

## The Cultural and Religious Conflict between Korean Wave and Islamic Values

### Konflik Budaya dan Agama antara Gelombang Korea dan Nilai Islam

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#### ABSTRACT

*Korean popular culture, such as movies, TV dramas, and pop music, is overwhelmingly powerful and TV dramas are especially remarkably popular in terms of obsession of fans and audiences. They also bring considerable profit to South Korea. The Korean Wave (Hallyu) brings a different level of Korean fever in certain East Asian countries, including Malaysia. By introducing new story materials, and using hi-tech skills in shooting, K-Dramas continue to gain popularity especially in the genre of historical drama that provides newly interpreted viewpoints about many historical stories. These continuous efforts in the fields of K-Pop, K-Food and K-Fashion expand areas and brighten the future of Korean Wave. The universality of cultures and values, which is the strength of the Korean Wave, is a unifying force to draw the minds of the people around the world and to make them enthusiastic about the Korean Wave. At the same time, there is also a possibility of conflict between Korean Wave and Islamic values, including in Malaysia. Muslim Korean Wave lovers are suffering from cultural and religious conflict between Korean and Islamic values and even experiencing anomie and dilemma such that they are not free from the criticisms of their own communities.*

*Keywords: Korean wave; Hallyu; impact; Malaysia; culture; Islamic values*

#### ABSTRAK

*Budaya Korea yang popular seperti filem, drama TV dan muzik pop 'sangat berkuasa' dan drama TV merupakan salah satu budaya popular yang paling luar biasa. Budaya tersebut bukan sahaja popular dari segi penonton dan peminat yang fanatik, tetapi ia juga sebenarnya mendatangkan keuntungan yang besar kepada pendapatan Korea Selatan. Gelombang Korea (Hallyu) telah membawa kepada tahap 'Demam Korea' yang berbeza di Asia Timur termasuklah di Malaysia. Dengan memperkenalkan bahan cerita yang baharu, dan menggunakan kemahiran berteknologi tinggi dalam penggambaran, K-Drama terus meraih populariti terutamanya dalam genre drama sejarah yang memberikan ruang untuk interpretasi baharu tentang banyak cerita sejarah. Usaha dan inisiatif berterusan yang dilakukan dalam bidang K-Pop, K-Makanan dan K-Fesyen juga telah meluaskan pengaruh dan mencerahkan masa depan Gelombang Korea. Aspek kesejagatan budaya dan nilai yang merupakan kekuatan Gelombang Korea, telah menjadi daya penggerak untuk menarik minda masyarakat di seluruh dunia dan membuatkan mereka jatuh cinta kepada semangat Gelombang Korea. Namun, dalam pada itu, terdapat juga kemungkinan berlaku konflik antara Gelombang Korea dan nilai Islam di Malaysia. Para pencinta Gelombang Korea yang beragama Islam bukan sahaja mengalami konflik budaya dan agama antara nilai-nilai Korea dan Islam, malah merasai perasaan anomie serta dilema dan mereka juga tidak terlepas daripada kritikan masyarakat.*

*Kata kunci: Gelombang Korean; Hallyu; impak; Malaysia; budaya; nilai-nilai Islam*

#### INTRODUCTION

Hallyu refers to the phenomenon of Korean popular culture which became vogue in Southeast Asia and mainland China in late 1990s. Hallyu is very popular amongst young people who are enchanted with Korean music (K-pop), dramas (K-drama), movies, fashion, food, and beauty in China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Vietnam, etc. This cultural phenomenon

has been closely associated with multi-layered transnational movements of people, information and capital flows in East Asia (Ing et al. 2018). Since the 15th century, East and West have been the two subjects of cultural phenomena. The East-West dichotomy was articulated by Westerners in the scholarly tradition known as Orientalism. During the Age of Exploration (1400–1600), the West did not only take control of the East by military force,

but also created a new concept of East or Orient, as Edward Said expertly proposed in his masterpiece *Orientalism* in 1978. Throughout the history of imperialism for nearly 4 to 5 centuries, the West was a cognitive subject, but the East was an object being recognised by the former. Accordingly, civilisation and modernisation became the exclusive properties of which the West had copied, whereas the East was a sub-subject to borrow or even plagiarise from Western standards. In this sense, (making) modern history in East Asia was a compulsive imitation of Western civilisation or a catch-up with the West (Bok-rae 2015).

