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PHENOMENOGRAPHICAL COLLOQUIES OF THE HALLYU WAVE AMONG SELECTED STUDENTS OF TAYTAY SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL, PHILIPPINES

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Abstract

The invasion of the South Korean culture in the Philippines has spanned in almost three decades where the former started exporting their drama series that caught a wide public attention in Philippine TV on 1990's. The evolution since then was foreseen inevitable that in fact, from 1.0 (K-drama), 2.0 (K-pop), 3.0 (K-culture), it continues to evolve into 4.0 (K-technology and online games) and the developing and ongoing 5.0 (a possible pan-pacific cross over). In this study, the Hallyu wave was carefully delineated by the researchers thru extensive literature reviews and further affirmed by the colloquies of the selected senior High School participants using the Phenomenographical approach. A Focus-Group Discussion was conducted that anchored with the theories of Soft Power (Nye, 1990), Desire Fulfillment (Heathwood, 2014), Cultural Hybridization (Ryoo, 2009), and Cultural Intermediaries (Maguire and Matthews, 2012). From the results of the colloquies, the researchers were able to bracket and expound qualitatively the following analysis and synthesis of results based from the responses of the participants: struggle,

ingenuity of ways, influences, inexplicable satisfaction, fandom bonding, the irony of situation, inspired by idol and dream away. These results paralleled the theories used to support the study and as such, proved the continuing wave and fever of the Hallyu culture in the Philippine archipelago. In future studies, the researchers recommend that a western counterpart in the area of adaptation and appreciation could be explored, both quantitatively and qualitatively.

Keywords

Hallyu Wave, K-Drama, K-Pop, Fandom, Phenomenography, Soft Power

1. Introduction

1.1 Hallyu in the Philippines

Last April 28, 2018, one of the famous Korean pop boy group EXO held a one-day concert entitled Exo planet # 4: *'Elyxion'* in the Philippines. Many Phixos (Filipino Exo-1) and other Exo-L (Exo's fans) anticipated the said event from the day of concert's announcement to the last minute of EXO's stay in the country. It was reported that even on the day of the ticket selling, many of their avid followers came the day before the concert date and camped out in front of the ticket stores; hoping and expecting to buy tickets - but to no avail for a huge number of fans. Apparently, the number of tickets were not enough for the Phixos hoping to buy the tickets. The tickets were totally sold out considering that there conspicuously exists a large percentage of poor families in the country. Majority of the avid fans are still students in junior and senior high school levels and are financially unstable. Tickets from a typical Kpop concert ranges from Php 1,000 (19.04 USD as of January 2, 2019) to more than Php12,000 (228.46 USD). The painstaking prices of ticket take a lot of effort for the fans to save up for the concert and likewise, exert more conscious efforts to sacrifice for their idols. It was thereby proven by the common trends *'Hashtag'* whenever there will be a concert happening, the *'Hashtag Iponing'*. *'#Iponing'* simply means a millennial or Filipino fans' term for saving. The hashtag includes a thread of weird but usual saving tips for the fans, and based on the numbers of concert attendees, these tips apparently were insanely effective for the eager fans.

The aforementioned phenomenon is just one of the manifestations of the growing Korean cultural invasion in the Philippines. In fact, the Philippine's consumption of the (South) Korean Culture has been highly severe and noticeable in many ways. For one, acceptance and adoption of large numbers of Filipinos to (South) Korean Culture is highly transparent with the given

presence of numerous Korean inspired restaurants, Korean Restaurants (the so-called authentic ones), and for another, the commercialization of Korean Cosmetic Brands stores and products, Korean Actors and Idols' merchandise stores and even the stability of Korean Dramas and Movies aired in major Philippine Television networks such as GMA, ABS-CBN and TV5 are becoming more mainstreamed in the Philippine pop culture. With all these evidences, the Hallyu fever temperature is undeniably high and severe. Igno and Cenidoza (2016) even stated in their research *"Beyond the "Fad": Understanding Hallyu in the Philippines"*,

