devastated, the Japanese public began to seek the cause of their current depression both economically and politically, from outside the country. Fortunately, this time period overlapped with the boost of the internet. This created a special form of chauvinism and hatred both online and offline in Japan.

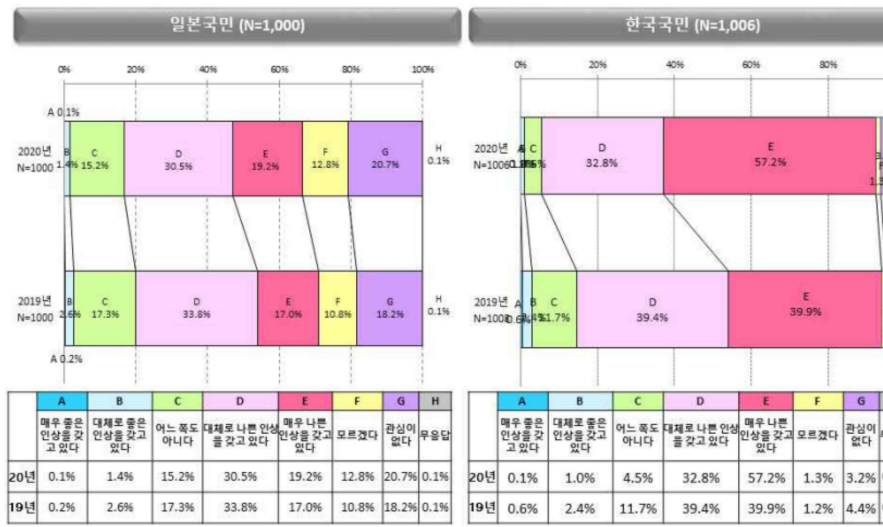
Korean-Japanese relations show a fundamental difference in perception of continuity over colonial and historical issues. Korea mainly provides education to revive the memories and experiences of war in Korea-Japan relations, while Japan advocates a break from the past through democracy and neoliberalism. While the two countries' overall favorability for their counterparts is steadily rising, they are expressing uncomfortable feelings about historical issues. According to the EAI survey conducted from 2013 to 2019, the Korean public's favorability for Japan has steadily increased. In the 2013 Korean Perception Survey, a good impression was 12.2%, but it rose to 31.7% in 2019. On the other hand, the negative increase decreased from 76.6% in 2013 to 49.9% in 2019.

The EAI survey also shows that Koreans perceive Japan separately from the government and the private sector. They have hostile feelings toward the political elite, but they reserve negative judgments about ordinary citizens. At this time, individual experiences and perceptions of Japan work as the basis for judgment. In the 2019 EAI issue briefing, this was presented as 'decoupling'. The people of both countries tell the political field and daily sphere apart. Only 3.0% of Korean respondents answered they had a "very good impression" or "generally good impression" of the other country's leaders, while 2.8% of Japanese respondents answered they had a "very good impression." of the Korean leaders.

On the other hand, about 80% of Koreans and half of Japanese responded with a negative impression that combined 'generally have a bad impression' and 'very bad impression', which shows that both countries had a bad impression of the leaders of the other party. In addition, perceptions vary by field. For example, there is a negative perception of Japan on historical issues, but there is a positive perception in fields other than politics.

Figure 2. Perception of the Other Country's Head of State(President Moon, Prime Minister Abe)

[그림 4] 상대국 정상(아베 신조 총리/문재인 대통령)에 대한 인상



Source: Joint Korea-Japan Public Opinion Poll from The Genron NPO and East Asia Institute(2020) 한일 양국 국민을 대상으로 한 ‘한일국민 상호인식 조사

Despite the recent disputation, Hallyu still remains as one of the key passages for cultural exchange between Korea and Japan. The current flow of Hallyu is less universal than its peak, which created a national “Huyu Sona(冬ソナ, Winter Sonata)phenomenon. At the highest high point of Hallyu, which was mostly during the early 2000s, the popularity of Korean soap operas was nationwide. However, it would be unfair to degrade the influence of Hallyu nowadays, as the aspect of Hallyu itself is evolving. There is still debate about how to classify the development stages of Hallyu, but most scholars and media agree that there are three to four stages.(Cho, 2020) They also acknowledge the fact that the most recent stage of Hallyu does not confine itself to a certain country or field. As the viewpoint of Hallyu may differ depending on what country or aspect the scholar focuses on, this paper will mainly discuss the development of Hallyu in Japan.

The first stage of Hallyu involved the growing attraction of Korean dramas. Starting with the well-known “Winter Sonata”(겨울연가), other Korean dramas such as “Stairway to Heaven”(천국의 계단) or “What is Love?”(사랑이 뭐길래) gained adoration in several Asian countries. The next stage included K-

pop music in the field. Since the late 2000s, content such as K-pop began to attract attention, due to Korean idols who were recognized by the Japanese public. The third and fourth stages of Hallyu took another turn in development, as Hallyu itself started to embody a “global” factor into consideration. In order to fully understand the popularity of Korean culture in Japan despite the recent political outcomes, the paper attempts to analyze the factors to the impact of Korean culture in Japan focusing on a specific time period, starting from the mid 2010s.

Many scholars point to globalization or cultural similarities when explaining the spreading of a culture in another country.(Iwabuchi, 2004, Iwabuchi, 2015) In the case of modern cultural expansion, the widespread of New Media plays an important part as well. However, this paper aims to add another factor for its popularity in Japan: the subtle unique, Korean cultural aspects based on cultural proximity. Albeit paradoxical at first glance, the Hallyu boom in Japan is not only because of the transnationality of the cultural products but also because of the unique “Korean aspects” it possesses.

However, this paper does not intend to flatter the “K-culture”. Since the first boom of Hallyu, there has been numerous “praises” regarding the Korean culture based on excessive patriotism. Some have been overly proud of the Korean culture, dangerously close to cultural cupremacy.(Tak, 2021) This paper aims to overcome this intoxicated nationalism and instead offer a wider perspective in analyzing the adoration or acceptance of Korean culture in Japan.

2. Research Question

There has been several studies that attempted to explain the connection of political relationship and cultural exchange. Iwabuchi clarifies how state nations

used cultural content in order to improve state image or how nations forbid cultural exchange to prevent a profound bond between “enemy states”. Of course, cultural exchange itself cannot lead to a profound relationship between countries and sometimes might even lead to opposite cases.(Iwabuchi, 2004) Iwabuchi Kōichi pointed out that explaining the spread of culture involves multiple variables. In his book *Popular Culture Connecting Asia: Japan, The Transnational Desire*, he analyzed the popularity of the Japanese TV series in Taipei and mentions that his interviewees from the younger generation “view Japan as one of many choices, and does not have a special 'affection' towards Japan”. This itself proves that cultural exchange and national closeness is not consistently develop in direct proportion.

However, the Korean-Japanese relationship and its connection with Korean cultural boom is uniquely intriguing because of their exceptionally hostile historical background. This thesis suggests although the relationship is rather rocky, Korean cultural boom is prevailing in Japan, due to the transnationality of modern culture, along with its subtle uniqueness.

The main research question is “How is Korean culture still popular in Japan?”. This paper attempts to examine the features that made Korean culture popular in the international market, while also suggesting specific factors that lead to the acceptance of the Japanese public.

It is no exaggeration to say that the Korean Wave in Japan began with “Winter Sonata” and the enthusiasm for Korean dramas later spread to a fondness for popular culture as well as dramas. Now, this interest expanded to the enjoyment of Korean culture in general. This shows that the research on Korean Wave in Japan cannot be enough simply by looking at this phenomenon as a brief curiosity. Therefore, it is crucial to not only look at how Hallyu itself has developed, but it is

also important to look at the attitude of the Japanese public towards Korea. This is due to the specificity rooted in the geographical, historical, and political closeness of the Korean-Japanese relationship.

In order to achieve the purpose of this study, the scope of analysis will be specified to the most recent Hallyu in Japan. The specific time range of said “recent Hallyu” or “modern Hallyu” will be the third and fourth stages, which started in the mid-2010s.(Cho, 2020) Since this time period is usually considered the starting point of the deterioration between Korea and Japan, it would be appropriate to investigate this distinguished extent of time. Also, as Korea and Japan share many politically, economically, and culturally profound bonds it would be worth investigating the particularity of this relationship.

Chapter 2. Literature Review

1. Cultural Expansion Among Asian Countries

In Iwabuchi's *Popular Culture Connecting Asia: Japan, The Transnational Desire*, he explains that Japanese culture gained popularity among Eastern and Southern Eastern countries from the start of the 1990s. One of the reasons which evoked his interest in this study was the surprising fact that “Japanese culture” was popular in Asian countries. He thought “the fact the Japan, which had an imperial, colonial history, continues to exploit other countries economically while also exporting cultural content was provoking” since Iwabuchi assumed that “Japan would face aversion”. His study focuses on the specific boom of the Japanese TV series in Taipei and introduces multiple interviews to explain the process of accepting foreign culture.

Though those interviews, Iwabuchi analyzed cultural proximity as the dynamic process of how receivers accept certain media texts in historical, political

or economical backgrounds. Also, he mentions that “factors such as high level of urbanization and simultaneous distribution of transnational media information causes "simultaneity" (as sense of living in the same era), which affects cultural proximity. Although the research involves the acceptance of Japanese culture in other countries, this paper will be using Iwabuchi's definition of cultural proximity along with the importance of simultaneity to suggest the variables that affect Hallyu in Japan.

Another important term introduced through Iwabuchi's research is the notion of hybridity. Hybridity is a concept that values the duality and intermediateity of identity caused by cultural hybridization which is against the “purity or originality of culture”. Hybridity explains the cultural similarities caused by cultural exchange among countries. This is not the only reason for cultures to spread in foreign societies(Iwabuchi, 261), but this factor contributes to some degree in cultural connection.

Also, in addition to Iwabuchi's research, Hirata Yukie has offered another factor in the spread of culture, especially Korean culture. She analyzed the civic exchange factor(mostly tourism) in connection with the sustainability of Hallyu.(Hirata, 2005) Unlike common belief, Hirata has pointed out that “Hallyu has not 'suddenly' emerged thanks to the success of “Winter Sonata”. Instead she attempts to evaluate Hallyu through the context of Globalization. In other words, Hirata Yukie's research removes that “national exchange” aspects of Hallyu as the meaning of state borders is fading in a globalizing society.