Thus, it is interesting to note that East Asian people, after gaining economic power through compressed modernisation, are eager to be main agents of their cultural activities in and through the enjoyment of East Asian popular culture in a postmodern era. In this transition from Western centred into East Asian-based popular culture, they are no longer sub-subjects of modernity. As Foucault says, 'constructing reality through language' is the privilege of those who control power. So, the golden goose called Hallyu can be conveniently dissected into four parts to be exported abroad: Hallyu 1.0 (K-drama), Hallyu 2.0 (K-pop music), Hallyu 3.0 (K-culture) and Hallyu 4.0 (K-style) (Bok-rae 2015).

#### KOREAN WAVES - FROM HALLYU 1.0 TO HALLYU 4.0

As mentioned above, Hallyu started with K-drama exports in the late 1990s. However, it quickly jumped up into the maturity stage of Hallyu 4.0 (K-style), by way of Hallyu 2.0 (K-pop music) and Hallyu 3.0 (K-culture). In the mid-2000s, Hallyu was closely linked to Korean idol groups-led K-pop boom. Thanks to web 2.0, driven by social networking sites and the smart phone (mobile), the vogue of Hallyu 2.0 (K-pop craze) reached the entire world, beyond East Asia. Even though Hallyu 2.0 has been around for three years, another neologism Hallyu 3.0 becomes very popular on the web. Latterly, Korean Ministry of Culture and Sports is planning to expand a cultural territory through this Hallyu 3.0, despite the downturn of Hallyu in crisis, China's on-line regulations, and Japan's growing anti-Korean sentiment, etc. (Bok-rae 2015).

The neologism of Hallyu 2.0 or neo-Hallyu was born with a yearning for Korean culture, such as Korean alphabet (Hangul), Korean food (Hansik), and Korean traditional costume (Hanbok), beyond

Asia. The term Hallyu 2.0 was used for the first time by Japanese media reporting widely on the showcase of Girls' Generation who released their first digital single in Tokyo. The significance of Hallyu 2.0 was to extend the range of Hallyu from contemporary K-pop culture into traditional cultures like Hangul, Hansik, Hanok (Korean-style house), and to achieve a 'genre kill' with the global advance of K-pop idols in Middle East, Europe, North/South America and Africa (Elaskary 2018). As expected, the early view from industrial and academic experts was very sceptical on the expansion of Hallyu toward Europe and North America where the mainstream Western culture continues to be prevalent, but super-national interests in Korean culture have spread out at a surprising rate. The real motivator of this enduring K-pop's popularity cannot be explained in terms of an industrial context or state support. It's mainly due to super national or hybrid characters inherent in Korean culture itself and social media outlets. It seems reasonable to find the decisive turning point to Hallyu 2.0 in the formation of super-national fandom with SNS (Youtube, Facebook and Twitter) which largely contributed to the worldwide spread of Hallyu (Ministry of Culture n.d.; Bok-rae 2015).