"Hallyu in the Philippines is not just a mere cultural phenomenon that will suddenly vanish. It shows the identity of the Filipinos, its history as well as its cultural weakness and strength. Korean wave might be popular, but still it cannot escape criticisms. They say that embracing Korean wave is setting aside Filipino material culture. However, that holds true for some but we can find actual benefits from it. Filipinos can learn a lot from Hallyu – the way Koreans promote themselves and believe in their culture that we can make our culture in the same level as others as well as it can further develop people to people relation. "

1.2 The Beginning of the Wave

The strong surge of Korean Wave started when South Korean President Kim Dae Jung (김대중) decided to develop an ultra-fast Internet connection and a network of Korean entertainers with a purpose of *'punching'* the country's soft power and introduce Korean culture to the world (Chow, 2015). It became successful in the late 1990's when Korea was able to export Korean Movies and Dramas to some Asian countries as pioneered in China and countries of Pacific Asia and up to the point of reaching larger Asian communities around the world (Jung, 2009). It also became a global sensation in the later days (Jin, 2012) and became a way for the transformation of the country from being so-called *"Third World backwater"* to *"First World powerhouse"* (Kim et al., 2007).

With all its contributions in the economic growth and popularity of South Korean culture and the presence of continuously increasing large fanbases, Hallyu is indeed a phenomenon.

Tracing its beginnings, the word Hallyu was first coined and used by the Chinese press in the late 1990's during the early golden age of Korean dramas and Korean movies in China, which

was originally written and pronounced as "*Hanliu*" (寒流) and "*Hanryu*" (한류) (Han and Lee, 2008). "*Hanliu*" has a two meaning in Chinese; (1) "*Hanliu* 韓流" a Korean Cultural wave and (2) "*Hanliu* 寒流" a (Cold) current or a "wintry wind that is blowing fiercely in mainland China" (Kim, 2015) and aside from Hanliu, Chinese also use "*Hanmi* 韓迷" to refer to the craze of Kpop culture (Kim, 2015). "韓" translates to "*Han*" (Korea) and "迷" refers to "*mi*" (Mania). Therefore, the characters refer to Korean or Kpop Mania (Kim, 2015). The word "*Mania*" or "*mi*", however when added to "*lu* 路 or 兒", the characters either mean "*Maze*" (迷路) or "*Missing Child*" (迷兒) presenting the "Wandering young Chinese people" (Kim, 2015) that are into and addicted to Korean Culture (Hence, Kpop). While "*Hanryu*" literally also means "Cold Wave" (Han and Lee, 2008). When written, "*Hallyu*" was still written as "*Hanryu*" (한류) (Han-ryu) due to writing and blocking rules of using Hangul but pronounced as Hall-yu.

1.3 Hallyu as a 'Full-Blown Culture'

Hallyu has become a '*full-blown culture*' on its own far from its condition way back mid-2000's where Hallyu started to surge out in Asia (Capili, 2015). It already evolved from Hallyu 1.0, to the foreseeing future of Hallyu 4.0 and 5.0. Hallyu eras that were differentiated and identified according to age, durability and coverage. Hallyu 1.0 is the oldest stage of Hallyu which refers to exported K-dramas where the strong presence of social media is not yet conformed. From Hallyu 1.0 (K-drama era) then to Hallyu 2.0 (K-pop music era) and Hallyu 3.0 (K-culture era) and finally to the newly rising Hallyu 4.0, undeniably, the surge happened so fast to Hallyu 4.0 in a short period of time compared to other cultural phenomenon in just less than three decades.

Since the day it was first used, it had already become a word of mouth to countless peoples of any age, gender, culture, nationality and religion and thus creating hybrid perspectives, beliefs and even culture to its reach, defining and performing cultural colonialism positively. Aside from it, Hallyu also seems to be something that makes the world of its coverage unites. In fact, Kim (2015) concluded that, Hallyu is something that draws "*One Asian Map*" that creates a social consensus, cultural solidarity and cultural homogeneity that ties East Asia into oneness through Kpop and Kdrama and out-focused the dominance of western culture and entertainment.

