

“Influence of Korean Drama to Cultural Identity of Students in One Private School”

Danica S. Gordo, Alyanna Grace M. Valle, Sheraine A. Cuevas, Reinna Vianca R. Cabrera, Erika Mae L. Revellame, Jan Jeric Guevarra, Michelle A. Em

Northern Quezon College Incorporated, Infanta, Quezon, Philippines.

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ABSTRACT

For the past decades of uprising fame of Korean Wave, the influence of it on student's cultural identities is globally significant, particularly among Filipinos. The uprising influences of the Korean drama wave to the Philippines contributes to a disturbing change and fading of cultural identity of the Filipinos. This study investigates the influence of Korean dramas to the cultural identity of students in one private school. This study utilized a qualitative research design through interviews, specifically phenomenological, through the use of a validated interview questionnaire. With the increasing global popularity of K-dramas, this research examines how exposure to this form of media influences students' fashion, language, food preferences, and media consumption practices in relation to their own cultural identity. Through semi-structured interview, allowing an in-depth discussion of student's perception about the influence of foreign media specifically K-drama, the study examines the extent to which K-dramas impact students' attitudes towards Filipino culture, their adoption of Korean cultural elements, and their negotiation of identity in a globalized world. Findings from this research provides insights into the complex interplay between media consumption and cultural identity formation among young Filipinos, contributing to a better understanding of the cultural dynamics in the context of globalization and media influence. Based on the study results, it reveals significant insights forming four central themes illustrating how exposure in Korean drama reshapes preferences in food, fashion, and daily habits of those who are exposed. This emphasized the negotiation of cultural identity as students incorporate foreign influences into their self-perception while still valuing their local identity.

Keywords ----- influence, k-drama, cultural identity, students

INTRODUCTION

For the past couple of years, the Korean dramas achieved global recognition that captivate audiences worldwide where the global reach of K-dramas is now undeniable, with streaming different platforms showcasing its widespread popularity and influence. Their popularity is even fueled by readily accessible streaming platforms and engaging storylines proving their high-quality production that resonate across cultures. A 2023 survey conducted by Statista Research Department across 26 countries around the world, about 41 percent of respondents stated that Korean dramas were very popular in certain areas of the country mentioning a certain age of respondents. With approximately 68% considering them generally popular, suggesting a significant portion of the student population likely watches Korean dramas. This widespread appeal extends within the Philippines, where the Korean Wave's initial entry was largely through Korean dramas. According to Baucas (2022) the early 2000s witnessed a significant shift in Philippine popular culture, largely effect by burgeoning which begins the grow or rapidly increased of the popularity of Korean media. This popularity significantly impacts students, despite of limited time of the students, majority of them spent time actively watching multiple titles and even using them as a tool for language learning. Tajul et.al., (2023) observed that the youth tend to be more inclined towards content which shows cultural similarities to them and Korean dramas not only show cultural similarities such as family values, trends that students relate to but also situations that captivated the attention of students due to its content that viewers relate to.

For the past decades of uprising fame of Korean Wave, the influence of it on student's cultural identities is globally significant, particularly notable among Filipinos. Despite having a rich indigenous culture and history, the Philippines experienced challenges in forming this unified cultural identity due to rapid societal change, colonial legacies and diverse preferences but out of it all, influence from other country greatly contribute to these challenges. According to Eslit (2024), the Filipino diaspora or dispersion significantly contributes to the evolution of cultural identity shaping both local and global perception of Filipino-ness. As millions of Filipinos migrate for economic opportunities, they carry their culture practices and traditions thereby fostering a transnational identity transcends geographic boundaries (Hannerz, 2021). This vulnerability makes the country an open opportunity for others to influence and Korean dramas is one of the strong contributors of this phenomenon. Now the influence of Korean Wave particularly K-dramas on Filipinos are felt and seen everywhere in schools, malls, shops, jeepneys, and even in parks as well as other tourist destinations.