Hirata's study has proposed several intriguing notions such as how the cultural boom was based on the middle aged female fandom, how the acceptance or interpretation distributed duplicity and how Hallyu lead to other dramas where both Korean and Japanese creators joined hands. However, this paper would mostly concentrate on the civic exchange due to tourism. The fact that Korea and Japan

has such a close proximity in both geographically and economically, encourages tourism and contributes to the unique, profound connection between the two countries.

Both studies agree that the transnational aspects of a certain culture promotes the spread of it in a foreign society. However, they do not promote the cultural superiority of each culture. Iwabuchi and Hirata clearly state that there are several variables when analyzing the cultural boom in foreign countries and they cannot be explained through one cause.(Iwabuchi, Hirata)

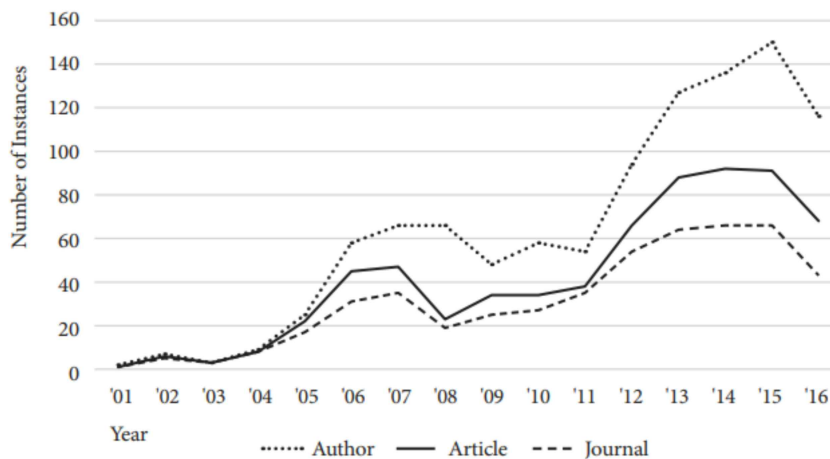
Also, Iwabuchi and Hirata consider cultural familiarity or cultural proximity as an important factor in the spread of culture. Although it cannot act as the one and only consideration, it contributes significantly when understanding the cultural boom in foreign societies.

2. Critical Review of the Studies of Hallyu

Since the last decade of the 20th century, Hallyu has emerged as a worldwide cultural phenomenon. It was not much later that it became a significant issue in academia both domestically and internationally. This paper attempts to introduce the progress of Hallyu research in various fields and compare some of the characteristics.

The first article on the Hallyu phenomenon was published in 2001, by Kim and Kim(2001). It was about the Korean cultural boom in China and how it would be a major change in the Korean entertainment business, with the commitment to new possibilities from Korean society. Over 600 papers about Hallyu were published with two tops in 2005 and 2012, according to Hong, Park, and Park(2017).

Figure 3.Chronological Changes in the number of authors, articles, and journals in Hallyu studies in Korea



Source: Adopted from Hong et al. Original data from Hong, Park and Park(2017)

These two points each correspond to the significant global success of Korean drama and K-pop. In the early 2000s, Korean dramas such as *Winter Sonata* (2002) and *Daejanggeum* (2003) were aired in several Asian countries and became widespread hits. This resulted in research focusing on the economic and cultural impact of Korean dramas. Likewise around 2012, many K-pop idols performed abroad, opening up to a new era of cultural influence.

The Korean government, economic market, and news media quickly identified and promoted Hallyu as a developing economic trend and soft power^①. Hallyu was identified as an important phrase in both the economic market and public policy, and a discourse encapsulating Hallyu's history, from "Hallyu 1.0" to "Hallyu 4.0," was promoted by academics, the media, and the government. Naturally, domestic research focused on the economic influence of Hallyu or how it was culturally accepted in other Asian countries.

On an international level, especially after the global hit of PSY's

^① Originally from Joseph S. Nye, "Soft Power" is a concept that corresponds to hard power(a force that constitutes general national power, such as the economy and military power), and refers to the ability to voluntarily obtain what the other party wants by fascinating intangible assets such as culture, communication, and diplomacy.

Gangnam style in 2012, the academic focus moved from Asia to other non-Asian countries. Scholars not only analyzed the success of Korean pop music in the United States or Europe, but they also extended their interest to countries in Southern America or Central Asia. From a multidisciplinary perspective, the role of Hallyu is connected with soft power, civic diplomacy, or state image.

In summary, Hallyu originated as a liking for Korean media material among Asian audiences but has evolved into a worldwide cultural movement intimately associated with the Korean government and companies. Also, the rising academic interest in Hallyu is influenced by its complexity, which includes so many issues and discourses such as its glocalized factor or its transnationality.

Even today, the phenomenon of the Korean Wave has spread around the world, drawing attention. The Korean drama "Crash Landing on You," which was aired in December 2019, is known to have surpassed the ratings of the drama "Guardian(도깨비)" and "Reply 1988(응답하라 1988)". According to Cho(2020) both dramas were a national and global success. "Crash Landing on You" has renewed its highest rating of 24.1% in history and captivated more than 20 million viewers even before the end of the show, and the accumulated number of viewers surpassed 21 million through reruns along with the internet.

The Korean wave is not restricted to only K-dramas. The pop music industry has earned immense adoration as well. For example, Korean idol group BTS has become very popular in multiple countries, promoting Korean music K-pop to the world. The music video for the BTS "Dynamite" released in 2020 exceeded 700 million views on YouTube, and the number is still increasing. Continuing with this success, BTS released "Dynamite" and became the first Korean singer to rank first on Billboard's "HOT 100" for three consecutive weeks.

Popular cultures, such as Korean music, movies, and dramas, are at the center of the Korean Wave, which has an economic ripple effect on tourism by attracting foreign tourists, as well as affection for Korea, preference for Korea, and trade creation. It influenced the awareness and desire to buy Korean products such as cars, mobile phones, cosmetics, clothes, and home appliances in Korean dramas and movies.

According to Yoo Jae-woong's (2007) study on the impact of Korean drama viewing on Chinese association and emotions, and Lee Joon-woong's (2003) study on the communication effect of the Korean Wave, Korean drama viewing has a positive effect on Chinese understanding of Korea, favorable association with Korea, interest, attitude, and behavioral intention. Due to the global influence of the Korean Wave, interest in the Korean national image and Korean tourism is also increasing. Several previous studies have verified that a good image of a specific tourist destination has a positive effect on the intention to visit and that the Korean Wave can spread and be exposed through the mass media to change the image of Korea into a favorable one (Lee Hyun-joo, Yang Kwang-Sik, 2012).

Initially, the term "Hallyu" which is equivalent to “the influence of Korean culture”, originated from the term “一陣韓流” in 1999. This terminology was applied to describe the enthusiasm of Beijing youth towards the Korean pop group H.O.T. but generally, Hallyu is considered to have been used since the 2000s, as a concept to refer to the Korean pop culture boom in East Asia. Although the growing interest in the Korean lifestyle is also crucial in defining the modern waves of Hallyu, this paper will focus on K-pop and Korean dramas, as it is a continued flow commencing from the first Hallyu.

The Korean Wave in Japan began in 2003, with the immense success of

“Winter Sonata” which was aired on NHK Japan. This drama bloomed into a national hit and became more popular than the original Japanese content in Japanese society. Since then, other Korean Dramas such as “Stairway to Heaven”, and “Daejanggeum” were exported to Japan and they gained great popularity as well. This period is referred to as the first Korean Wave in Japan, which is a stage with a middle-aged female fandom and received attention from both Korea and Japan. Cho(2005) mentioned that this stage created a positive national image for Korea and lead to an economic boost in tourism and consumer industries. Indeed, many tourism packages to tour the sites from Winter Sonata emerged, meeting the consumers' needs. The most intriguing part of the first Korean Wave is that it had a middle-aged female fandom that was constructed by television broadcasting. Because of this factor, the earlier stages of Korean Wave research were focused on analysis based on gender and nationality.

The second Korean Wave, also known as the “New Korean Wave” started around 2010, with the emergence of K-pop. This did not mean that K-pop was “new” to the Japanese public. Even before the second Korean Wave, K-pop idols such as BoA or TVXQ(동방신기, 東方神起) were popular and even made it into the Oricon Charts which is considered an indicator of success^②. However, their strategy was through localization. It is a well-known fact that the earlier generations of K-pop idols had proficiency in Japanese to “blend in” with the Japanese entertainment industry. In the second Korean Wave, K-pop idols entered Japanese society with an already firm fan base formed through social media and quickly rose as top-class celebrities. As a result, the generation of Hallyu recipients

② “일본에서 활동중인 가수 보아가 6개의 앨범이 연속해서 오리콘 차트 1위에 오르는 데 기록을 세웠습니다. 보아는 어제 일본에서 발표한 다섯 번째 앨범 'MADE IN TWENTY'가 발매되자마자 일본 오리콘 차트 1위에 올라 그동안 발표한 앨범 6장이 모두 오리콘 차트 1위에 오르는 기록을 만들었습니다.”

"Actively performing in Japan, BoA has set a milestone by topping the Oricon charts with six consecutive albums. Her fifth album 《MADE IN TWENTY》 which was released yesterday, set a record of six Oricon chart-winning albums released so far as it too, topped the Oricon charts."

expanded and the Korean Wave obtained the image of a “hybrid global and local culture”. In this stage, the Korean Wave continued to thrive while simultaneously gaining a new brand image as being “trendy” instead of “nostalgic” unlike the first wave.

This trend strengthened in the third Korean Wave which happened around 2017. As mentioned above, the Korean Japanese relationship rapidly deteriorated and started to affect public opinion on one another. As if to reflect the tension, Japanese terrestrial broadcasts, which have consistently aired Korean dramas since the success of “Winter Sonata”, stopped Korean dramas. The anti-Korean sentiment(혐한류, 嫌韓流) steadily formed and spread its influence in Japanese society with the rise of Netto-uyoku(ネット右翼, Japanese Internet rightists) and the anti-Korean publishing industry. However, because the third Korean Wave was formed by mostly teenagers and those in their early 20s, this cultural movement was less dependent on political and diplomatic conditions.