1.4 Indicators of Hallyu

Among all the indicators of Hallyu, Kpop and Kdrama are the most dominant and the drivers of the other growing coverage of Hallyu. "*KPop*" refers to Korean Music, and "*KDrama*" refers to the Korean Dramas or movies (Jung, 2009). These two have been a significant contributor of Hallyu's success in its oldest era, Hallyu 1.0 and until the latest era, Hallyu 4.0. In fact, according to Han and Lee (2008), as what mentioned above, "*Korean Wave*" stemmed from the wild popularity of Korean movies and K-pop music and the first thing that delivered Hallyu fever to China and other Asian countries - Kdrama.

Before, the Hallyu umbrella only covers Korean music, Dramas and Movies (Kim, 2007). But in the recent years, the meaning and coverage of this word evolved and expanded similarly to the surge of the Hallyu itself with the help of the presence of social media and internet. In fact, this already became a buzzword for almost everything about Korea (Edwards, 2006) that is being cultured to numerous Asian, American and European countries (Hallyu is also present in Africa but, not as large as its effect on the mentioned continents), showing the state of how borderless Korean Wave is.

Hallyu fever increased its own heat by the continuous competition of three major Channels in South Korea, KBS, MBC, and SBS (Han and Lee, 2008) that resulted to continuous development in the quality and range of viewers being covered, from Hallyu 1.0 to Hallyu 4.0 (Kim, 2015). Each player strives to catch the interest of majority of Korean and international viewers through the use of social media.

Considering social media as Hallyu's major tool of conquering globalization (Schulze, 2013; Jin and Yoon, 2016), and the fact that one third of the population is made up of millennials (born from 1980 to 2000s), they are undeniably the biggest fan base group which are referred to as the '*first digital natives*' (Pana news). The presence of social media and internet enabled the ease of fans' and non-fans' access to Kpop and Kdrama and engaged them of getting into Hallyu more. In fact, Capili (2012) stated that the fans are the most "active and passionate social media users".

Yet, despite the surge of Hallyu, there is still paucity in the literatures concerning this phenomenon (Noh, 2010). Contributory thus to the growing body of literature, this study aimed to provide colloquies of selected senior high school students—and as such, Phenomenographical analysis saturated the literatures to affirm and further understand the claimed "wave".

2. Methodology

This study used phenomenography as it mapped out qualitatively the different ways by which the respondents related their experiences and perceptions of the Hallyu phenomenon. The researchers referred to the study of Viladrich (n.d.) to be guided on the process of data collection, immersion of data, developing categories and finalizing the outcome space. Instead of an interview, Focus Group Discussion (FGD) was utilized by the researchers in order to generate responses based from the interactions of the participants on given set of questions. The questions were anchored from presupposed theoretical analyses that relate to the participants' direct experiences on how they were immersed in the world of K-pop. The following questions were asked:

- a. What usual efforts do you exert in order to patronize any form of K-pop entertainment (drama, music, dance, fashion, food and culture)?
- b. What is it in K-pop that you get too immersed with to the point of addiction to it?
- c. What changes have you personally observed in you that has been influenced by the Korean art and culture?
- d. Have your beliefs been recently changed as a result of being a K-pop fan? Explain How.
- e. How has your studies being affected by being a K-pop fan? Has it gotten better or worse? Justify.
- f. As a country, how do you see South Korea, the birthplace of K-pop?
- g. What are the influences of the Korean culture to you that further shaped and formed your identity in terms of habits, desire, fashion sense, music choices, social life and beliefs?
- h. How do you derive satisfaction from being a fan or follower of K-pop entertainment?
- i. Have you considered yourself as an instrument to propagate Korean culture? Why or why not?