The uprising influences of the Korean drama wave to the Philippines contributes to a disturbing change and fading of cultural identity of the Filipinos. "The Philippines and Korea are linked by flows and counter flows of people," said Dr. Virginia Miralao of the Philippine Social Science Council in the study on the Korean culture dispersion in the Philippines. According to Han (2015 as cited by Posadas and Vargas, 2023) the Korean culture in the Philippines had little influence on the Philippine society until the late 1980s, when the Korean wave started. They continued to be seen as a closed group by the Filipinos. But in the present time, the Philippines, where cultural identity is complex and often fragmented due to historical influences and globalization, the pervasiveness of K-dramas presents a high result that Korean wave thru Korean dramas greatly impact the changes and losing Philippines cultural identity. Utilized in Korean dramas, the country's vibrant portrayal of Korean culture, values, and aesthetics that sparked a significant interest in Korean language, food, fashion, and tourism. The Philippine's exposed vulnerability, specifically the students that are still learning from the things they always encounter, received the impact that contributes to the country's weak defense in protecting cultural identity.

Due to the global popularity of Korean dramas, its impact is well documented. But in specific regions, particularly within a single private school, the impact of the phenomenon remains under-researched. The widespread evidence of Korean drama viewership within this institution, supported by observable adoption of Korean culture particularly in fashion, language, cuisine, and product consumption practices signify an investigation into its potential effects on student's sense of self and cultural belonging. Therefore, this study focuses to investigate Korean culture the students adopted and the influence of pervasive Korean drama consumption on the cultural identity of the student. Through this study, the researchers provide insights into the cultural implications of the Korean Wave among students.

Statement of the Problem

This study aimed to explore the influence of K-Drama consumption on the cultural identity of students in one private school. The primary objectives are to describe the experiences and changes of the students pertaining to cultural identity upon watching K-dramas.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions;

1. How do watching K-Dramas influence the cultural identity of students?
2. Based on the results of the study, what initiatives, such as activities can be drawn to strengthen the cultural identity of Filipino students?

Significance of the Study

The generalization of this study would be great contribution to provide valuable information on how Korean drama can influence student's cultural identity. The result of this investigation could be highly significant and beneficial to the following:

Students- This study provides insights into the complex relationship between K-drama consumption and the formation of cultural identity. By examining this connection, the study shed light on how K-dramas influence students' self-perceptions. These findings help students critically analyze the effect of K-drama on their identity, fostering self-awareness and a deeper understanding of the dynamic interplay between media and culture.

Parents- This study benefit the parents as it clarifies concerns on how watching K-drama affect the cultural identity of their children, these findings help the parents better understand the impact of K-drama viewing on their children's sense of self and cultural belonging.

Teachers- This study provides understanding for the teachers of how K-dramas influence the cultural identity of the students. This finding can help them develop more engaging and relevant teaching methods, incorporating cultural references of their own to strengthen and connect with the students.

CHED and DepEd- This study provides valuable information for CHED and DepEd to understand the importance of culture, influence of K-drama and how the influence of K-drama affects the cultural identity of students. They need to include the importance of cultural identity in the curriculum so that students can become aware of their origins and upbringing. These findings help to create events to strengthen the cultural heritage of students as Filipinos and to further strengthen their Filipino identity.

Future Researchers. This conducted study open doors for future researchers to refine and expand studies in relation to the effect of K-dramas to cultural identity among students. The study also gives the future researchers interest to continue and pursue their own researchers making the findings as basis for their future study.

Scope and Delimitation of the Study

This study focused on the influence of Korean drama on cultural identity of a student with four dimensions such as fashion, food preferences, languages adoption and media consumption practices. The researcher used Phenomenological research design and collect data through in person interviews with students who meet the following criteria. Students who are active viewers that watch at least three Korean drama episodes per week, a threshold aligned with Lee & Cho's (2022) framework for media engagement and cultural identity negotiation. The participants also have watched at least twenty Korean dramas, long-term viewer who have been watching Korean dramas for more than a year, and when participants exceeded to three students that meet all three criteria, the participants are selected based on the highest number of Korean dramas watched. The students are given a questionnaire as an overview of the questions and use as a source of material for the study. The participants are selected within the population of one private school located in Infanta Quezon. This study is conducted up until September 2025, which presented the population. The findings of this study could be utilized by the researchers in the future.

This study is limited to context of one private school and may not be generalizable to other private school or educational settings. The sample size is limited to fifteen students, three per department- Bachelor of Secondary Education, Bachelor of Elementary Education, Bachelor of Science and Criminology, Bachelor of Science in Business Management and Senior High School department- with five department in total, this limitation is dependent to students who meet the criteria and willingness to participate in the study. Supported of Marcelino's (2020) claim that the younger generation is whom immediately influenced by their surroundings and young people are also exposed to different styles when it comes to music, fashion, and dramas, the researchers selected secondary and tertiary levels as the participants of the study. A small sample size could impact the breadth and depth of the findings and may not fully capture the influence of watching Korean drama to cultural identity.