Fandoms of K-pop idols such as BTS(BangTanSonyeondan, BulleT proof Boys, 방탄소년단) or TWICE(트와이스) actively consumed K-beauty content and products which led to a boost in the cosmetic field as well. Unlike the first two stages of the Korean Wave, the development of social media played a crucial role in spreading the cultural trend. In other words, the Korean Wave was no longer transmitted through TV broadcasting stations. Another important factor of the third Korean Wave is that Korean culture made its way into the daily lives of the Japanese. This resulted in a wider area of consumption like K-beauty or Korean cuisine. The younger generation became accustomed to modern Korean trends in areas like Shin-Okubo where the Korean towns are largely formed.

In the fourth and most recent stage of the Korean Wave, new discussions are arising and they point out several factors that differentiate it from the previous stages. Most analyses agree that the fourth Korean Wave started in the summer of

2020, with the success of “Crash Landing on You”. With the outbreak of COVID-19 combined with the rapid growth of the streaming market and OTT(Over-The-Top) services around the world, the public could enjoy different content from other countries with a lesser time gap. For example, NHK in Japan broadcasted “Winter Sonata” over a year later it finished in Korea. In particular, Netflix, which served “Crash Landing on You” as its original content, is known to have more than 5 million subscribers in Japan as of August 2020. Because Netflix has its “account sharing feature”, the numbers could be more. As Japan is considered as one of the major countries that lead Netflix's growth in the third quarter of 2020, it is easy to estimate its influence. (Li & Yang, 2020)

Along with K-dramas, K-pop thrived in Japan as well. Produce 101 Japan(TBS, 2019) and NiziU(Hulu Japan, 2020) introduced Korean production systems and program formats and launched new idol groups from the said audition programs. Because it is still an ongoing phenomenon, scholars have unique and different views on how to evaluate the fourth wave. Cho(2021) claimed the fourth Korean Wave was different from the first and second waves while combining it with the third one. He pointed out that Korean entertainment was moving beyond being “Korean” and was aiming for a global stance. By doing so, the Korean wave will establish itself as a “universal culture” instead of a mere “boom”. Han(2021) emphasized that the active consumption of locals was more important than the promotion of the government or mass media because the fourth stage of Hallyu is a “daily consumed” option.

Figure 4. Table Regarding Hallyu in Japan

	Target Audience	Time Period	Main Factor
1 st Wave	Women in their 40s and up	2003~2004	Winter Sonata
2 nd Wave	Women in their youth(Teens to their 20s)	2010-2013	K-pop Idols such as BoA, TVXQ, Kara etc
Hate Speech, Anti-Korean sentiment			
3 rd Wave	Japanese public in the their youth(10~30s)	2017-Current	K-pop Idols such as Twice, BTS
4 th Wave	Japanese public in the their youth(10~30s)	2019-Current	Netflix Korean Dramas such as Crash Landing on You, Itaewon Class etc

Source: Adopted from several sources ,rearranged by author

From the perspective of Korean culture in Japan, the fourth Korean wave in Japan could be seen as a mixture of the second and third waves as it is K-pop oriented along with daily lifestyle consumption. However, the most important factor that differentiates the fourth Korean wave from the previous waves is that not only does it occur during a period of sour Korean Japanese relations, but also that it is based on various “new media” such as OTT services that emerged with the outbreak of COVID-19 and this cultural expansion has a much more younger generation as its fan base.

3. Scope of Research

Unlike the Korean Wave in other East Asian countries, Hallyu in Japan occupies a special position within Korean society. The excitement that Korea, which used to be a colony, started to export its culture to a former colonial power raised public pride in Korean culture and Hallyu received immense attention, mostly due to scholars analyzing the success factor and economic benefits of Hallyu.

Obviously, the fate of Hallyu in Japan seemed bleak due to the aggressive discord between the two countries. There has been a widely accepted prediction that this sour relationship between Korea and Japan will slow down, or even halt the Korean wave. In the annual report analyzing the status of the Korean Wave abroad, Korean Foundation for International Cultural Exchange(KOFICE) stated that many are skeptical about the continuity of the Korean Wave's popularity and its expected duration in Japan. 36% of the respondents replied that the “Korean Wave is over”, 16.8% responded that “it will be over in 3~4 years” and 15% answered that “it will be over in 1~2 year”.

However, contrary to the negative perceptions, the Korean Wave entered its fourth stage in 2020 and is continuing to expand its influence. Even though the Korean Japanese relationship isn't at its peak condition, Korean dramas such as “Crash Landing on You” and “Itaewon Class”(이태원 클라쓰) are gaining popularity among the Japanese audience through Netflix and other platforms.

Since the late 1990s, the Korean wave has grown into a cultural phenomenon and scholars saw this as a prominent academic subject. Efforts to explain this cultural boom have been made on both a domestic and international level, with promising ideas. Many of them include cultural proximity, cultural

hybridity, globalization through localization, and even transnationalism. Because this is an ongoing phenomenon, the research field is still expanding from media content to food, tourism, and “daily life”.

This includes the methods of researchers dealing with the Korean wave. Earlier scholars focused on the national benefit the Korean wave will produce while more recent scholars are interested in evaluating the phenomenon itself. For example, Hong(2019) claims that the Korean wave is far from a “one-time fad”, and categorizes the studies conducted on the Korean wave so far. As the Korean wave expanded, so did the number of studies produced.

In addition to literary research, this study aims to analyze cases of K-pop idols and K-drama that have been popular since the mid 2010s. It is quite difficult to differentiate the Korean Wave into clearly divided stages. This is because the Korean Wave viewed as a continuous flow, not a single content.(Kim, 2018) Also, the standards may vary depending on what context it is used, or the specific field it is analyzed. However, along with the worsening trend of Korea-Japan relations, this paper decided to differentiate the Korean wave by dominant standards.

The reason for focusing on K-Pop and K-drama is that they are the two leading fields regarding the Korean Wave, and nowadays, K-pop and K-drama have mutual influence. For example, when a Korean drama could gain popularity even before the start of the show due to the news that a K-pop idol will star in the drama. Therefore, it would be better to view both areas in order to clearly grasp an understanding of the current Korean wave.

The cases to be studied are some of the most influential cases in the Korean wave. Kingdom(킹덤), Crash Landing on You, Snowdrop(설강화), Itaewon Class in the drama category, third or fourth generation idols such as EXO,

Twice, BTS, and NiziU in the pop music category. The Korean dramas were selected from Netflix and Disney Plus as they are the two most successful Over-The-Top platforms as of 2023. Also, Netflix has obtained the status of the model example of "successful OTT service" platform and Disney has expanded in a remarkable pace, making it another noticeable OTT platform.

Along with these modern examples, this paper will introduce some cases before the “modern” stage of Hallyu to compare and contrast such as Winter Sonata(겨울연가), You’re Beautiful(미남이시네요), BoA or TVXQ. After introducing the individual cases along with the reason they are significant, this paper will attempt to connect glocalization strategies, transnationality, and the “Korean aspect” to the current cultural phenomenon of Hallyu in Japan.

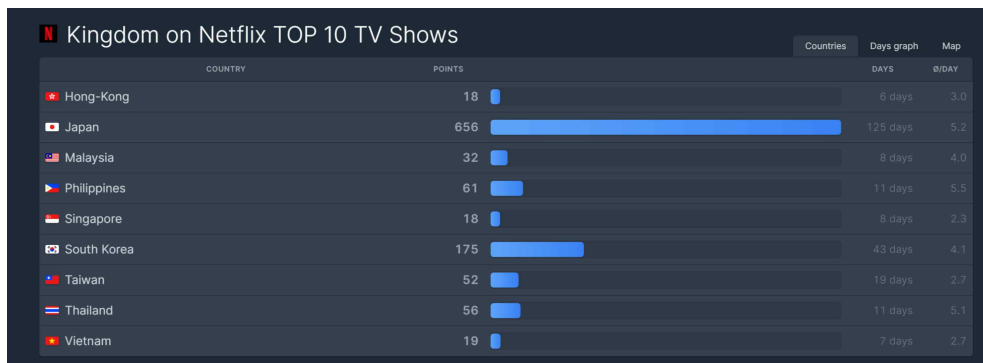
3-1. Case Studies Regarding Korean Drama

Kingdom(2019)

This fantasy historical zombie apocalypse drama was an international success while also removing the prejudice of Korean dramas being romance oriented. It also appealed to a wider audience, especially the Japanese male viewers who were ever less interested in dramas. Kingdom is Netflix's first self-produced Korean drama and as the drama has become a global success, it provided an opportunity for Netflix to actively invest in Korean dramas. Kingdom was selected because of its value as a piece that announced the beginning of Korean dramas distributed through OTT platforms. Although Kingdom was not specifically aimed or exclusively successful in Japan, it still shares important features that contribute to the spread of Korean culture contents in Japan.

Figure 5. Kingdom Scoring “656” in Popularity of TV shows from Japanese

Netflix Users

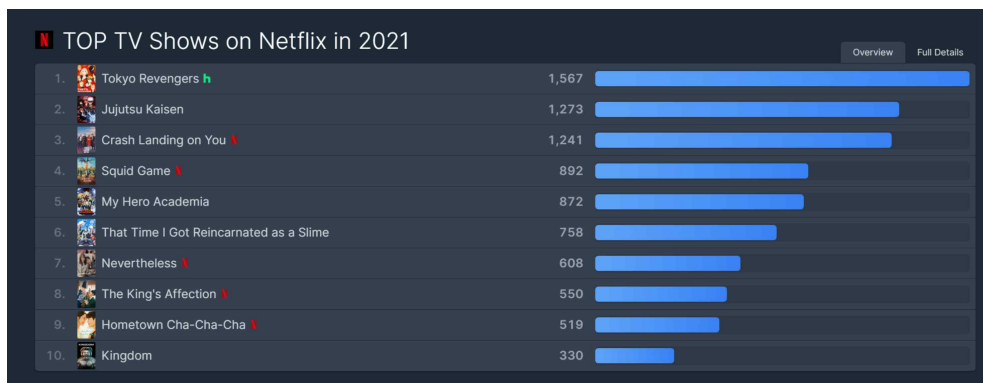


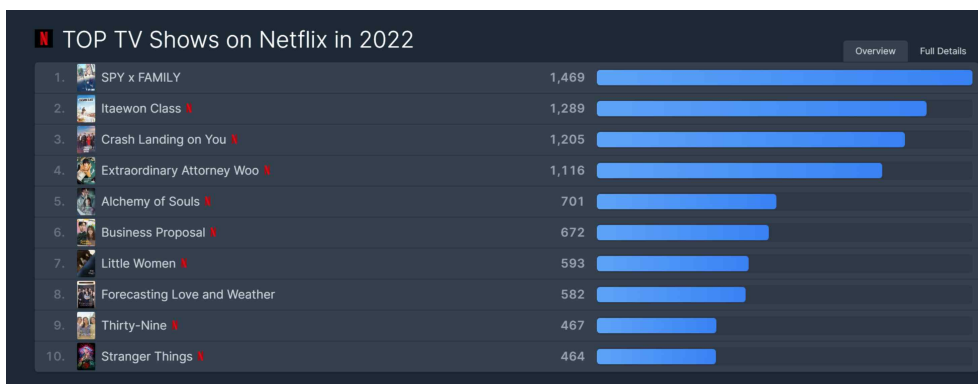
Source: FlixPatrol <https://flixpatrol.com/title/kingdom/top10/> (Accessed on 2023.06.08.)

