

# The Influence of Hallyu Culture on Chinese Youth Group

**Kailui Chen**

Shenzhen Senior High School,  
Shenzhen, Guangdong, China

angelli@pattison-edu.com

## Abstract:

The Hallyu culture, a strategic cultural export initiative by the South Korean government during its economic transition, has successfully built the country's soft power through the innovation and global dissemination of diverse cultural elements, forming a global fan base that spans various ages and cultural backgrounds. Because of the appearance of this culture, there are different impacts on Chinese youth. This paper analyzes the influence of Hallyu culture on Chinese youth. Through the analysis of the transmission path of Hallyu culture, this paper reveals the global value of cultural diversity and the huge economic potential of the cultural industry and emphasizes the key role of new media in cultural communication. The success of Hallyu also highlights the influence of youth in shaping cultural trends and the strategic importance of cultural soft power on the international stage. This paper argues that under the influence of Hallyu culture, Chinese adolescents have changed their psychology, behavior, and core values. This change is two-sided, and certain measures need to be taken to strengthen the positive effects and eliminate the negative ones.

**Keywords:** Hallyu culture; influence; Chinese youth group

## 1. Introduction

Hallyu culture, also known as Korean pop culture, has been widely disseminated among Chinese teenagers since the late 1990s and has had a significant impact on the values, behavioral habits, and psychological states of young people. The term "Hallyu" originally emerged from the world of Go (a board game) and was later used to describe the influence of Korean culture in various regions around the world. Korean pop culture is a phenomenon of cross-cultural communication, the study of Hallyu helps to under-

stand how different cultures influence and integrate in the context of globalization and helps to reveal the complexity of cultural globalization. The success of Hallyu provides a reference to the development of the cultural industry in other countries. What's more, the dissemination of Hallyu is closely related to the development of new media technology, which provides insight into the role of new media in cultural dissemination. In addition, the global popularity of Hallyu, especially its positive impact on the racial identity of Asians, helps to understand racial relations

and cultural identity in the context of globalization. The impact of Hallyu culture on Chinese teenagers is a multifaceted topic that holds significant value for analysis. First and foremost, as a concentrated expression of South Korea's cultural industry, Hallyu is not only a social and cultural phenomenon but also plays an important role in shaping South Korea's national cultural soft power [1]. Also, the impact of Hallyu culture on Chinese teenagers is comprehensive, changing their lifestyles and consumption habits, and profoundly affecting cultural identity and value concepts. At the same time, the success of the Hallyu culture also provides important insights and references for the development of China's cultural industry. Therefore, this paper will mainly talk about the impact of Hallyu culture on the Chinese youth demographic.

## 2. The Impact of Hallyu Culture

In the early twenty-first century, Korean pop culture became a global sensation. Various forms of culture, including TV shows, films, music, and animation, have increasingly made inroads into Western cultural markets, such as North America and Europe. While the influence of Western culture, especially Hollywood movies, continues in non-Western cultural markets, the Korean cultural industry has expanded the export of its locally created pop culture to various parts of the world. Social media, both social networking sites (SNS, such as Facebook) and user-generated content (UGC, such as YouTube), have played a significant role as new platforms for the dissemination of Korean culture.

### 2.1 Positive Impact of Hallyu Culture

First of all, Korean pop culture promotes cultural exchange by sharing Korean traditions, language, and lifestyle with the world, fostering a better understanding and appreciation of Korean culture. The success of Hallyu has increased cultural confidence in South Korea and globally, becoming an important force in promoting cultural diversity and international friendly relations.

Then, the popularity of Hallyu has boosted the South Korean economy through increased exports of cultural products, tourism, and the growth of related industries such as cosmetics and fashion. From 2017 to 2021, a series of Korean industries' exports brought economic benefits that amounted to 37 trillion won. Although South Korea's economic growth slowed to 1.4% in 2023, the lowest level in three years, affected by factors such as declining exports and tightening global monetary policy, the development of Hallyu culture still shows its resilience and influence globally. The positive contribution to South Korea's economy is obvious.

What's more, as a global cultural phenomenon, Hallyu culture has not only enhanced South Korea's international image and economic growth but also profoundly influenced teenagers in Asia and around the world especially in China through its rich cultural products and positive values. It has promoted cultural exchange and integration, stimulated innovation in the cultural industry, boosted tourism, strengthened international cooperation, and contributed to the diversification of social culture.

### 2.2 Negative Impact of Hallyu Culture

Although the positive aspect is very outstanding, there is also a negative side of the quo. To begin with, there is a concern about the over-commercialization of Hallyu culture, which might lead to a saturation of the market and a lack of innovation. Secondly, there is a worry about the "bubble", where the focus on certain K-pop stars and groups can create an insular environment that may not be sustainable in the long term. This trend could limit the diversity of the cultural landscape and potentially alienate those who do not identify with the mainstream trends, especially for the youth.