#### THE IMPACTS OF KOREAN WAVE (HALLYU) IN MALAYSIA

The aggressive growth of Hallyu in Malaysia has been extensive. Even to this day, Hallyu continues to gain ground in Malaysia's local television. Here is influence of Hallyu fever in Malaysia:

##### K-DRAMA

The South Korean TV dramas that have been aired in Malaysia so far include *Winter Sonata*, *Autumn in My Heart*, *Joyful Girl*, *My Love*, *Patjwi*, *All About Eve*, *Doctor Brothers*, *Successful Trader*, *All-In*, *Woman Detective*, *Stairway to Heaven*, *Lovers in Paris*, and *A Jewel in the Palace*. TV dramas that have significantly contributed to boosting the Korean Wave in Malaysia include *Winter Sonata*, *Autumn Fairy Tale*, and *A Jewel in the Palace*. Despite it having been aired three times so far, *Winter Sonata* has enjoyed invariably high viewer ratings. Its lead actor Bae Yong-joon has since been loved by Malaysians as South Korea's representative actor. *Winter Sonata* is a soap opera with a tragic ending of love, using the beautiful winter scenery of South Korea as a backdrop. This drama has captivated the

hearts of Malaysians who are family centred and sensitive to emotions. It has left deep impressions in the hearts of Malaysian viewers of Malay or Chinese descents, regardless of race or religion. The influential Malaysian daily *The Star* has carried a story on the success of South Korean soap operas (Cho 2010; Lee et al. 2020).

According to the newspaper, *Winter Sonata*, which was broadcast in Malaysia in 2002, was such a smash hit that more than 1.5 million viewers riveted their eyes on the TV screen whenever each episode of the drama was on. Following *Winter Sonata* in 2002, *Autumn Fairly Tale* also contributed to maintaining popularity of South Korean dramas in Malaysia. The high popularity of *Autumn Fairly Tale* led to its export to Egypt, another Islamic country. A Malaysian pop song featuring a boy struggling to win back the heart of his girlfriend who has been fascinated by Song Seung-heun, the lead actor of *Autumn Fairly Tale*, hit the headlines in Southeast Asia. This trend also led Southeast Asians to take interest in South Korean pop songs. *A Jewel in the Palace*, showcasing Korean foods was loved by all Malaysians since it was broadcast as a prime-time programming. The drama won popularity both from Malaysian women and men. This drama caused many Malaysians to take greater interest in Korean culture and foods. Naturally, many Malaysians visited Korean restaurants to taste Kimchi and Bulgogi. Its lead actress Lee Young-ae has ranked second following Bae Yong-joon as a favorite South Korean celebrity in Malaysia. TV ads featuring Lee are still showing on TV screens (Ariffin et al. 2018; Cho 2010).

The Korean Wave in films began with the blockbuster *Swiri*. This trend was followed by Malaysians' love of the horror movie *Phone*. With the introduction of these films as momentum, Malaysians came to know about South Korean movie stars, such as Won Bin and Lee Jung-jae. Afterwards, scores of South Korean films, including *Old Boy*, *Friends*, *Taegukgi: Brotherhood of War*, *My Sassy Girl*, *Windstruck*, and *My Little Bride*, were introduced to Malaysia one after another. Because of a relatively stable social structure of Malaysia, Malaysians prefer South Korean films that comically deal with love stories, rather than movies with serious themes of war or violence. Just as these South Korean films and TV dramas have won high popularity in Malaysia, so have many South Korean pop stars, such as Bae Yong-joon, Choi Ji-woo, Lee Young-ae, Ahn Jae-wook, Jang Dongkun, Won Bin,

and Lee Byung-heon. Film actor Kwon Sang-woo has won popularity as a next-generation Korean Wave star as the drama *Stairway to Heaven* starring him was broadcast on 8TV in Malaysia. Actresses Song Hye-kyo and Kim Hee-sun have captivated the hearts of young Malaysian men (Cho 2010).

Not enough with that, a Malaysian, TV series known as *My Coffee Prince* produced by Cane Film Sdn. Bhd. had been adapted by Korean TV series which used to be famous TV series in Korean and around the world. A long time ago, Malaysian industry tried to take this opportunity by adapting this into Malaysian Music Industry by producing a K-Pop alike group such as 4U2C, Feminin and DeFam. Besides that, Malaysian movies such as 'Kimchi Untuk Awak' which hit up a few years ago are also unofficially helping Korean to being known more in Malaysia about their culture (Cho 2010; Lee et al. 2017). The latest development of exciting K-Drama fans was the presence of Korean actor, Kang Dong Won for the first time in Malaysia on April 3, 2018. The event was organized by IME Asia (Mschoiyu 2018).