Crash Landing on You(2020)

The drama "Crash Landing on You" spread rapidly with positive reviews from celebrities and the public, including famous politicians, actors, and comedians regardless of gender, generation, or political orientation. Since 2020, when the drama was first released, "Crash Landing on You" has been at the top of Netflix's popularity rankings and has maintained its top record until last year (2022). The words "Crash Landing on You" and "4th Hallyu Boom" were included in the candidates for "2020 New Words and Trendy Words Grand Prize(新語・流行語大賞)," which selects the most controversial new words and buzzwords in Japan.(Cho, 2020)

Figure 6. Top TV Shows on Netflix Japan of 2021 and 2022





Source: FlixPatrol <https://flixpatrol.com/top10/netflix/japan/2021/>
<https://flixpatrol.com/top10/netflix/japan/2022/> (Accessed on 2023.06.08.)

Itaewon Class(2020)

Previously, Korean dramas mainly targeted women, but Itaewon Class resulted in the universal acceptance of Korean dramas. It was openly recommended by several Japanese celebrities and was remade into a Japanese drama, Roppongi Class(六本木クラス). Along with the Crash Landing on You, it has been at the top of Netflix for a significant period of time.

Snowdrop(2022)

Exceptionally, Snowdrop gained more popularity in Japan than in Korea. It launched on Disney Plus in 2022 and was criticized for its historical attitude in Korea, but it was a success in Japan. According to FlixPatrol, "Snowdrop" ranked 12th in the Disney Plus TV series just one day after its release, which was a notable achievement. In addition, it drew more attention because Ji-Soo, a member of the idol group BLACKPINK, acted as the heroine while also participating in the original soundtrack of the drama. This is a direct example of how K-pop is intertwined with K-dramas, showing the modern wave of Hallyu should be analyzed from multiple perspectives. Also, it was aired through Disney Plus, another large OTT service platform.

3-2. Case Studies Regarding Korean Pop Idols

EXO(Debuted in 2012)

It is difficult to distinguish the generations of Idols, but generally, the third generation is considered as those who debuted in the early 2010s. Although there are idols such as BoA or TVXQ who have previously been successful abroad, idols who debuted and worked after Psy's "Gangnam Style"(2012) aggressively pursue to thrive in both the domestic and overseas markets at the same time. In that sense, EXO can be seen as the starting point of the third-generation idol. In addition, they intentionally used a different marketing strategy than their predecessors, aiming for a horizontal relationship between artists and fans. This strategy has become the norm for modern K-pop idols. In this respect, EXO was selected as a research subject in that it started the generation of modern K-pop idols along with the modern Korean Wave.

TWICE(Debuted in 2015)

TWICE made its debut in 2015 and a couple of years later, it gained immense popularity in the Japanese market. In addition, they were selected as a group that represented third-generation idol groups along with BTS by the Hallyu White Paper(한류 백서). Their success is noteworthy as they have played a major role in bringing K-pop into the mainstream market. Also, they have appealed to women in their 20s, establishing a sustainable fandom. This has led to the foundation for a long-term trend of K-pop in Japan.

BTS(Debuted in 2013)

BTS was the first Korean idol group to top the Billboard 200 three times while also being the first to attend the Grammy Awards. Their success has brought

an unusual impact on the Korean music industry. Albeit their success in non-Asia countries magnet more interest, their success in Japan cannot be overlooked. In addition, BTS debuted as a small to medium-sized agency but used SNS as an effective method of promotion.

NiziU(Debuted in 2020)

NiziU, a girl group produced by Korea's JYP and Japan's SONY MUSIC, is currently gaining popularity in Japan as appeared at the NHK Kohaku Uta Gassen for the second time in a row at the fastest pace ever upon its debut. (Chosun 2022) Although they are an all-Japanese-girl group, they are identified as a “K-pop group”.

Also, their organization was broadcasted through the streaming platform ‘Hulu’, gaining popularity among many Japanese viewers. Their unique process shows several aspects of the modern Hallyu flow.

Chapter 3. Transnationality of Hallyu

1. Transnational Cutlure through “Glocalization”

1-1. Glocalization in Korean Dramas

The term "glocalization" is a combination of "globalization" and "localization.“ First mentioned in marketing theories meaning the ”localization of global products“ in the 1980s, it later expanded to describe socio-cultural phenomena(Hong, 2010) Glocalization considers both "how international company's products or strategies change and adapt to suit the region" and "how regional things change and adapt to achieve globality" (Ko, 2016). As the Korean wave shows both a sense of universality and specificity, it can be anticipated that

the Korean cultural flow in Japan has evolved into a transnational product, developing globally based on cultural interaction. Cho(2021) evaluated that the modern Hallyu is different from the first two waves of Hallyu. The third and fourth wave of Hallyu is “moving beyond Korea” to “the world”, establishing itself as a universal culture, not a “one-time phase”.

One of the factors that have influenced this change would be the overall increase in the quality of Korean dramas. According to Park(2017), most enjoyers of Korean culture acclaimed the excellent quality of K-dramas. To them, Korean dramas were accepted as the measure of “quality television”. Just as American television productions with complex narratives, various resources, and a star-studded cast provoked a discourse regarding quality television Korean dramas that drive the modern Korean wave are considered high-quality dramas, in terms of narrative or production scale.

In particular, those who have prior experience with Korean dramas or those who have formed a specific, negative image of Korean dramas changed their perception of Korean dramas. Park has notified this phenomenon by pointing out that viewers had a tendency of distinguishing 'Korean Wave Drama' and 'Korean Drama'. The term “Korean wave drama” was used to refer to the “traditional romance dramas” which have gained popularity among female audiences through Japanese broadcasters. Whereas "Korean Drama" is considered to be Korean dramas that audiences had access to individually. Although the term used by the Japanese public may differ, it is clear that they have enjoyed the transnational content of Korean dramas.

There have been similar phenomena in the previous waves. When “You’re Beautiful” was a major hit in Japan, the prevailing opinion was that it was a trend

because it was unlike previous Korean dramas such as *Winter Sonata*. However, “You’re Beautiful” was also romance-oriented, and appealed to targets who expected romance as *Winter Sonata* did.

On the other hand, modern Korean wave dramas show a stark difference from their predecessors. “*Kingdom*” is a zombie apocalyptic mystery thriller rather than a romance-oriented drama, which appealed to male viewers who were previously uninterested in Korean dramas. In addition, although romance was an important feature in *Crash Landing on You*, the cultural and political differences between South and North Korea are also important. According to Park, this detail appealed to the Japanese public, who are highly conscious of North Korea-Japan relations.

1-2. Glocalization in Korean Idols

BoA and TVXQ, who debuted in Japan during the first and second Korean Wave periods, started as singers who localized (Japanesized) to J-pop rather than Korean singers based on K-pop identity. For the global production of local products, K-Pop boldly procures functions such as composition, choreography, and production in the global market and implements globalization (Im, 2013). The most noteworthy strategy was to recruit local members to implement a localization method as well as to aim for a global market. This helped overcome language barriers when entering foreign markets with ease, leading to a successful entry to the global field. In the case of EXO, Chinese members were recruited, while TWICE recruited Japanese and Taiwanese members.

SM Entertainment was the first K-pop agency to introduce foreign idol members. EXO was divided into two unit groups, EXO-K and EXO-M at the time

of their debut. It was an unconventional strategy to simultaneously launch two units, one(EXO-K) based in Korea while the other one(EXO-M) was based in China. SM Entertainment also produced EXO's music in both Korean and Chinese versions at the same time. With the global hit of 〈Growl〉 in 2013, EXO has emerged as the leading artist of K-pop. The powerful, sharp and correct choreography combined with long-taken music videos of twelve members left a strong impression to the viewers. EXO achieved such amazing results in Korea and then topped the Oricon chart with their first Japanese single 〈Love Me Right~Romantic universe~〉 released in 2015 along with their first Japanese album 《COUNTDOWN》 in 2018. 〈Love Me Right~Romantic universe~〉 even received a Platinum level from the Recording Industry Association of Japan.

They also held concerts at Yokohama Arena before their official debut, and in November 2014, when their debut single was released, they mobilized a total of 445,000 audience. Their three days concert tickets were sold out both at the Tokyo Dome along with the Osaka Kyocera Dome. According to Kim, this was the first time in foreign artist history in Japan that the first single and first album topped the Oricon chart as soon as they were released. EXO also established a record of holding a Tokyo Dome concert just after three years and seven months since their debut.

In addition, it is a global trend that concert mobilization has come to mean as much as album sales as a standard of an artist's popularity. The successful dome concert performance proves that K-pop artists have solidified their market base as top artists in Japan, as a stable, sound audience in a large scale is necessary to hold a dome concert. Kim explained that the "activity of regularly holding large-scale concerts, such as domes in Japan, shows a difference of the previous artist who

performed in Japan. They are not 'visiting' Japan, but they have transformed into artists that are both 'foreign artist' and 'domestically performing artists'.

According to Kim, in 2017, the triumvirate of K-pop girl groups has changed from Girls' Generation (SM), Wonder Girls (JYP), and 2NE1 (YG) to Red Velvet (SM), TWICE (JYP), and BLACKPINK (YG). Among them, TWICE's achievements played a major role in establishing a new system for girl groups. In particular, the number of YouTube plays contributed significantly to the successful status of TWICE as a world-class pop star. Kim even described it "as if it were to inherit the success of Girls' Generation."

Their Japan debut was also made with this global popularity. On July 2nd, 2017, 15,000 people gathered at TWICE's showcase at the Tokyo Metropolitan Gymnasium (東京体育館, Tōkyō Taiikukan). 〈One More Time〉, released in Japanese, topped the Oricon chart with sales of 201,000 copies in the first week alone. TWICE also starred in the Kohaku Uta Gassen of that year.