The data collected were carefully transcribed and delineated into categories after bracketing the responses of the participants following Viladrich's Phenomenography conceptual framework:

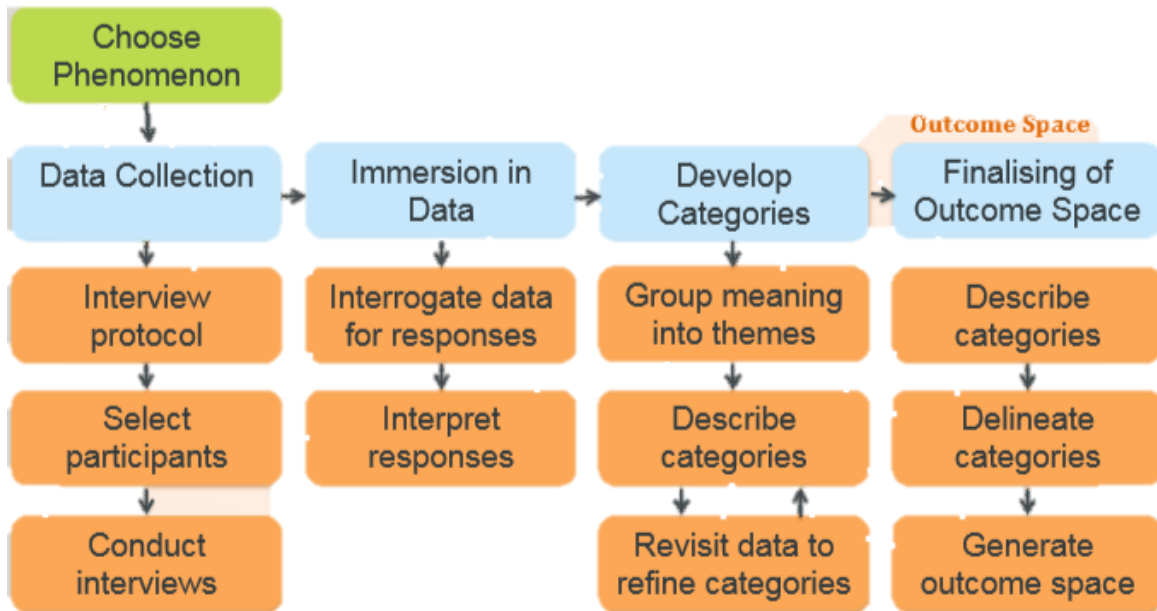


Figure 1: Viladrich's Phenomenography Conceptual Framework

2.1 Trustworthiness of the Study

In addressing trustworthiness of this qualitative research, strategies that creates Credibility, Dependability, Transferability, Confirmability and Reflexivity on the study was done.

In ensuring the credibility of the study, more than just engaging with the field of the participants, the researchers also did persistent observations of the possible participants' behavior and elements that could be useful in the study even before conducting the pre-survey. One of the researchers focused on getting into the field of K-pop fans and the other researcher focused on the K-drama fans, although both get involved in the said fields to ensure the richness of the data that will be collected.

In reviewing, coding, analyzing and interpreting the findings of the pre-survey and the actual survey, the researchers also did investor triangulation or analyst triangulation wherein both researchers were involved in the whole process of getting the result to avoid selective perception and interpretation.

In terms of transferability, thick description was also done to make meaningful interpretations even to an outsider in the field of Kpop and Kdrama.

The dependability and Confirmability of the study can also be seen in the study through audit trail wherein the researcher steps from the start and development of the topic to the analysis and coming up with the findings were described transparently.

2.2 Selection of Participants

The researchers conducted a pre-survey among the students of Taytay Senior High School to gather out those who consumes Hallyu or into Kpop and Kdrama. Out of the 528 grade eleven and grade twelve students from Accountancy, Business and Management track, Humanities and Social Sciences track and Technical-Vocational Livelihood Track (Academic year 2017-2018), the researchers sorted out the heaviest consumers to be the participants of the focus group discussion done for this study. Based on their availability and willingness to participate, the researchers came up with twelve highly involved participants.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Struggle

“The struggle is real”, notes one participant. Given that resources are limited, it requires special coping mechanism to satisfy the insatiable “K-pop” desire to be updated as a fan. Considering too that the Philippines has widely known incompetent internet connection, watching the latest uploads on Youtube and streaming on online sites test their patience through.