#### K-POP

In the wake of the popularity of South Korean dramas and films, South Korean pop songs have consistently won popularity in Malaysia, with singers or groups, such as Jang Nara, Rain, BoA, BabyVox, and T.V.X.Q, coming into the spotlight in Malaysia (Cho 2010). It begins with 'Sorry Sorry' of Super Junior 2009 that sweeps all over the world including Malaysia. In 2012, the world was taken by storm when a South Korea singer, PSY, released a song called *Gangnam Style* which became an unexpected worldwide hit across the globe. K-Pop song usually contains a blend of Western and Asian elements, thus enabling them to attract a global audience. As the Korean Wave or otherwise known as Hallyu sweeps over us, we cannot deny the power and the influence of it has on fans and the larger part of society. In Malaysia, the rise of K-Pop had been going steady and spreading fast since early 2010. Some K-Pop fans in Malaysia, especially girls, are pretty hard core when it comes expressing to their love of Korean music. 'K-Pop is my life! I live and breathe K-Pop!' said a K-Pop fanatic (Lynn n.d.).

In fact, a KTO's survey showed that K-Pop has indeed overtaken K-Drama as the main purveyor of Hallyu in Malaysia and elsewhere. The survey revealed that, driven mainly by the Internet and

social media network, more than 53.3% of 12,085 fans from 102 countries chose K-Pop as the Hallyu aspect that interested them most. In 2011, Malaysia local radio channel, Astro Hitz with Korean Tourist Organization has published new programs K-pop Hitz Talent Show. According to the celebrity television website, manager of Astro Hitz, Sheong Cheng-wei says this programme gets higher rating and this further validates the public's acceptance and its tremendous demand (Ariffin 2013). There are many genres in Korean music. Dance hits and ballads are among the popular musical genres and they are fan-favourites. With a variety of musical styles (bubble gum pop, folk, rock, dance and others), people are spoilt for choice. This is one of the reasons why K-Pop is able to capture the attention of global audience including Malaysians because of their different and distinctive musical genres.

#### K-LANGUAGE

Nowadays, Korean music plays an important part in influencing the lifestyles of its fans. Some Malaysians have accepted and adopted the K-Pop culture into their lives. Little by little, Korean music had influenced Malaysians with their fashion styles, music, dance, food and ultimately, their language. In order to know what the lyrics of K-Pop song means in Korean, one has to understand the Korean language. Therefore, people attend Korean language classes to master the language. Amazingly, most K-Pop fans, are actually able to sing along with the song just memorising the pronunciations of the lyrics. Sometimes, the fans will just mumble the parts of the song that they know. Sounds silly, doesn't it but that is the extent the music has influenced fans of K-Pop songs. Other than that, it is very common in Malaysia, especially in schools or in the streets, that we can actually hear someone saying *Annyeong-haseyo* (hello) or *Sarang-haeyo* (I love you) in random conversations.

These Korean terms have become common because learning them is as easy as ABC. It is also can be learnt from various sites like [www.talktomeinkorean.com](http://www.talktomeinkorean.com) and would also recommend it to those who would love to learn much easier and faster, at no cost too. The scenario has even gone so far and wide in the country, even in schools and institutions in Malaysia like University Malaya (UM), the National University of Malaysia (UKM), Mara University of Technology (UiTM) and Tunku Abdul Rahman University (UTAR) are among those

offering Korean language courses in its syllabus. Furthermore, private language centres are also more popularly offering Korean language classes with the serious number of students more drastically willing to take up the language (Dayang 2019).