The Japanese single 〈Candy Pop〉 released in 2018 topped the Oricon single chart with 266,000 sales in the first week, and the mini album 《What is Love?》 released in Korean ranked second on the Oricon weekly album chart, exhibiting popularity regardless of the Japanese market and the global market. Shortly after the opening of the PyeongChang Olympics, Time magazine focused on TWICE's "highly sophisticated bubblegum pop music", placing TWICE along with BTS and EXO in an article titled "The Best K-pop Groups You Need to Know." (Kim, 229)

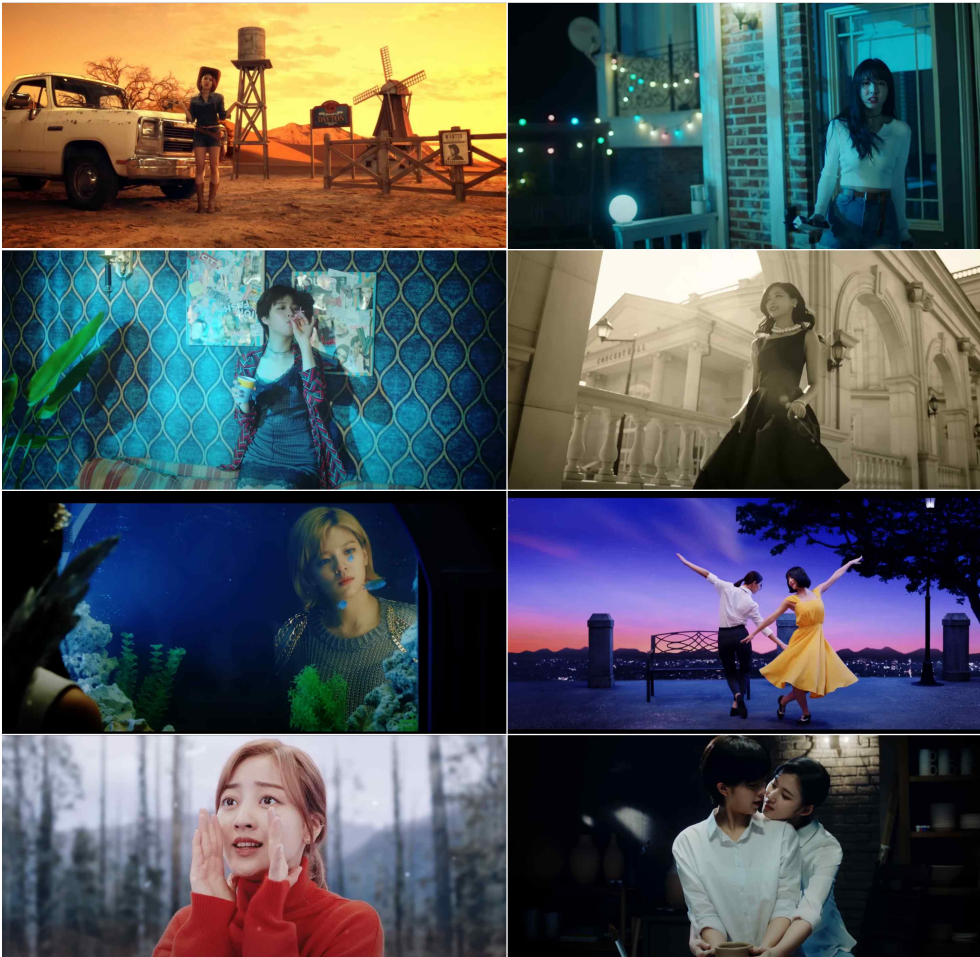
As for TWICE, three out of nine members(Mina, Sana, Momo) are Japanese. Even though their agency openly publicized that the three members were Japanese, all of them spoke fluent Korean while fitting in naturally within the

group. While performing as TWICE, these Japanese members did not shun their nationality or cultural heritage. Unlike Second generation idols who have adapted existing Korean songs and released them as Japanese debut singles to take advantage of the popularity gained from their Korean activities, TWICE produced their debut single with original Japanese content. Based on the locality due to the Japanese members within the group, their strategy aimed to target the Japanese public rather than a specific group of K-pop consumers. To pursue that goal, TWICE released albums with several Japanese exclusive tracks, which have a “typical J-Pop character”.(Choi, 2012) With this strategy, TWICE is recognized as a "girl group with Korean and Taiwanese members" in Japan and has successfully established itself in the Japanese market.

Among TWICE's characteristics, the multiple nationalities of members is the most noticeable. However, the combination of their sophisticated pop music along with the visuals should be discussed as well. In this musical space which has no connection with their nationality, the members of TWICE exist as “characters”. For example, the various costumes show that the members exist as “idols” beyond nationality. They do not wear costumes that directly show the original form, but the designs and settings show iconic works and act as a form of homage that can draw universal interests. In 〈Cheer Up〉, the members dress up as characters from *A Fistful of Dollars*, *Scream*, *Chungking Express*, *Breakfast at Tiffany's* and so on. In 〈What is Love?〉, they homage scenes from *Romeo+Juliet*, *La La Land*, *Love Letter*, and *Ghost*. This “dress up” is not a one time concept but one of the core characteristics that creates the identity of the group TWICE and eventually leads to their transnationality.

Figure 7. TWICE members homaging iconic movies from Music Videos of 〈Cheer

Up〉 and 〈What is Love?〉



Source: Music Video of 〈Cheer Up〉 and 〈What is Love?〉(Accessed on 2023.07.04.)

TWICE's transnational aspect shows the high level of the Korean entertainment system. This resulted to the the rapid increase of those who want to become the “second TWICE” and their longing to enter such a “universal pop space”.(Kim, 2018) Such perspective contributed greatly to the formation of NiziU, which will be introduced later.

On the other hand, unlike EXO and TWICE, all the members of BTS are Korean without releasing any “exclusive” tracks. However, rather than submerging themselves in the local culture, BTS decided to engage with themes of consensus. They create music lyrics that connect the younger generation through sincere

concerns regarding everyday, ordinary, universal worries. In this respect, BTS seems to be implementing a high-level globalization strategy that universally targets the commonalities of the global youth market. (Choi,2012)

BTS members share various messages containing their experience through their music. One important point to be noticed is the fact that all members contribute in their album as composers, lyricists, or both. In particular, RM, Suga and J-Hope even made mixtapes^③.(Kim, 218)

As such, BTS is a group whose self-expression through music is its essential identity. Not only do they appeal their musical talents, but they also include their dreams as artists in lyrics and performances, the helplessness felt by the younger generation, social inequality caused by income gaps, and their anguish in school and youth. The unfavorable conditions that they are not from large entertainment companies (SM, JYP, YG) also infused into their production. Their narratives and messages are unique content, but many can relate to their messages.

Through storytelling through a series of albums, BTS draws sympathy by handling social problems such as pressure from an unstable future, depression issues and school violence. The theme that penetrates all albums of BTS is "youth" experienced by young people living in the same era. They gained universal sympathy through the theme of "youth," and at the same time, they actively intervened with fans in their “world”, leaving room for interpretation to find connections or symbols to their previous albums, in addition to listening to music. Since their debut, BTS has attempted to spread word about hope to support the anxious youth through their "School Trilogy" and "Youth Trilogy" albums.

^③ A hip-hop culture in the form of rappers or DJs recording and releasing music. Since it is difficult to achieve commercial success, it is also interpreted as a criterion for evaluating the artist's musical talent.

Their recent albums convey the message of self-love. In particular, with the release of the "Love Yourself" series, it has signed an official partnership with UNICEF and is conducting a love myself campaign with the aim of eradicating violence "#ENDviolence." (HeraldPOP, 2018)

NiziU takes the glocalization strategy to the extreme. Although NiziU has no Korean members, every Japanese member can not only sing in Korean but can also communicate in Korean as well. Produced through a collaboration of JYP and SONY MUSIC, NiziU is characterized by a K-pop style and a girl group consisting of artists of Japanese nationality. JYP's producer Park Jin-young presented his vision of "globalization by localization" by fostering and producing overseas talent at the "Macquarie Emerging Industries Summit" in July 2018 as a new model for K-pop.

It is based on the "K-pop Hallyu Stages"^④, with the first stage exporting Korean content overseas, the second stage discovering foreign talent and collaborating with Korean artists, and the third stage directly fostering and producing talent overseas. In other words, NiziU applies the third stage model of K-pop to Japan, fusing Japanese talent into K-pop styles and systems to aim to enter the world. Much like TWICE, which organized its members through an audition program, NiziU gathered talented Japanese girls who were willing to pursue a career of music with the identity of a "K-pop artist".

2. New Media as a Means of Spreading Culture

2-1. New Media Leading to Simultaneous Impact: Dramas

Since the outbreak of COVID-19, the world is living in an environment

^④ This is a different from the "overall development of Hallyu".

with various unfamiliarities. This social change that strikes the globe is called the "New Normal". Some of the features of the "New Normal" include "social distancing" and "untact" formed by the long-term pandemic universal around the world. One of the keywords that have influenced society during the epidemic of COVID-19 would be "non-contact".

The boost of Hallyu came suddenly. It was triggered as "untact" became a daily life in the global community and enjoying cultures "at home". The global platform based on "OTT (Over The Top Service)" also known as "Online Video Streaming Service" provided a new emergency route for Hallyu for individual users.

The global streaming platform, represented by Netflix, YouTube, and Disney Plus as a late starter, has given a new boost to the Korean Wave, which had been on the defensive due to anti-Korean sentiment in Japan. Over the past four years, the Korean Wave has experienced both ups and downs in various environments surrounding the Korean Peninsula and has been experiencing advancements and declines. Through these series of events, the Korean wave has evolved into a new aspect.

With the support of a global platform represented by Netflix, the Korean Wave is breaking through a weak regional structure and pioneering a new space for its activities. In the midst of these changes, some scholars find that the cultural power of the Korean Wave is shifting from a local Korean Wave to the form of simultaneous worldwide access. In other words, today's Korean Wave is transforming from a phenomenon spreading in a specific region to a phenomenon spreading through a virtual base. This evolution has created a new distribution network between the platform such as Netflix and the consumer, directly.