Researchers face potential issues, with time management being one of them as the participant's schedules differ from the researcher creating challenges. Next is funding, as researchers need financial support for transportation and producing copies of their survey questionnaires for the participants. Finally, the source of information presents a concern, as researchers encounter limited data. This aimed to understand the influence of Korean drama to cultural identity on a student in one private school. Sought to uncovered the essence of the phenomenon under the study by analyzing the descriptions and interpretation by the participants.

Definitions of Terms

Active viewer – Active viewers were defined as those who self-identified as a regular viewer and met the threshold of watching at least three episodes weekly, consistent with prior knowledge on media engagement (Lee & Cho, 2022). Someone who interacts with media by interpreting or responding to its content in addition to viewing it.

Culture – Defined as a set, practices and symbols that are learned and shared. Together they form an all-encompassing, integrated whole that binds people together and shape their worldview and life ways. (Lara Braff & Katie Nelson ,2020)

Cultural identity- In Cambridge English dictionary (n.d.) cultural identity is define as a sense of identifying oneself that is formed through shared characteristics such as language, traditions, beliefs, values, and norms that are passed down from generation to generation. Cultural identity refers to cultural identity in this study which will be measured through student self-reported perceptions, behavior, and expression related to their culture.

Filipino Culture Appreciation Day- is an event led by the students from certain school organizations designed to strengthen and celebrate Filipino identity in response to the cultural shifts observed in research, particularly the influence of Korean dramas. It counters the impact of foreign media through four key activities, showcasing traditional Filipino fashion, exploring local culinary pride, staging plays highlighting Filipino communication styles and gestures, and creating films that promote responsible media consumption. This event aimed to foster a deeper understanding and appreciation of Filipino culture among students, strengthening their cultural identity in a globalized world.

Influence – A skill set where behavior or approach is used to change someone else’s through process. It is also defined as the power to have an important effect on someone or something. If someone influences someone else, they are changing a person or thing in an indirect but important way (Vocabulary, n.d). Influence refers to the measurable effect or impact of a factors (such as media, people, culture, or experience) on the behavior, attitudes, values, or decision of individuals or groups. In this study, influence can be determined by observable changes, responses, or adaption in the action or views of participants as a result of exposure to particular factor.

Korean Drama- With another term such as K-drama or Korean Novela, refers to Korean language type of television series from south Korea, often featuring themes such as romance, historical events, fantasy, and slice of life. (Jin and Yoon, 2020)

Conceptual Framework

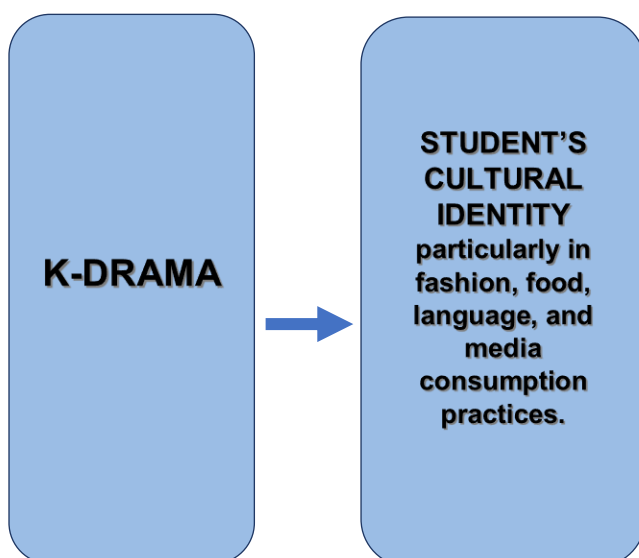


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of the Study

As shown as the above figure the conceptual framework that examined how exposure to K-dramas influenced a various aspect of the student's cultural identity. The framework illustrated two variables: K-drama which represented the exposure of students to Korean dramas. The research explored the overall engagement with K-dramas among the student population. Student's Cultural identity, pertaining to the participant's fashion, food, language and media consumption practices, describing their experiences and changes upon watching K-drama. The arrow in the middle represented the influence of watching K-drama that gradually change in the student's cultural identity.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this chapter presented the methodology employed the Influence of Korean drama in cultural identity of students in One Private School. The qualitative phenomenological approach was chosen to explored deeply into the subjective experiences of individuals within the context. This section provided an overview of the Research Design, Research Locale, Research Population and Sample, Research Instrument, Data Gathering Procedures, Specialist Informant and Ethical Considerations used in this study.