#### K-ENTERTAINMENT (VARIETY SHOW)

Aired in 2010, a genre of variety shows in urban environment, *Running Man* were became hit and the most popular variety show until now including in Malaysia. Since that, Malaysia was hit by storm of variety show and the most popular one is *Running Man*, *Return of Superman*, *Law of the Jungle* and so on. Malaysia favourite channel ONE is set to air top variety shows within one week of their Korean telecast. Viewers can get their daily dose of laughter with *Running Man*, *Law of the Jungle*, *Oh! My Baby*, *K-Pop Countdown (Inkigayo)*, and *Star King (S2)*, which will show every week night at 11pm local time. Effect of the K-Variety show had brought many event involving of Korean star in Malaysia. For example, South Korean celebrity Lee Kwang Soo of *Running Man* fame was recently in town for the 'Running Man Challenge Hydrated by 100Plus' event in partnership with TV channel ONE HD (Yeen 2016).

Malaysia TV also took another great opportunity in adapting Korean variety show into Malaysia's entertainment, from cooperation of C&J ENT with Malaysia entertainment, 'I Can See Your Voice' one of Korean variety show that hit high rating around the world had been remake and brought into Malaysian industry which is known as "I Can See Your Voice Malaysia" aired in 8TV. This variety shows getting hit in Malaysia and on their way to produce second season. There are a few variety shows that involved participate from Malaysian citizen such as Muhammad Khalid makes Malaysians proud as he describes our country in the most beautiful way in Korea's Popular Variety Show *Abnormal Submit* (Lee 2017).

#### K-FOOD

The demand for Korean food has doubled since last year, according to the research. Malaysians aged 26 to 35 contribute an average of 40 per cent of the total Korean food sale this year. Among the top five items commonly purchased by Malaysians are *Pepero*, a cookie stick dipped in chocolate, *Ramyun*, also known as instant noodles, *Kimchi*, a fermented Korean side dish made of vegetables, *Toppoki*, a soft

rice cake and Milkis, a popular carbonated beverage. Within recent years, the popularity of Korean cuisine has certainly been growing. It is not difficult to stumble upon various kinds of Korean restaurants as we walk along the streets of Kuala Lumpur. Whether it is a luxury fine dining experience, or a visit to a small café, many seem to adore the taste of spicy and sour dishes prepared with various kinds of ingredients. There isn't a need to travel all the way to the likes of Seoul and Busan to indulge in delicious Kimchi, Bulgogi and Bibimbap. Along with the surge in the popularity of Korean pop culture, Korean cuisine too has been emerging as one of the top cuisines, especially in Asia (Zuliantie 2016). Recently, Top 10 of Korean restaurants in Malaysia are Sae Ma Eul, DubuYo, Bon Ga Korean BBQ, Hanwoori, Kyochon, Onsemiro, Da On Fine Korean Cuisine, Bulgogi Brothers and Gangnam88 (Anon 2016).

#### FASHION AND K-BEAUTY

K-Pop fashion is another major area that has influenced fans. K-Pop singers always wear stylish outfits in their music videos, which is why some Malaysians can be seen following or copying the fashion styles of their favourite K-Pop singers by imitating the way they dressed. They tend to dress and accessories themselves like their favourite artistes and even styled their hair like theirs. In their opinion, dressing like a K-Pop artiste is a fashionable and cool thing to do and it makes them feel closer towards their favourite K-Pop singers or bands. Younger listeners tend to do this a lot. Meanwhile, among famous K-Beauty in Malaysia are Nature Republic, Innisfree, Peripera, Skinfood, Apieu and Etude House Sorabee (Yeng 2018).

#### K-PRODUCT AND K-BRAND

We could see that many Korean products, riding on the K-wave, have penetrated Malaysian market beyond Hyundai and Samsung. We can now find Korean food products on supermarket shelves and many different brands of cosmetic products in the market. Recently added to mix are the apparel brands SPAO and MIXXO, which were launched at Pavillion KL. Data obtained from MATRADE show that the total amount of goods that Malaysia currently imports from South Korea is 4.6% compared to 4.1% back in 2012, so there is a clear trend pointing to the increasing popularity of Korean consumer products among Malaysians (Jeong et al. 2020).