The Korean drama "Crash Landing on You" which topped Netflix's overall ranking in Japan in June 2020 is an excellent example of how the Korean Wave is changing in Japan. Consumers could easily access new, Korean content through an OTT-based global online network rather than an existing regional-based distribution channel. In addition, this connection is characterized by the fact that it is not led by the government or regional-based distribution of a specific country, but by individual users accessing and consuming virtual spaces established by the distribution network of global companies. Unlike "Winter Sonata" which took over a year for it to be broadcasted in Japan, "Crash Landing on You" was aired through Netflix with a minimal time gap. The viewers in Japan could experience the same content as the viewers in Korea, creating a sense of simultaneousness. Through New Media, the traditional access gateways, which were highly affected by political turmoil, are no longer the only way to consume Korean culture.

Even the popularity in Korea does not affect the impact of Korean drama in Japan since all the viewers access the content with a little time gap. "Snowdrop" faced immense rejection from the Korean public due to its historic perspective of "romanticizing" the 1980s. However, broadcasted through the streaming platform Disney Plus, Snowdrop gain a fairly successful result in Japan. It was the first drama to be released by Disney Plus, simultaneously worldwide leading to this surprisingly lucrative result.

2-2. New Media Leading to Simultaneous Impact: Idols

Traditionally, when companies enter the global market, they first dominate the domestic market, explore possibilities in overseas markets through exports, establish overseas offices or branches to focus on specific overseas

markets through contracts, and then enter the entire global market. However, in the modern K-pop industry, foreign markets are targeted almost instantly.

Another New media affecting the Korean wave is SNS. Social Networking Services (SNS) is an Internet-based service that enables individuals to exchange information, form and maintain relationships, and create or exchange user-generated content (Suh, 2012). SNS supports forming and maintaining personal relationships mostly online, allowing those to connect regardless of time and space. was able to draw the attention of the world by taking this generalization of SNS as an opportunity.

More than before, SNS is becoming an important means for idols and agencies to communicate with fans. The early Korean waves were enabled by the traditional cable TV broadcastings but nowadays SNS is contributing to the transnational spread of K-Pop.

Especially, the "third-generation idols," including EXO, TWICE, and BTS used SNS in unique ways to achieve their goal. Today, consumers are demanding in-depth services through partnerships, away from the desired product itself (Park&Park, 2014). Third-generation idols not only spread existing music videos or performance videos globally based on SNS, but they also provide various new content exclusively for fans. Music-related content such as music production processes and choreography videos, as well as daily life content such as members' daily lives and travel, were shared on SNS (Lee, 2018) They not only use well-known SNS applications represented by Twitter or YouTube, but they also use Social Networking apps which are private for fans such as VLive(Previously "V app") or WeVerse.(VLive is now merged with WeVerse as of 2022.12.31.)

EXO is famous for its "100-day promotion" conducted before its debut

using YouTube. SM Entertainment released a total of 23 teaser videos and they have received sufficient attention even before the official debut. In addition, EXO actively provides videos in V-live, an important platform for K-pop idols. EXO currently has 12,732,585 followers(as of 2022.12.31.), the third largest channel after BTS and Blackpink. Through this app, EXO provides live broadcasts to communicate with fans in real time.

TWICE has uploaded all of their title songs on YouTube and among them, the music video of TT became a major hit in Japan. The point choreography of “TT” gained popularity as people started to post themselves posing with the specific choreography, which lead to TWICE’s unusual popularity even before their official debut in Japan. In less than a year after the song was released, JYP Entertainment announced "#TWICE" in June 2017 and held two showcases at Tokyo Dome for its debut stage, attracting a total of 15,000 fans(Im&Choi, 2013)

BTS and its connection with SNS(especially Twitter) have attracted many scholars’ attention. Some even evaluate that BTS has “rewritten the history of SNS. Because the group had little financial support due to its small size, they opened an SNS account to share their daily life and professional works such as mixtapes before their debut. BTS has used various platforms for different needs, but Twitter could be considered the core of its promotion strategy.

BTS is listed in the Guinness Book of World Records for both “Most Twitter engagements (average retweets)” and “Most Twitter engagements (average retweets) for a music group” as of April 2019.

Figure 8. BTS Listed on the Guinness Hall of Fame for Most Twitter Engagements

BTS social media records		
Record	Number Achieved	Date
Most Twitter engagements (average retweets) for a music group	422,228 engagements	29 April 2019
Most Twitter engagements (average retweets)	422,228 engagements	29 April 2019
Fastest time to reach one million followers on TikTok	3 hours 31 min	25 September 2019
Most viewed YouTube video in 24 hours	101,100,000 views	22 August 2020
Most followers on Instagram for a music group	40,220,226 Instagram followers	22 April 2021

Source: <https://www.guinnessworldrecords.com/records/hall-of-fame/BTS-best-selling-album-in-South-Korea> (Accessed on 2023.06.08.)

BTS also provides videos from their debut to their present activities through their official YouTube channel. They have about 2200 videos divided into 30 categories, ranging from daily life episodes to teaser videos for their next album. In the "Bangtan Bomb(방탄밤)", one of their categories, about 100 behind-the-scenes videos are uploaded. In addition to their YouTube channel, BTS's Vlive has 38,661,581 followers(as of 2022.12.31.) which is the largest number among over 1000 K-pop channels.

NiziU still has been actively uploading their videos on YouTube since their debut, much like the other well-known K-pop idols. In the category NiziU LOG, they post videos of their daily lives and information about their new album. Their contents are mostly in Japanese, but their video titles are mainly in Korean along with Korean subtitles, appealing to various audience.

As such, the SNS of current idols is a means for artists and agencies to provide music performance videos, while also communicating with fans in real-time. EXO, TWICE, and BTS, the leaders of the third-generation idols, are groups that successfully formed fandom by actively utilizing SNS in a world where people

can be connected with a little time gap, NiziU is acting as a post-K-pop idol to follow this trend.

3. Fandom Culture

Fandom culture has affected the modern flow of Hallyu, unlike the previous fandom rooted in the early stages. This phenomenon is mostly focused on the field of the K-pop industry, however, because the current Korean wave is largely driven by K-pop culture, this paper attempts to introduce its feature.

In the field of Korean Dramas, the “fandom” culture started with Winter Sonata. It has been academically reviewed how the middle-aged female fandom of “Winter Sonata” or “Yon-sama” affected the flow of the first wave of Hallyu. Also, scholars such as Hirata went a step further to analyze the gender-oriented effect of fandom. However, as the Korean wave evolved, more interest was focused on the characters rather than the actors(Kim, 2010). Nevertheless, because cases such as Snowdrop show that the popularity of a Korean pop idol can influence the attention a drama receives, it would be apt to review the fandom culture of the K-pop music industry and how the fandom achieves a transnational identity.

3-1. Marketing Prior Debut

In K-Pop, as part of pre-marketing, many artists display themselves through various methods in order to capture fans. EXO had disclosed teaser videos just 3 months(100 days to be exact) before their debut. Teaser videos, by definition, do not contain much information besides the music. Of course, curiosity through releasing teasers is one of the main promotion strategies of the K-pop industry, however, it was because of SM Entertainment’s massive financial support along with its name value that made pre-marketing possible.

On the other hand, TWICE and NiziU used survival audition programs to create a pre-debut fandom. The final members of TWICE were chosen through Mnet's program called "SIXTEEN" while NiziU's final members were selected through "Nizi Project" streamed through Hulu and YouTube. Both debut survival programs were led by the agency not only to select finalists but also to serve as a promotional window along with a foundation for fandoms.

Through SIXTEEN, TWICE gained recognition and familiarity with their future fans. The members were evaluated by their popularity and skills through the process of carrying out missions given to them each time, and ultimately, they were able to make a successful debut by forming members with the final choice of viewers.

The audition broadcast "Nizi Project," which was the process of NiziU's debut, was aired on Hulu, and YouTube. The broadcast became popular among many Japanese viewers, including the younger generation, as the growth and determination of participants touched the heart of the audience. This program also acted as a fandom foundation for the participants.

In both cases, pre-marketing before debut through survival broadcast programs acted as a very attractive method for the agency. Not only can they choose the "most talented" participants through traditional auditioning, but they could also create a fandom by broadcasting the participants. This is quite different from the case of EXO which had secrecy to the promotion. However, the production cost of such idol groups' debut survival broadcast programs ranges from 800 million won to 1 billion won (Kim, 2018). Since the financial burden is for the agencies, only the large and economically sound agencies could attempt this type of pre-marketing.

In order to overcome this limitation, BTS built a fandom through active SNS activities. Park evaluates that this presents a new paradigm in SNS marketing. As mentioned above, BTS is famous for its active participation online. By using the Internet and SNS as channels for distributing private information to fans, they attracted public interest and build friendly images with celebrities as well.(Bae, 2016) According to Im, BTS used their account from July of 2011 which was almost a year ahead of their debut. Their account is still actively used, posting information about each member's daily life.

3-2. Marketing Post Debut

While marketing prior to debut creates the foundation for fandoms to grow, these fandoms act as a shared identity after the debut of stars. Fans have their own nickname, one that is not only used by the star but also used to identify themselves. Many K-pop idols have “official” fan clubs that the agencies recruit during a given period of time. The specific nature of the fandoms varies among themselves, however, some common factors act as a boost to the K-pop culture boom.

After the major outbreak of COVID-19, most of the K-pop fandom could be considered online-based. This particular feature has made the bond between “fans of the same star” even more profound. According to Sohn(2012), transnational fandoms are based on “having fun together(함께 놀기)” and a sense of familiarity among fans, even if they come from different cultural backgrounds. In other words, fans who share the same love towards the stars feel a sense of belonging like a group of friends they know each other well.

The BTS fandom is an excellent example of how “fandom identity”

overcomes other identities. Named ARMY(Adorable Representative M.C of Youth) the BTS fandom shares a sense of belonging within the group. Lee claims that it is due to the collective knowledge and the identity forged through it. Lee reviews several activities from ordinary fan activities to those that involve socio-political engagement.

Lee introduces the “White Paper Project” as one of ARMY's "actual mobilization of capabilities" at the social and political level. In November 2018, a T-shirt worn by a member in the past became a problem. Because of the misunderstanding of said T-shirt's design, his scheduled appearance on Japanese music shows was canceled, followed by the attack of Japanese media along with anti-Korean forces. The controversy grew among foreign fans who were not familiar with Korea-Japan relations and World War II. To sort things out, fan translators of BTS carried out a white paper project in cooperation with experts within the fandom in order to explain the political and historical background surrounding the incident. They did not publish the White Paper simply to explain the fandom's position, but to also reflect on how to resolve conflicts within the fandom and the world, contributing to creating a “true humanistic fandom community beyond each nationality.”