In contemporary society, the teenager's inner heart is very complicated and sensitive. With the development and success of Korean pop culture, the youth may discover this popular culture through their friends or social media. In this easily dominated by mainstream ideology, it is easy for teenagers to fall into the closed loop thinking that following the trend is a brilliant idea, so they cannot realize what they want. Thus, it is easy to lack spiritual support, resulting in the so-called butterfly effect.

## 3. The Specific Impact of Hallyu Culture on Teenagers

In the context of teenagers, Hallyu has been found to influence their perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors. For instance, a study focusing on Malaysian young females revealed that K-pop was the most popular Hallyu cultural product, which subsequently influenced their attitudes and behaviors toward other Hallyu products [1]. The internet and social media have played a crucial role in the dissemination of Hallyu culture, shaping the thoughts and attitudes of young females.

Moreover, Hallyu has been recognized as a form of soft power for South Korea, contributing significantly to its economy and international competitiveness. The phenomenon has also been linked to an increase in the learning of the Korean language and a growing interest in Korean studies among teenagers and young adults, not only in Asia but also in Europe and the Americas [2].

### 3.1 Psychology

It has fostered a sense of cultural identity and imitation among adolescents worldwide, who have embraced and mimicked South Korea's fashion and lifestyle. Through social media, it has created a transnational fan community, enhancing cultural affinity and social engagement. The Korean Wave has also stimulated interest in learning the Korean language and exploring Korean culture, influencing teenagers' consumption patterns and lifestyle choices [3].

Moreover, it has profoundly affected teenagers' personal lives, perceptions of travel, and identity formation, serving as a vital component of cultural diversity and the development of a globalized perspective among the youth [4-6]. Although there are concerns about cultural homogenization, the Korean Wave has undoubtedly provided a new way for teenagers to experience culture and express themselves.

### 3.2 Behavior

It has driven a pattern of cultural consumption, with a surge in the popularity of Korean dramas, pop music, fashion, and beauty products [7]. This trend extends beyond material consumption to an appreciation for Korean cultural elements. Additionally, the Korean Wave has spurred a growing interest in learning the Korean language to better understand the content of Korean entertainment [8].

Based on this, social media behavior among Chinese youth has also been influenced, with increased participation in fan communities and online discussions. Aesthetics and fashion sense have been significantly shaped by Korean trends, with many teenagers emulating the styles and makeup look of Korean celebrities. The values and lifestyles portrayed in Hallyu culture, such as an emphasis on personal expression and the pursuit of dreams, may also affect the value systems and behavioral patterns of Chinese teenagers.

Furthermore, Hallyu culture could influence the teenagers' elections such as some travel choices. It may also inspire educational aspirations, with some considering studying in South Korea to experience its higher education system. Identity formation is another area affected by the Korean Wave, as some teenagers use their engagement with Hallyu culture to express their individuality and independence.

### 3.3 The Core Value

First of all, the fashion elements and aesthetic standards in Korean culture have influenced the dressing style, lifestyle, and even aesthetic orientation of young people,

possibly leading them to pursue beauty according to the standards advocated by Korean culture. Secondly, the life attitudes and value concepts conveyed in Korean culture, such as individualism and consumerism, may affect the value orientation of young people, prompting them to form value orientations different from traditional culture. Thus, a trend of values prevails among young people. Last but not least, the popularity of Korean culture may also affect young people's sense of identification with their own culture. Some young people may be more inclined to accept and appreciate Korean culture, while their interest in their own culture may relatively decrease.

In summary, the Korean Wave has a complex and profound impact on the core values of Chinese youth. This requires the community to guide and utilize it with a more open and rational attitude to promote the healthy growth of young people and the development of local culture [9].

## 4. Revelation

### 4.1 Teenager

Hallyu provides a wealth of inspiration to Chinese teenagers, influencing them in numerous ways beyond the realm of entertainment. Firstly, the stories of Korean artists which are achieved through relentless effort and perseverance, inspire Chinese teenagers to pursue their dreams and work to achieve them in the future. Then, the spirit of teamwork evident in K-pop groups, with their cooperation and mutual support, highlights the importance of collaboration in social life to guide teenagers in knowing how powerful the corporation is. Additionally, hallyu's innovative approach in the cultural industry inspires a drive for creativity and breakthroughs in various fields. Also, the emphasis on knowledge and skills in hallyu encouraged teenagers to develop a habit of lifelong learning and to continuously improve themselves.

What's more, hallyu's fusion of Eastern and western elements teaches teenagers to appreciate and absorb the advantages of a variety of cultures in the context of globalization. Despite its popularity in China, Hallyu also serves as a reminder for Chinese youth to recognize the unique value of Chinese traditions.