As students, the respondents also admitted that such time balancing acts were quite a struggle. Juggling between student duties and following through the life, career, love interest, updates and latest news about their idols, make their every little choice narrowed down on accommodating and favoring such desire nearest to the fulfilment of staying in touch with the celebrity they so idolize. One participant also revealed how she saves up from her meager allowance just to patronize certain merchandise that relates to her idol or buy the cheapest ticket on a forthcoming concert. It is with such amplified efforts that the students cope amid the given struggles of being a fan. In the end however, they admitted in unison that such “*crazy*” strains keep them away from any worse habit or vice, such as getting into addiction on illegal drugs, early relationship, fornication or premarital sex or worst, early pregnancy.

3.2 Ingenuity of Ways

The emergence of the social mediascape became a noteworthy element of the growth of Hallyu phenomenon as Korean entertainment industry strategically adopts social media to achieve global reach (Jin and Yoon, 2016), which in turn is highly favorable to local South Korean and international fans who also adopted social media in fan practices. Social mediascape also allowed

the younger generation fans to be more participative, open, vocal and updated due to the availability of Internet access in any country - Western or Asian.

However, the presence of continuously advancing technology triggered the fans to covet and technologically cope up with their idols online and thus paved the way for the existence of illegal downloading and viewing sites. However, digital Networks apprehended these activities by shutting down illegal downloading and viewing sites. After numerous shutdowns and closure of illegal viewing and downloading sites in the early 2000s, the promotion of the content by illegal sites still, did not stop (Tolou, 2014). In fact, more new wave of illegal sites are growing popular to the fans like DramaFire, Dramacool, DramaGo, Drama.net, KissAsian, Kseries, Mangotv and even Facebook, Share It (Video, files, music mobile and pc sharing application) sharing and Youtube have grown popular among the fans and served frequent source of the respondents' resourcefulness.

The limitedness of the resources - free and accessible resources, made the respondents find ways to gratify their desire to be updated with their idols and their shows, performances or personal lives. Daily hacking on technology online has been their open secret on their circles and these are supposed to be very usual and normal for them. Going to illegal sites to stream or play back the TV or drama series had been openly recommended on social media sites and fan groups that they randomly join in. The ingenuity of ways had been assisted by the language of the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) whereby the millennials and post-millennials easily adapt. One respondent even admitted that regardless of the ingenuity of ways they do, as long as they stay updated with their idols, it would be fine. *"We're resourceful at any form because we really wanted it. We are so into them"* said one of the respondents.

3.3 Influences

Cultural Globalization, today, in the modern digital age, has been relatively easy and stable for some, and it is generally viewed not a bad thing since it had been beneficial to numerous countries. Connection between various areas was no longer something impossible for an ordinary person. One of the beneficiaries of internet is South Korea which was able to boost its *'soft power'* (Nye, 1990; Kim, 2015) through the birth of Hallyu, mutualizing to the existence of Cultural Globalization.

Studies have shown that the significant and continuous popularity growth of Korean (hereafter, South Korean) culture (Jung, 2009); (Jin, 2012) and defined by Jin (2017) and Igno

and Cenidoza (2016) as a soaring cultural phenomenon. However, some researchers have argued that Hallyu is a form of *"Economic or Industrial Phenomenon"* rather than a cultural phenomenon. Kim Bok Rae (2015) discussed this in her study *"Past, Present and Future of Hallyu (Korean Wave)*. Wherein, she discussed that there are three theoretical analyses to explain the origins of Hallyu. When being based on the first theoretical analysis which is "Competence" (Hard power), Hallyu is due to Hard Power that South Korea has imposed to let globalization happen.

"...the Hallyu phenomenon is based on the economic success South Korea achieved through the rapid industrialization in the late 20th century. In this light, Hallyu is regarded as a symbol of Korean hard power/CT (cultural technology) which enabled Korean entrepreneurs/workers to make better cultural products. In fact, Hallyu as a field of culture business has benefited from "Pan-Asiatic cultural production network" forming through Korean firms' active marketing strategies and their partnership with local companies in Asia. In this regard, Hallyu is not cultural, but economic/industrial phenomenon."

However, Kim (2015) debunked and contradicted the first theory by her second theoretical analysis which is the *"Attractiveness"* (Soft Power) that presents a stronger position on the explanation of Hallyu, wherein, Kim (2015), stated that

"The "culture contents" in a magic pot named hallyu contain "Korean-styled development model" which has not only achieved democracy, despite its authoritarian economic growth, but also maintained dynamics of Korean civil society and traditional values (loyalty/filial piety) and so on."