This incident regarding ARMY is a single example, but the ordinary fandom activities organized by most K-pop fandoms also contain a sense of identification as a “fandom”. Many K-pop idol fandoms organize group activities such as streaming for their stars to enter the “music charts”, and participate in fan meetings (both online and offline) based on a shared identity. This transnational identity of fandoms is one of the reasons for the continued Korean wave boom.

Chapter 4. Cultural Uniqueness of Hallyu

4. “Korean-ness” in Cultural Content

Another factor that has surfaced in the modern Korean wave is the “Korean-ness” of the contents. This might seem paradoxical as the transnational aspect has been the central factor for the modern Korean wave in Japan. However, the Korean identity in both the K-drama and the K-pop field has proved to appeal to the Japanese audience.

4-1. Subtle Korean Cultural Aspects: Dramas

The Netflix drama “Kingdom” was an international masterstroke and also gained popularity in Japan as well. One of its unique features was that it had historically accurate outfits and props. This consideration of historical backgrounds allowed Kingdom to acquire especially positive feedback both domestically and internationally. However, foreign viewers including the Japanese public did not concern much with historical accuracy, due to the fact that most are fairly uninformed of Korean history. Nonetheless, the historically “Korean” atmosphere grasped their attention. For example, the traditional hat(Gat, 갓) gained immense recognition throughout Kingdom.

Another example of historical drama that appealed to the Japanese public is Snowdrop. As mentioned above, Snowdrop is a romance drama that took place during the Korean Democratization Movement. The temporal background itself would not have stirred such a disturbance among the Korean public. However, the drama showed signs of idealizing those from the National Security Agency, who hunted down pro-democratic activists and even “innocent citizens”. Not surprisingly, the drama did not gain much profit or attention domestically but it

made quite a name for itself in Japan. This shows that historical accuracy is not a factor in success in Japan. Rather, the “Korean-ness” itself served as a unique and somewhat exotic feature to the Japanese public and attracted attention.

Dramas based on conventional time periods have a certain “Korean-ness” as well. In the case of *Itaewon Class*, it deals with the socially marginalized youth(those who are not the “general college students”). Hong(2021) evaluates that many webtoon-based dramas contain the unique sentiment of webtoons such as a sense of deprivation which resonate with the younger generation. The same goes for *Itaewon Class*. The drama shows the development of the protagonist from his late teens to his thirties, moving towards his revenge as the main theme of the story. Its main character is a social “irregular” as he was expelled from high school due to violence against a bully. However, he actively resists the frustration of reality and eventually successes in both his revenge and business. This story is far-fetched but emotionally sympathizes with the younger generation’s resentment towards “bullies” and the unfairness of Korean society.

In addition, the story stages in "*Itaewon Class*" which is a real place in Korea. It symbolizes the vitality of young people, and the space represented by a "street vendor"(포장마차) is a specific place in Korea can the youth can connect with one another, creating a sense of reality. Both the story and locations have a sense of “Korean” uniqueness which absorbed the Japanese public.

One of the biggest changes in the modern wave of Hallyu, especially in the K-drama field is the increase in the number of middle-aged male viewers. At the center of the popularity of the drama "*Winter Sonata*," which sparked the first Hallyu boom, were active middle-aged Japanese female fans. On the other hand, it is unusual that male viewers who haven't shown interest before, were attracted to

Korean dramas.

In fact, according to Lee(2020), the proportion of men who expressed favor with "Crash Landing on You" was 97.1%, which was 10% higher than that of women. With the prevailing assessment that Korean Wave entertainment content in Japan relies heavily on female-centered consumption, this result showed that not only women but also men played a major role in the popularity of "Crash Landing on You", which reignited the Korean Wave in Japan. Then, why did Japanese men especially feel strongly liked in the drama "Crash Landing on You"?

It could be because middle-aged men naturally accepted Korean dramas without resistance due to the immense amount that flowed into Japan. However, the results from Oricon offer a different explanation. It records that women chose the desperate "Forbidden Love Story" and "humor of characters" for the main reason of their liking for "Crash Landing on You", whereas men cited "the aspect of inter-Korean culture and lifestyle" and "the background of the division of the two Koreas."

"Crash Landing on You" tells the love story of an heiress who crash lands in North Korea due to a paragliding accident and a North Korean officer who fell in love while protecting her. The main story of the drama unfolds in the background of South Korea, North Korea, and Switzerland, but their different nationalities are the biggest barriers between the two. It itself acts as a symbol of prohibition that should not be crossed.

Due to the setting of such a unique drama, there has been a major change in the perspective of Japanese towards North Korea. With the popularity of "Crash Landing on You," interest in North Korean words along with its life style has increased. In the past, the Japanese public's image regarding North Korea was

focused on the negative aspect such as "provocation," "threat," and "war". However some people even claimed to feel closer to North Korea than before after the drama boom.

4-2. Subtle Korean Cultural Aspects: Idols

The “Korean-ness” is also a significant factor in the K-pop field as well. According to Kim, some Korean media praised PSY's 〈Gangnam Style〉 as “ the rhythm of the song shows the traditional rhythm of Korean traditional music, the unique energy and passion of Koreans in the performance, and the temperament of the horse riding culture in the 'horse dance’”. Those who thrived to find the cause of popularity of 〈Gangnam Style〉 from the traditional sense of "Korean" insisted that the traditions of Korean music and the Korean temperament were at the root. Their argument eventually leads to the claim that such virtues raised Psy to become a world-class musician, and this expressed the “greatness of Korean culture”. However that is not the case.

The Korean characteristic of pop culture is not merely some part of a certain song or choreography but rather infused into the system. The Korean industry pursues 'Perfect Idols' and the Japanese industry pursues 'Idol with Room for Improvement'. Korean entertainment already has established itself as an "idol with fans" system strategy by utilizing SNS in line with the digital environment. On the other hand, Japan is an idol system strategy that makes fans feel a sense of accomplishment by watching their favorite idols grow. Japanese fans are encouraged by idols who are immature and clumsy but are cute and try their best. The fans are both eager and anticipated to see the improvement. However, in order to actually “see” the improvement, Japanese idol fans must “pay’

either with time or money.

Because their aim is different, the two industries utilize different strategies. Under the concept of being an object of awe, Korean idols go through harsh and intense training to achieve a professional aspect. Even at a young age, their vocal and dance skills are superior and professional, as the idols show off talent on the stage. This hasn't changed since the second Korean wave, some might even acknowledge that this "harshness" is part of the "Korean-ness" of K-pop.

Even the Japanese K-pop idol group NiziU has gone through harsh training by Jin-Young Park himself to achieve the "K-pop idol" standard. Their existence shows some admiration for the "professional" K-pop idol training system. Also according to Jeong(1999), one of the reasons the BTS fandom is growing rapidly in Japan is because of this difference. Jung mentions that economic limitations are one of the reasons Japanese youth turn their head toward Korean pop idols.

The basic selling point of Japanese idols is to look like a "friendly neighbor girl" who wants to "cheer for." Japanese idols, who are willing to share their dreams of becoming famous artists and actually realize it with fans, are desperate to appeal themselves to the public. The agency of AKB48, one of the most popular Japanese idols, started the fan voting system called the "AKB48 Senbatsu General Election"(AKB48 選抜総選挙) in 2009 to share this process with fans. Through this general election, 16 members are selected to participate in extra activities such as starring in music broadcasts and recording songs. One single, physical album contains one voting ticket, and fans who are willing to vote for their 'Oshi'(推し, Their Favorite) purchase these albums. In other words, if you buy 100 albums, you can vote 100 times. Fans have openly "hoarded" hundreds to

thousands of CDs so that the members they support can make it to the top 16. In fact, as such things happen frequently, Jung explains that it contributed greatly to the achievement of millions of sellers of AKB48 albums.

As the concept of Japanese idols is to "grow through (financial) support", that fans directly support their favorite idols by consuming CDs, DVDs, and concert tickets. However, teenagers and their 20s are those who have difficulty finding full-time jobs due to the economic recession and are experiencing more difficulty acquiring economic independence than other age groups. They "realize" early that it is difficult for the Satori (realized) generation to succeed no matter how hard they try. Therefore, the idol concept, which requires them to spend money to grow, is no longer appealing. On the other hand, Korean pop idols who already have achieved a "professional" level do not require economic support. Although the K-pop industry has several methods to gain consumers' funds, most of their content(including their music videos) is free to access.

Despite these stark differences, the K-idol groups which gained immense popularity in Japan have commonalities with the traditional Japanese idols as well. They appeal to the public as "friendly idols to cheer for" through their story telling, while TWICE and NiziU was practically born from a quasi AKB48 Senbatsu General Election format.

BTS is famous for its unique background. The K-pop market has been centered on major agencies of SM Entertainment, YG Entertainment, and JYP Entertainment for years. It was never an easy attempt for idols who were from small and medium-sized agencies to compete with idols of major agencies that already have a solid system along with the association of their senior groups. Many expected that BTS would also fade away, but these underdogs with "dirt spoons in

their mouths"("흠 수저") broke expectations and created their own success story. (Ko, 2017) The underdog storytelling narrative appealed to the Japanese public, as "idols to root for" much like how the fans of AKB48 bought multiple albums to show support for their "Oshi". The BTS fandom, ARMY is also famous for its tendency to unite, more than most fandoms. With the cohesive nature, they show support by streaming BTS music, tagging hashtags on multiple SNSs, or increasing the exposure of BTS music through radio song requests.

Another idol group that has shown their "friendliness" is TWICE. The albums of TWICE have an organic connection and story related to each member obtained through the survival audition program. Because a significant portion of their fandom was built by this program, TWICE naturally obtained the story of "growth" much like a "Bildungsroman".

Along with the pre-debut-friendly story, TWICE's song has confident female imagery, urging the listeners to come closer to them. Sometimes they would be upset about the situation ("TT") but sometimes they would ask to "knock knock on the door" of others' hearts("Knock Knock"). Choi and Im(2019) also mention that, due to the nature of the girl group, which needs more public popularity than a few core fans, TWICE developed a story that can be easily enjoyed by citing the identity of a friendly girl. This marketing strategy continued with the development of NiziU.