Based on the above effects, first of all, schools and families should strengthen teenagers' understanding of different cultures and their ability to think critically, helping them establish correct values and aesthetic views. Then, encourage teenagers to be exposed to and understand a variety of cultures to promote cultural diversity and prevent the excessive influence of a single culture on teenagers. What's more, the youth in China could participate in various cultural activities and experience different cultural

forms, strengthening their sense of cultural participation and belonging. Furthermore, teenagers should strengthen international cultural exchanges to be exposed to and understand the cultures of different countries and regions, promoting cultural mutual learning and understanding. Through these measures, the one-sided impact of Hallyu culture on teenagers can be improved to a certain extent, promoting their comprehensive and healthy growth.

## 4.2 The World

The impact of the Korean Wave on teenagers offers profound insights into global cultural development: It highlights the global value of cultural diversity and fosters cross-border cultural exchange and understanding; reveals the immense economic potential of the cultural industry and the pivotal role of new media in cultural dissemination. The success of the Korean Wave also underscores the influence of the youth in shaping cultural trends and the strategic importance of cultural soft power on the international stage. Moreover, it emphasizes the importance of maintaining cultural authenticity amidst globalization and the positive guidance that cultural products can provide to the younger generation. Additionally, the Korean Wave demonstrates opportunities for cross-cultural collaboration and the indispensable policy support and investment from governments in promoting cultural prosperity. These insights guide how global cultural products can communicate more effectively with young audiences while fostering harmonious coexistence and mutual prosperity among different cultures.

## 5. Conclusions

With the global spread of Hallyu, Korean culture's international influence has significantly increased, becoming an essential part of South Korea's soft power. In addition, the popularity of Hallyu has spurred rapid development in South Korea's cultural industries, including film, music, television dramas, fashion, beauty, and tourism. Moreover, Hallyu has established an effective cultural export model, including star training, content production, and marketing strategies, offering a reference for the cultural industry development of other countries. Hallyu culture has continuously absorbed and integrated different cultural elements in its development, demonstrating the diversity and inclusiveness of culture as well.

The impact of the Korean Wave on teenagers offers valuable insights into the culture itself, emphasizing the strategic importance of cultural soft power, the necessity for continuous content innovation, and the effective blending of local and global trends. It underscores the power of the fan economy and the importance of cultivating

cultural confidence. It also highlights the dual nature of cross-cultural communication as both an opportunity and a challenge, the social responsibilities inherent in cultural production, and the critical role of technology and social media in cultural dissemination. Finally, it demonstrates the need for sustained investment and support in cultural industries, providing a roadmap for other cultures seeking to expand their global reach and influence.

In addition, for example, the image of Hallyu idols may affect youth's perception of their appearance, and may even trigger some negative psychological cognition, such as dissatisfaction and anxiety about their own body. This is one of the examples of the elements that may affect the psychological state of youth. Also, the global popularity of Hallyu culture has enhanced the cultural confidence in the ethnic identity of Asian communities. Last but not least, South Korea has created exquisitely crafted stars who have become fashion icons, imitated and pursued by Chinese youth.

## References

- [1] Othman S N. The globalization of Hallyu phenomenon: Impact on Malaysian young female's attitude and behavior. *Trends in Undergraduate Research*, 2021, 4(2): h29-38.
- [2] Cheon S Y. Review of the book *The Global Impact of South Korean Popular Culture: Hallyu Unbound* ed. by Valentina Marinescu. *Korean Studies*, 2015, 39: 113-114.
- [3] Roslan M A A, Nasharuddin N A, Murad M A A. The impact of Hallyu globalization on attitudes and behavior of Malaysians. *E-Journal of Media and Society (E-Joms)*, 2024, 7(3): 121-145.
- [4] Yap L K. *Hallyu in the Philippines: Stories of belongingness within Kpop stan culture*, 2019.
- [5] Titania D D M, Haryanto J O. A study of Korean drama and Indonesian teenager's perception of images of South Korea as a potential tourist destination. *Manajemen dan Bisnis*, 2022, 21(1): 13-24.
- [6] Roy R K. Fandom, mediated culture, and reimagining identity: Exploring the Hallyu wave in South Asia. *Korean Wave in South Asia: Transcultural Flow, Fandom and Identity*. Singapore: Springer Nature Singapore, 2022: 59-78.
- [7] Sun L, Jun J W. Effects of Hallyu on Chinese consumers: a focus on remote acculturation. *Sustainability*, 2022, 14(5): 3018.
- [8] Cicchelli V, Octobre S, Cicchelli V, et al. Introduction: Hallyu is an alternative aestheticized global pop culture. *The Sociology of Hallyu Pop Culture: Surfing the Korean Wave*, 2021: 1-36.
- [9] Kulich S J. Getting the big picture on Chinese values: Developing approaches to study the shifting core of Chinese culture. *Intercultural Communication Studies*, 2008, 17(2): 15-30.