

Hallyu Wave as a Tool of Soft Power Utilized by South Korea to Spread Cultural and Economic Influence to East Asia

Achini Gunawardena¹

Abstract

This study examines the influential and effective spreading out of Hallyu wave in East Asian region, as one of the main tools of soft power that has been utilized by South Korea to spread cultural awareness and gain economic benefits for their economy. This research also attempts to identify whether Korean wave effectively work as a soft power tool for South Korea. The Hallyu wave essentially started to spread throughout the East Asian region with Korean television dramas and Korean pop music (K-pop). Along with expansion of those fields in East Asia, local industries in the region adopt to several other cultural forms, such as animation, digital games, Korean cuisine, and etc. These main elements of this wave have expand throughout the world in the past few decades at a rapid speed. The main objectives of this study are to examine how Hallyu wave has influenced South Korean's cultural aspects to spread in East Asia and to determine whether Hallyu is an effective soft power tool for the growth of economy of South Korea by its spread into East Asia. This research analyzes how each part of East Asia has seen Hallyu and how much influence it has in this region. The final analysis of this study examines whether South Korea is successful in spreading their culture in East Asia and if this soft power approach will succeed in the long run. Mixed method is the methodology that has been used when conducting this research to provide a better understanding of the research problem. Qualitative data needed for the cultural aspect and quantitative data needed for the economic aspect of the study are gathered from secondary sources such as books, journal article, newspaper articles, research papers, articles in websites, and public speeches given by political leaders. The data gather are analyzed through content analysis methods and hypothesis testing method. This study concludes with an explanation that there is certainly a presence of Hallyu wave in East Asian region as well as worldwide, but only time will tell whether it will be effective in future means of soft power.

Keywords: *Hallyu Wave, Korean Wave, South Korea, Soft power, East Asia*

¹ BA Honours in International Studies, University of Kelaniya
achiniusm888@gmail.com