### THE CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS CONFLICTS BETWEEN KOREAN WAVE AND ISLAMIC VALUES

The characteristics of Korean culture as introduced by Korean films, dramas, pop performances in Malaysia have led to the efforts to discover the possibility of the Korean Wave going global, spreading to the Islamic world, and sustaining itself for a long term. Malaysia is a multi-racial nation and multi-cultural society where diverse ways of thought and modes of living coexist peacefully and in harmony (Zulkiple 2011; Ahmad Munawar et al. 2018). Such a country's acceptance of the Korean Wave signifies the possibility that the trend can go global. Malaysia's acceptance of the Korean Wave also means that it does not merely carry Korean nationalist trends, but also contains global universalism (Azhar et al. 2019). Malaysia is composed of diverse ethnic groups, such as Malays, Chinese, Indians, and others (Wan Kamal & Allawati 2012). The country is also a multi-cultural society (Wan Kamal & Wan Hamdi 2016a; 2016b). Islam is its state religion, but also permits the freedom of religions, accepting Buddhism and Hinduism. While Malay is the official language, English and Chinese are also spoken extensively (Wan Kamal et al. 2013; 2014). In Malaysia with such diversity, the Korean Wave has successfully come into play through TV dramas and films (Cho 2010).

Nevertheless, Korean Wave also do not excluded from being criticism from many country including Malaysia. A Malay-Muslim NGO called K-pop as Christian Conspiracy. Some even said that K-pop genre is an evolution of the Korean contemporary Christian music which started in the 1970s. Some of them also said K-pop is one of the Gospel strategy in expanding Christian religion and ideology. At a recent convention (2018) for the conservative youth group GAMIS in Malaysia, an activist fingered K-Pop as one of the sources of the corruption of young people's minds. Faizuddin Mohd Zai claimed that K-Pop promotes Hedonism among young people and interferes with their cognitive development. He even went so far as to claim that K-Pop fans will end up with low paying careers compared to the youth who are not following the subculture. He also claimed that the freedom and liberation expressed in K-Pop weakened discipline among Muslim youths by encouraging excessive individual freedom. He stated that 'We are damaged because we grow up in an environment that is

unhealthy and how do we expect our youth to be good when even the (entertainment) programs are immersed in Hedonism, like K-Pop here and there. It has made them apathetic and individualistic. They no longer care about current affairs and worse is Malay-Muslim parents themselves are encouraging this culture of hedonism.' He did not disclose the source of his information, but he so certain with his findings that he concluded that exposure to liberalism and pop culture was causing Muslim youth to become dysfunctional adults (Syed Jaymal 2018; Mohamad Zaidin 2014).

In 2015, Malaysia felt it is the end when there were video uploaded on social media showed that a Korean boy group having a skinship with their Muslims fans. The famous boy group called B1A4 came for their mini-concert and having their fan meeting became controversy when they hugged and kissed forehead with their Muslim fans. This controversy had brought criticism from the Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM) and Federal Territory Islamic Affair (JAWI). JAKIM took their action by sue three of Muslim girl and jailed them for 6 months due to inappropriate action. Meanwhile the organizer also had been sued because they can't handle this situation wisely. The organizer accept their fault and write a letter of forgiveness but they also wrote a statement stated that it is not a boy group fault since they asked for permission first with all of three Muslim girl before having some games with them in the stage.

Due to this incident, new set of guidelines drawn up by the Malaysian Islamic Development Department (JAKIM), that males and females are to be segregated during concerts, according to a new set of guidelines. In a section dealing with the organisation of entertainment events, JAKIM said programmes should not allow 'mixing of males and females in the audience.' The guidelines were endorsed during the 107th National Fatwa Committee Meeting held on February 10-11, 2015. It also specified that concert organisers should not allow 'mingling between men and women' during practises and rehearsals. Additional concert guidelines introduced were that there should be no ritualistic elements, signs or symbols contrary to Islamic teachings, either directly or indirectly; acts that are prohibited in Islam or vices, or things that can lead to such situations and circumstances that leads to chaos or disruption of public order (Avineshwaran 2018).