Research Design

The researchers utilized phenomenological research design in conducting the study. Phenomenology explored the influence of Korean drama to cultural identity of students in One Private School and foster intercultural understanding, promote critical media engagement, and support positive cultural identity development.

In this study, phenomenology allowed for an in-depth exploration of the influence of Korean drama to students in One Private School. By using this approach, the researchers aimed to understand how exposure to K-dramas shapes their values, uncovering the essence of their engagement and identifying common themes and patterns in how these dramas shape their cultural perceptions. Additionally, this approach enabled the researchers to gained a holistic understanding of the participant's experiences and to identifies common themes and patterns that emerged across these experiences.

Research Locale

This study was conducted in One Private School at Barangay Comon, Infanta, Quezon where the school is located. Known for its cultural diversity and vibrant community, it was chosen as the research setting. Exploring the influence of Korean drama to cultural identity of students offering valuable insights into the interplay between global media and local culture, informing community initiatives promoting cultural preservation. The study's findings helped to create a relevant and effective understanding of global media influence and potentially informing community initiatives promoting cultural preservation and fostering intercultural understanding, possibly served as a model for other educational institutions encountering similar challenges.

Research Population and Sample

The participants of this study are the students within One Private School. They are chosen using purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling technique where the researcher selected participants based on specific criteria that are relevant to the research study. In this case, the researcher aims to include participants who provide in-depth and detailed information about the influence of Korean drama to their cultural identity as student. The researcher gathered rich and meaningful data that informed the development of global media influence and cultural preservations in One Private School. Following the criteria in the selection of the participants: (a) active viewer of Korean drama series (b) watched at least twenty Korean dramas (c) a long-term viewer who have been watching Korean dramas for more than a year, and (d) willing to participate in the study.

Data Gathering Procedures

The researchers sought first the permission of the institution especially the Program Supervisor of the concerned Department as they are informed about the nature of the study. Afterwards, the researchers identified the students under the criteria for a participant through purposive sampling technique. Once identified, the researchers request

for the consent of the participants prior the schedule of the interview. The interview scheduled under the convenience of the target participants and the necessary data were acquired. After that, the researchers proceeded to transcription of the data which is the first step in thematic analysis.

Data Analysis

Thematic analysis employed to analyze the qualitative data obtained from the semi-structured interviews with students. The interviews were transcribed verbatim and coded using an inductive approach. The initial codes were derived via thoroughly examining the data and identifying recurring patterns and concepts. These codes organized into broader themes through iterative coding and constant comparison. Analyzation of different theme from multiple studies similar to the study are used as a bases to formulate the themes derived from the participants statements. The themes refined and named based on their relevance to the research objectives and the richness of the data. The findings provided valuable insights into the influences of Korean drama to cultural identity of students.

DISCUSSION

The findings of the study revealed significant insights into the themes. There are four central themes emerged, illustrating how exposure in Korean drama reshapes preferences in food, fashion, and daily habits of those who are exposed. The themes indicated shows how students were influenced by watching K-drama. This emphasized the negotiation of cultural identity as students incorporate foreign influences into their self-perception while still valuing their local identity. For instance, some student described wanting to consume Korean traditional or local food but limited to resources, find alternatives where local products with the same quality is what they brought as a representation of cuisine they desire from watching K-drama. Despite the changes of adapting foreign culture, many of the students still emphasized a conscious effort to preserve their Filipino heritage, framing their adaptations as “additions” rather than replacement. As for the most participants, it is proven that watching K-drama changed their preferences especially when it comes to food, fashion and lifestyle. The adaption the students unconsciously do, leads to a gradual process of changing in their cultural identity. This culture negotiation reveals a process of transforming of identity where the students are somehow in between embracing global trends and safeguarding cultural authenticity. Researchers observed from the student’s behavior the enjoyment in the novelty of Korean culture, covering the fear of its dominance—a sentiment that sparked the creation of Filipino Culture Appreciation Day.