The analysis based on soft power is more accepted since the effects of "intrinsic values" (Kim, 2015) in the Korean Dramas were more appreciated than the presence of Korean Entrepreneurs.

Additionally, still according to Kim (2015), Hallyu is not a "subaltern agent of modernity" but, rather a "main agent of East Asian popular culture" parallel to the Western-oriented popular culture. In fact, South Korea is announced as the Hollywood of the East.

This study in effect, also aimed to focus on this theoretical analysis (Hallyu as a cultural phenomenon) rather than the first theory 'Competence' (Hallyu as an industrial phenomenon). As an "attractive soft power", Hallyu can be summed up in the word *"Energy"* (Kim, 2015). Korean

Energy can be divided into three kinds: (1) Universal Energy (Gi 기), (2) Intrinsic Joy (Heung 흥) and (3) Care and Affection (Jeong 정). These three are more explainable together with the development of Hallyu's reach. In this, Hallyu as soft power can be seen on the responses of the participants of this study as the effects and influences of Hallyu to them are strongly more on cultural basis.

In this paper though, the observed influences among the respondents could be summarized into physical, linguistic, social, cultural and mental areas. During the FGD, the respondents openly share how they have been influenced by their K-pop idols, whether consciously or unconsciously. The physical influences are apparent on the choice of image or looks that they so copied from their celebrity idol, be it on the color or style of hair to fashion articles. Linguistically on the other hand, the Korean language has become adaptable to them including the writing and transcribing in Hangeul. They all learn it on their own by self-study. On casual conversations too, common Korean words like 'Oppa' (Older brother), 'Chingu' (Friend), 'Saranghaeyo' (I love you), 'Hwaiting' (Fighting), 'Ppali' (Faster), 'Maseumnida' (That is right), 'Kamsamhamnida' (Thank you), 'Jjinja' (Really), 'Araseo' (Okay) are uttered in between their conversations, mixing it to the Filipino and English vernaculars as if it is normally spoken by Filipinos.

On the other hand, the wide social aspect of the Korean influence has been incorporated economically in many greater metropolitan areas in the Philippines. The Korean cuisine has been served in kiosks, mall stalls and fused in restaurants like Samgyupsalamat (Samgyup + Salamat – Tagalog word for Thank you), a restaurant offering unlimited 'Samgyupsal' or grilled pork belly. There have been also Korean grocery stores, boutiques and stalls that became a common sight in most urban areas. On the other hand, the effects of watching K-drama series had been far and wide that it already created a market niche among Filipino patrons. Interestingly too, the respondents related that in many aspects, the awareness of the Korean culture has become infused on their consciousness. Their way of thinking, norms, cultural preferences have been highly influenced by what they watch. One participant even boldly said "*I learned how to make cute antics to express my feelings towards the opposite sex*". Another participant also admitted that the effect of watching Kdrama to her is to the extent that the happenings and emotions in the certain episode determine her moods too and she copies the main character's traits.

Consumption of Hallyu has also made these fans culturally hybrids through the adapted influences. Wherein according to Awanthropology (2011), they adopt and blend their native and further acquired cultures through the Cultural Imperialism like Hallyu.

3.4 Inexplicable Satisfaction

The reason why fans are so into Kpop and Kdrama despite of the cultural and language differences is what researchers around the world are trying to answer yet most of the results shows only because the fans want to and they are happy with getting into it. The researchers also included this question in the FGD. For the respondents, being in a K-pop fandom serves as a “*happy pill*” for them. “*Happy pill*” is like a dose of happiness taken in the form of seeing their idols sing, ramp, dance, act and interacting with them in any form of media and where they viciously follow.

There is an intrinsic motivation that drives the fans and in such, there is an inexplicable gratification that dwells within that only them could understand no matter how they try to explain and reach it out to other people especially the non-fans. The intrinsic gratification and satisfaction was explained by Heathwood (2015) in the Desire Fulfillment theory. Fans continue to desire consuming Kdrama and Kpop because it gives them happiness, relaxation and other personal benefits. According to Heathwood (2015), what is good for people is getting what they want or fulfilling the desires. And the stronger the desire, the more it will be satisfying and the more it satisfies them, the more they desire for it and it is given that the level of satisfaction they receive varies and so the strength of their desires.