Not enough with that, Malaysian also getting choked by candlelight vigil for late Kim Jong Hyun was held at Kuala Lumpur. In the end of 2017, one of the Shinee members which is Kim Jong Hyun, 27 years old was found unconscious at a private hotel in Seoul on December 18. He confirmed committed suicide due to stress. After his death, over 100 fans of Kim, from various religion including Muslim fans, gathered near Dataran Merdeka for a candlelight vigil in memory of him. Participants were seen holding up candles, balloons, flowers and glow sticks as they mourned Kim. They cried and pray for Kim to successful rest in heaven as well. Again, this issue getting various criticism from netizen especially Muslim fans. Tan Sri Dato' Seri Dr. Haji Harussani bin Haji Zakaria the Mufti of Perak also concerned about this issue and stated that Muslims cannot join candlelight vigils for Kim Jong-hyun; it is Haram. He said such activity is against Islamic teachings and is akin to 'glorifying' Kim's death. Also in 2015, the National Fatwa Council declared that it is forbidden for Muslims to join a candlelight vigil, as the activity is deemed to be similar to the practices of the followers of other faiths (Arfa 2017).

Another incident in 2018, fans faint, injured at K-Pop group Wanna One event in Kuala Lumpur. Held at Stadium Negara, the event had attracted more than 5,000 strong crowd, filling the venue to the brim. While the K-Pop group was performing its opening set of two songs, fans in the packed rock zones were seen to be pushing one another to the front in an effort to get closer to the stage. As a result, some of them fainted due to the overcrowded environment, while some suffered from injuries because of all the pushing. Wanna One members were sent backstage while the security team and the paramedics tended to those affected. The remaining fans in the rock zones were asked by the event crew to move to the back but they seemed to refuse to budge. There was a 110-minute delay as the crew and security team attempted to restore order by asking the fans in the rock zones to sit lest the pushing happened again (Bibi Nurshuhada 2018).

## CONCLUSION

The way Malaysia has accepted the Korean Wave shows that this trend will continue for a long term. Although it is one of the countries that have joined the trend of the Korean Wave last in Southeast

Asia, Malaysia has accepted the trend faster and more aggressively. The Korea Foundation for Asian Cultural Exchange has conducted a survey of 1,543 people living in Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand from September 26 to October 14, 2005. According to the 'Report on the Consumer Trend and Policies in Southeast Asia Regarding Korean Cultural Products' prepared by the foundation, 44.3 percent of Malaysian respondents have watched 'Korean TV dramas,' 19.2 percent have seen 'Korean films,' and 4.7 percent have listened to 'Korean pop songs.' According to another survey of 500 Malaysians in Kuala Lumpur (50 percent of them are of Malay descent and the other 50 of non-Malay descent) conducted by Professor Ha Bongjoon from June 1 to 14, 2006, 59.7 percent have watched Korean TV dramas (over the past month), 57.3 percent have seen Korean films (over the past six months), and 34.2 percent (over the past month). Of these respondents, 70.3 percent are very satisfied with Korean dramas, 68.9 percent with Korean movies, and 56.7 percent with Korean pop songs (Cho 2010).

From a socio-cultural point of view, the Korean Wave or any foreign culture as a matter of fact, is of an unhealthy influence. Malaysians should retain their identities and not allow themselves to be too easily influenced by foreign culture, especially when a culture is not suitable with ours. For example, in the issue of 'the hug culture' promoted by Korean artists with their fans on stage received great criticism from the masses. Then there are Korean female artists who dress in skimpy outfits while performing, and that is definitely not suited to our culture.

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