The cases from JYP Entertainment show a particularly interesting point. Both groups were organized from a survival audition program much like the Senbatsu General Election of AKB48.^⑤: fans must pay(their time, effort, or

^⑤ Lee(2019) gives IZ*ONE(2018) as an example of the collaboration of Korean and Japanese pop

money) to support their favorite member or else they will be eliminated.

In SIXTEEN, the participant needed to appeal not only to Jin Young Park(the CEO of JYP Entertainment) but also to the viewers. As the participants strive for their debut, the viewers feel a sense of empathy towards them, leading to supporting their "Oshi" through voting or promoting them. Nowadays with the enormous success of Produce 101(2017), the concept of survival audition idol shows is not unusual. However, SIXTEEN was aired in 2015 which was much earlier than Produce 101. The intense competition and the desperate survival along with a sense of fair sportsmanship attracted many future TWICE fans.

NiziU followed in TWICE's footsteps as it was organized by an audition program as well. Park Jin Young, the producer of NiziU presented the vision of “globalization by localization” and introduced his perception of fostering and producing foreign talent in the “K-pop way” as the new model of K-entertainment. From the start, NiziU was a mixture of the Korean and Japanese ways. The audition program “Niji Project” which included the process of NiziU's debut, was aired through both Nihon Televi(NTV, though partially) and the video platform Hulu. With immense popularity, the program was popular not only with the younger generation but also well-known to the upper generations as well.

culture. IZ*ONE was a popular K-pop idol that debuted through the audition program “Produce 101”. “Produce 101” was highly influenced by the Japanese girl band AKB48 and the program had been an international success, later officially working with “the very original format” that is referred to as “Produce 48”. Lee admits the fact that “K-pop and J-pop resembled each other closely” but adds that it “does not mean that they are being homogenized”. Through their interaction with one another, the Korean wave is forging into a new category, one that cannot be defined as either Korean or Japanese. Nonetheless, IZ*ONE which was born from an audition program influenced by a Japanese girl band and gained popularity around the world, including Japan. This paper admits that IZ*ONE is an important example that combines Korean and Japanese pop culture, therefore approaching the Japanese public with both familiarity and exotic charm. However, Produce 101 was not funded by a single entertainment firm, unlike SIXTEEN or Nizi Project.

The production of TWICE and NiziU show distinct features that are different from the conventional debut of K-pop idols, JYP not only proposed the idol groups with a “touching” story, but it also accepted the Japanese influence and the interactive nature of the modern Korean wave. The cases of modern K-pop idols show that the Korean wave not only has Korean aspects to it but they are partially merged with Japanese culture as well.

Chapter 5. Conclusion

1. The Unique Aspects of Hallyu

Despite the political turmoil surrounding the two nations, such as protests against Korea, and export regulations on major export items, the third and fourth Hallyu boom is still ongoing in Japan. In order to decipher the reason, this study analyzed various cases of K-pop and K-drama that are leading the 3rd and 4th Hallyu boom.

First of all, the reason the current K-pop and K-drama can appeal to the Japanese public is because of the transnationality of the current Korean Wave. Its transnationality can be explained by strategies through globalization and new media. In the K-drama category, the overall quality of the work has been improved to acquire transnationality. While in the K-pop category foreign members are recruited or songs regarding universal emotions are sung to achieve a higher ground in the international global market.

In addition, ever since new media gained approval rather than traditional media, consumers could access content simultaneously or within a very short time period. Considering that it took more than a year for Winter Sonata to land in Japan and that there were few record exchanges between Korea and Japan, the changes

are fundamental.

Also, the fandom culture played an important role although was limited to the K-pop field. Korean entertainment companies strived to build solid fandoms even before the idol's debut through teasers, survival audition programs, or SNS activities. After the star's debut, fans belonging to these fandoms will share a solid identity of "one fandom." These fandoms appear as friendly "hanging out together" with each other, but they also become cohesive when they have to speak out socially. Although not all fandom has the same outcome, they have influenced the flow of the Korean Wave in Japan in that fans share an identity regardless of cultural or national background.

Another factor, paradoxically, is the "Korean uniqueness" while maintaining some culturally similar backgrounds. It may seem contradictory that the Korean Wave, which has transnationality, uses Korean characteristics to succeed. However, "Korean-ness," which is revealed without provoking the Japanese public, can appeal to the consumers as an exotic charm. This can be seen in the characteristics of K-drama that leads the latest Korean Wave. *Kingdom*, which tells fantasy stories with historical background, and *Snowdrop*, which does not deal with history that is "hostile" to Japan, have experienced enormous popularity in Japan. In Korea, the public criticized *Snowdrop* as its historical perspective was inappropriate thus leading to its lack of success. This shows that "historical accuracy" is an insignificant criterion for the Japanese public, but the general exotic aura is an allurement.

This "Korean-ness" also appears in K-drama set in modern times. The conflict between the main characters in *Itaewon Class* has a sense of echoing that of Korean youth. The drama, albeit slightly unrealistic, shows the success of a

socially marginalized youth against a colossal unjust, unfair figure. Also, the "realistic space" of Itaewon and the "street vendors"(포장마차) appealed to the Japanese public as unique and "Korean". The realistic portrayal of North Korea in Crash Landing on You also appealed to middle-aged male viewers who had nothing to do with Korean dramas until now.

"Korean-ness" is also revealed in K-pop. This paper pointed out that Korea's idol concept is clearly different from Japan's idol concept (idols who are immature and clumsy but are improving with the support of their fans). To the Japanese youth who have difficulty getting financially sound occupations due to the recession, Japanese idols are now burdensome. On the other hand, Korean idols attracted Japanese audiences using different charms from Japanese idols by sharing their daily lives through Social Networking Services and demonstrating their perfect appearance, and performance on stage.

2. Limitations and Further Studies

Of course, this paper has its limits. This paper cannot be liberal from selective knowledge, judgment, or even ignorance. Additionally, most of the empirical evidence used in analyzing was from think tanks instead of raw data, meaning that there is a possibility that this data already had some intention.

Furthermore, the modern stage of Hallyu is still ongoing, which means that some definitions or identifications might be blurred or even incorrect. Along with that, this paper could not investigate or analyze the popularity of "Korean daily life" among the Japanese public, although the interest in settling down in everyday lifestyles is one of the significant details of modern Hallyu. Although Hirata Yukie already introduced the aspect of "extension of every day life" in her

studies, the modern Hallyu boom spreads even further and infiltrates in cuisine or cosmetics as well.

For example, some scholars point out that the modern Hallyu is appealing to more than just women, which breaks off from the traditional “female dominated” fandom.(Cho, 2020)^⑥ However this paper did not touch upon the gender subject, albeit the evolution or shifting of Hallyu's target is an interesting and important topic to ponder on.

Nonetheless, this thesis made an effort to bring attention to the less explored part of the spread of Hallyu by connecting cultural exchange with both culture proximity and uniqueness. Also, instead of dealing with a broader concept, this paper intentionally focused on the cultural and political relations of Korea and Japan as it is unique in its continuance and its rivalry.

Whether or not Hallyu will continue is not a question, the Korean cultural trend will most likely advance in ways not yet explored. Although both countries' relations have deteriorated and improved in recent years, it is necessary to acknowledge that Japan and Korea have entered into a new relationship governed not only by state politics or economic trade but also by powerful, prominent cultural ties. As a result, comprehensive examinations of the flows, receptions, and interpretations of popular culture via mass media will be critical in understanding the future of Japanese-Korean ties.

Although we have witnessed both deterioration and improvement in the relationship between both countries in the last few years, one must acknowledge that Japan and South Korea have entered into a new relationship governed not only

⑥ “이번 드라마 붐의 가장 큰 특징은 기존의 한류 팬과는 가장 거리가 먼 중장년 남성들이 콘텐츠를 즐기게 되었다는 것이다.”

by state politics or economic trade but also by groups of powerful, prominent fans and consumers engaged in a variety of cultural exchanges. In the future, the struggles in the power relations between the two countries will depend increasingly on symbolic, mediated representations. It is for this reason that careful analysis of the flows, receptions, and interpretations of popular culture via mass media will be significant in order to understand the future of Japanese-Korean relations.

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Abstract in Korean

한국과 일본은 문화적, 정치적 배경에서 많은 유사점을 공유해왔다. 이러한 공통점 때문에, 그들은 국제적인 무대에서 긴밀한 협력을 추구하는 관계를 구축하였다. 두 국가에게 필수적이지만, 그들의 관계는 평온과는 거리가 멀다. 특히, 한일관계는 이명박 대통령의 갑작스러운 독도 방문을 시작으로 현재까지도 갈등의 시간을 보내고 있다.

하지만 한국과 일본의 역사적, 외교적 갈등을 둘러싼 혼란에도 불구하고, 그들의 문화적 교류는 상호작용의 중요한 통로 중 하나로 작용해오고 있다. 한국 문화는 여전히 일본 사회에서 널리 받아들여지고 있다.

많은 학자들은 문화의 확산 과정을 문화적 유사성을 통해 설명한다. 하지만, 문화의 수용과 확산은 한가지 관점에서 단순히 분석할 수 없다. 특히, 현대의 문화 교류와 같은 경우에는 뉴미디어(New Media)가 중요한 행위자로 꼽힌다.

본고는 문화적 수용의 또 다른 변수로서, “문화적 근접성에 기초한 한국의 문화적 개성”을 추가적으로 제시하고자 한다. 언뜻 보기에는 역설적이지만 일본에서 한류 붐이 일고 있는 이유는 드라마나 아이돌 음악과 같은 문화의 초국적성(Transnationality)뿐만 아니라 이 안에 내포되어있는 독특한 '한국적인 측면' 때문이기도 하다.

본 논문은 문화 수용과 한류에 관한 선행 연구를 검토하고 한국 드라마 분야와 한국 아이돌(대중 음악) 분야에서 사례를 분석, 일본에서 유행하는 한국 문화에 대한 이해에 기여하고자 한다. 그러나, 이 연구는 기존의 언론이 그랬듯이 한국 문화의 "우수성"을 주장하고 싶지 않다. 그 대신 본 논문은 일본 내 한국 문화에 대한 수용을 분석하는 데 있어 보다 넓은 시각을 제공하고자 한다.

비록 한계가 있음에도 불구하고 문화적 교류를 문화적 근접성과 독특성 모두와 연결시켜 한류 확산에 대한 관점을 제시하고자 한다.