To counterbalance the influences, this event the researchers came up with would help showcase the pride of Filipino culture celebrating Filipino traditions. Activities like a short filmmaking workshop will encourage students to document shows inspired by Filipino literary pieces, while a food bazaar will spotlight regional dishes reigniting pride of Filipino delicacies. A fashion show redefining “trendiness” through a Filipino lens, and a stage play that dramatize Filipino culture fostering a deeper connection to national identity. By implementing this, it may be possible to cover the things that students have adapted because of watching K-drama.

CONCLUSIONS

The recognition of K-dramas in the country has various reasons why it has spread widely and strongly one of it is through media. Similar to the Filipinos, K-dramas also introduced their own culture, through watching it, individuals learned and eventually adopt significant factors particularly those similar with one’s practices. The experience of students throughout their involvement in K-dramas shows the influence of it not just in the student’s perception but to a wider aspect which is the cultural identity of one being. Students realized the importance of allocating time for watching and prioritizing important things in their life. The students also understand the importance of balancing their time, set limitations and boundary in the things they often utilized their time as they notice that the more in depth their exposure is the more practices they adapt. Active K-drama viewers indeed develop a curiosity to try such things to explore. Through their viewing habits, they become interested to the point of being influenced in aspects like lifestyle, fashion, purchasing skincare and makeup products, food products they consume and even the language they often hear from watching as well as the quality of media they prefer. The presence of unique plot twists, the flow of the story, and excellent actors in Korean dramas become one of the reasons why students started and continuously watch K-dramas. Therefore, through

the “Filipino Culture Appreciation Day” that will be held by the school, the student’s Filipino cultural identity could be maintained. The “Filipino Culture Appreciation Day” will be held once a year for one day, where there will be various activities such as a food bazaar where different Filipino foods will be served, a stage play where students must present Filipino literature inspired and filmmaking that students will represent showcasing the identity of the Filipino, such as family dynamics and local folklore. Lastly, a fashion show where there will be a display of clothing inspired by Filipino clothing from different tribes or region highlighting the rich culture of the Philippines. By doing this, the cultural identity of Filipinos, especially students, may not be completely lost. Even if they have an interest in other cultures, such as Korean culture, they will still not lose their Filipino-ness and their Filipino cultural identity. The rapid rise of K-dramas and the recognition of their cultures, such as value, food, and clothing, indeed contribute a significant influence on viewers. With the widespread Korean entertainment industry, not only the students but most people developed an interest in engaging on such entertainment that their cultural identity somehow receive a gradual change.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings derived from the study led to comprehensive and significant insights. After the thorough analysis of data, the researchers recommended the following:

Students

Students should have time management when watching K-dramas so they could maintain their time every day for the task and chores they have. By using digital apps or planners to allocate specific time slots for study, watching and other activities, they can make their “To-Do List” as their routine everyday balancing the things they need to prioritize before screen time to watch K-drama. By doing this, they will have discipline in their study time, reduce stress, and K-drama will be an entertainment more than a material that change certain things in them.

Parents

Parents play the most important role in helping to shape their child's identity, so as for the parents, they should be the one who provides guidance to their children, such as open communication and setting boundaries or limitations especially when it comes to what content they should and should not watch. They must be strict in setting time limits, encouraging their children to have outside hobbies such as sports, talents, and interests in other things instead of spending the whole day watching K-drama.

Teachers

Teachers can use the popularity of K-drama nowadays as a learning tool by organizing school activities such as task-based and real-world applications that students can do themselves and they can realize the differences between various cultures in different parts of the world. This will also help them see the uniqueness of Filipino culture and have an appreciation for the culture they have. In this way, it will help them maintain the cultural identity that their students have as Filipinos.

CHED and DepEd

CHED and DepEd should support the implementation of Filipino cultural appreciation celebration that the researcher came up with. With the support of the said department, this event could help on strengthening the cultural identity and heritage of the Filipino and so that it will not be forgotten, especially now that most of the students are exposed to the digital era where everyone can see the different cultures of different race. By engaging to different Filipino activities, it will show a strong connection to Filipino culture. With the CHED and DepEd support, the teachers and staff will participate in this event through encouraging students to enrich their cultural knowledge.

Future Researchers

Future researchers could consider increasing the number of participants to have more and deeper exploration of K-dramas. Influence on cultural identity by expanding the scope, methodology, and connections of the study. Since there are many studies that prove that the cultural identity of students is indeed influenced, future researchers can conduct a study into how easily students' cultural identities are influenced by watching K-drama. In this study, one could learn more about the possible reasons why watching K-drama can influence students so easily.

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