3.5 Fandom Bond

In a study conducted by Catherine Deen, PhD (2014), she found out that fans form fanclubs for 3 main purposes: (1) to support the artist, (2) to market the artist and (3) to unify (Filipino) fans. Out of these three, according to fans, socialization or unity is the very main reason why they join fanclubs. One respondent even related that getting in the fandom is like living in another dimension where they usually create their “own world” that only fellow “K-poppers” could understand. This, according to Deen (2014), makes them feel socially handicapped in the general society. Thus, being a member of a fanclub gives them a therapeutic effect of having a sense of affinity and belongingness. It also allows them to experience freedom in expressing subculture habitudes they created within the fandom. Fans do not necessarily meet up physically, except during scheduled fan meet-ups during certain idols’ special days where they interact and

celebrate together, but they feel *'bonded'* to each other virtually when the topic pertains to their idol. There is, in fact, a sense of recognition and emotional depth when they meet at a concert or show, given that they do not know each other's names. The bond is immediately accommodated once the identification was detected as being a fellow fan. Unity follows that supersedes the need to know about each other in a personal way. It is usually enough that their common ground is their idol—what he/she eats, drinks, wears, dances, sings, does or performs. Another respondent even told that if a certain leader of a fan group initiates a “fan project” (in lieu of the upcoming show or concert of their idol), other fans immediately respond to such initiative to the point of willingly spending or splurging for the said “fan project”. This was confirmed by another respondent who said that they tend to build friendships online or in person with their fellow fans when they meet up during fan signing events or concerts or even when they just had a simple interaction online because of their idols.

3.6 The Irony of the Situation

Related still with the Desire-Fulfilment theory, the theory suggests that if one so desires, one fulfils even if the costs and stakes are high. Considering the distance of South Korea and the Philippines, fans' hearts grow fonder towards their idols that they long more to check on their celebrity idols through online news and it in fact ironically excites and strengthens their affection for their idols. One respondent stated that *“Here in the Philippines, we do have local actors and it is just easy to see them but Kpop idols are not. Yes, there is something with the distance. It excites us plus 'K' is obviously better”*. The amount of efforts that fans exert are often insurmountable; like camping overnight just to secure tickets from choice seats. Language is not even a barrier, in fact for them, the foreign sound is like music to their ears whether they understand the semantics or not. Admittedly too, respondents agree that fans tend to go too far in terms of copying their idol's hair color, fashion sense and looks even if it does not suit them.

3.7 Inspired By Idol

One remarkable statement of the respondents was the reality of being academically good and achiever in class. Where did the inspiration come from? It was from the message of their celebrity idols during interviews and press conference, urging their fans to *“study hard”*, *“always eat on time”*, *“dream big”*. Kpop boy group BTS (BangTan Sonyeondan) even included a message *“Now stop watching and study, your parents and bosses hate me”* for the fans in their song Pied Piper from their album *“Love Yourself 'Her'”*. These messages make the fans more

driven to achieve better in life. It has become more personal than their parents' or friends' advice. It is like a heartfelt message addressed personally to them when they see their celebrity on screen and spilling the message. Many fans' posts on Facebook and tweets on Twitter can be seen sharing how their idols changed their lives.

3.8 Dream Away

Getting immersed with the life, character portrayal and career of their celebrity idols make the student-respondents to dream away along with their fantasies and delusional states. Day dreaming is very common to them as they professed that the love life or boyfriend/girlfriend that they desire would be like the character portrayed by their idols in a drama series or movies. This is no longer new for it is shared by all fandoms including westerns. Capili (2015) quoted in his study Samantha Barbas' line in her book —Fans, Stars and the Cult of Celebrity (2001):

“(Fans) They were so infatuated, critics claimed, that they spent hours dreaming about their stars. Perhaps more than anything, they seemed to confuse fantasy and reality.”

Fans creates a special attachment to their idols. They serve as an inspiration but they can also be the cause of their disappointments, depression and they even drive the day's mood (Capili, 2015).

4. Conclusion

This study is limited to the experiences of the respondents as both Hallyu fans and consumers as it may coincide with the other patrons of the South Korean culture in the Philippines or abroad. The selected respondents were in Senior High School at the time of the FGD and were enrolled in the academic tracks of HUMSS (Humanities and Social Sciences) and ABM (Accountancy, Business and Management). Their shared responses could not be summed as absolute reflections of the phenomenon but could be used as points of reference deemed valuable to the development of the Hallyu influences in the Philippines and unto the consciousness of the Filipino youth.

Hence; it could be said that the Hallyu phenomenon has reached far and wide in the Philippines in nearly two decades since “Winter Sonata” (2002) release. Foreseeing its evolution to Hallyu 4.0 on 2018 already made a big impact on the random lives of the Filipinos. Through the years, minus political relations, it's like the Philippines has become South Korea's biggest fan.

Patronizing of the Korean culture and arts has escalated high that Filipinos have been taken by the Hallyu waves be it in entertainment, fashion, food, technology and culture. The Hallyu phenomenon has penetrated and targeted specifically the consciousness of the Filipino adolescents who have better access of the media, social media and technology. In this study in fact, the researchers were able to highlight the growing impact of the Korean influence in the ordinary lives of selected Senior High School students at Taytay Senior High School. Through phenomenography, the researchers were able to relate about the direct experiences of the participants on how much of their lives have been influenced by the Hallyu phenomenon. The following ideal types were underscored by the researchers based from the results of the FGD and literature review:

- a. The struggle is apparent on being a K-pop fan due to the limitedness of resources and being an ordinary student, but it is how they make both ends meet that makes the existence real as a fan. Participants noted the sacrifices they usually make in conjunction with the intrinsic desire to accommodate the narrowed down choices to follow their celebrity idols. This is in reference to the theory of desire-fulfillment theory (Heathwood, 2015).
- b. The fulfillment of the strong desire to connect with their celebrity idols, the participants admitted that they find hundreds of ways to be updated with the life and career of their K-idols. How they save up from the meager allowance, download episodes despite very incompetent internet connection, visit illegal online sites or outsource from friends or fellow-poppers were some of the ingenious ways adapted by the participants.
- c. The Korean influence according to the participants has hit them even through their subconscious state such that even in the course of daily tasks as student, private citizen or family member, and so as their natural state of expressions both in oral or in deeds.
- d. The attractiveness of the Hallyu culture has predated the Philippine culture by using the soft power strategy that has powerfully invaded pop culture, mass media and social media in the Philippines for almost three decades now. Soft Power has been explained as the fluid entry of cultural elements such as drama series, music and dance crazes, food, fashion and accessories, technology and beauty products including skin care and aesthetic surgery procedures through Korean culture.

- e. Be it film, drama series, K-pop music, dance, fashion, style, accessories, Korean food, language, aesthetic surgery and beauty care, the Korean influence has fused with the Philippine culture and these were highly observed by the participants. They in fact agreed that the fusion has become inevitable due to the strong commitment of the Philippine fandom to the elements of Korean culture and its celebrities. This was further expounded by cultural hybridization. The Korean influence according to the participants has hit them even through their subconscious state such that even in the course of daily tasks as student, private citizen or family member, their state of thinking which make them cultural hybrids (Ryoo, 2009) and they even participate in hallyu's growth by being Cultural intermediaries (Maguire and Matthews, 2012).

5. Future Direction of the Study

This study exhausted qualitatively the colloquies of selected senior high school students in Taytay Senior High School using Phenomenographical approach. It was able to utilize the theories of Soft Power, Desire Fulfilment, Cultural Hybridization and Cultural Intermediaries. The study saturated the responses of the participants and took it as one of the Asian's perspective on the Hallyu fever and wave. However in a grander scheme of things, the researchers wish to read more literatures on the adaptation and appreciation of western counterparts to understand more the nature of the Hallyu phenomenon.

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