

THE HALLYU OR KOREAN WAVE AND ITS INFLUENCE ON YOUTH IN KERALA

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Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Master of Arts
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DECLARATION

I, **PRIYANKA JOSEPH**, do hereby declare that the Dissertation Titled **THE HALLYU OR KOREAN WAVE AND ITS INFLUENCE ON YOUTH IN KERALA** is based on the original work carried out by me and submitted to the University of Kerala during the year 2022-2024 towards partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Arts Degree Examination in Sociology. It has not been submitted for the award of any degree, diploma, fellowship or other similar title of recognition before any University or anywhere else.

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CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

This is to certify that this dissertation entitled **THE HALLYU OR KOREAN WAVE AND ITS INFLUENCE ON YOUTH IN KERALA** is a record of genuine work done by **MS. PRIYANKA JOSEPH**, fourth semester, Master of Sociology student of this college under my supervision and guidance and that it is hereby approved for submission.

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MA SOCIOLOGY

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the influence of Hallyu, or the Korean Wave, on the youth of Kerala, with a specific focus on its impact across several cultural dimensions, including music, cuisine, beauty standards, fashion, and mental well-being. By exploring the intersection of Korean and traditional Indian cultures, the study aims to offer an understanding of how young people in Kerala navigate and reconcile these diverse cultural influences in their daily lives.

The research employs a **sequential explanatory mixed-method approach**, beginning with a quantitative analysis of survey data from 97 respondents aged 15-24. This quantitative phase is complemented by qualitative insights derived from in-depth case studies with five participants, which provide a richer, more detailed exploration of individual experiences with Hallyu.

The findings reveal a high level of engagement with Hallyu content among the youth of Kerala, with significant shifts noted in their musical preferences, dietary habits, and beauty routines. Many respondents reported integrating Korean cultural elements into their daily lives, demonstrating the deep cultural penetration of the Korean Wave in Kerala.

The study also explores the psychological impact of Hallyu on Kerala's youth. Participants offered mixed perspectives on its effects on their mental health and character development. On one hand, several respondents highlighted positive outcomes, such as enhanced global awareness, a broader sense of cultural empathy, and greater opportunities for self-expression. On the other hand, some expressed concerns about the potential for obsession with Korean pop culture, which could result in cultural dissonance and feelings of disconnection from their own heritage.

In addition to providing a comprehensive analysis of current trends, the research looks toward the future, discussing the possible global trajectory of Hallyu. Respondents conveyed optimism about the continued growth and global spread of Korean culture, believing that its influence will only expand in the coming years. This discussion contributes to broader conversations on cultural globalization, emphasizing the dynamic interplay between global cultural trends and local traditions in the digital age.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Hallyu is a Chinese term that means the Korean Wave. It refers to the phenomenal growth of Korean popular culture encompassing everything from music, movies, drama, and fashion, to online games and Korean cuisine (Gangharia & Kanozia, 2020). South Korea is one of the only countries in the world, with a dedicated goal to become the world's leading exporter of popular culture. It is a way for Korea to develop its "soft power". Soft power is a popular term coined in 1990 by Harvard political scientist Joseph Nye. It refers to the intangible power a country wields through its image, rather than through hard force like economic and military power (Nye, 2004).

Hallyu first hit the shores of China and Japan, later the Southeast Asian countries and then worldwide. With such growing interest from around the world, the number of tourists and international students who visit Korea has increased significantly. The phases of the Korean wave in India can be divided into two. The first is referred to as the Korean economic wave. It came in India with the liberalization of the Indian market at the beginning of the 1990s. There was a growing association with Korean companies like Hyundai, LG, Daewoo, and Samsung. In the following years, these companies further expanded and diversified the range of their products and became household names in India. The second phase is termed as Korean cultural wave. In India, the rise of Hallyu or the Korean Wave has been meteoric, with Indians being a huge fan base of K-pop music and K-dramas. The emergence of Hallyu in India has been marked by a growing fascination with South Korean pop culture, driven primarily by the popularity of Korean dramas and K-pop. Initial exposure began with Korean dramas like "Boys Over Flowers" and "Descendants of the Sun," which gained a significant following through streaming platforms. The global success of K-pop groups such as BTS, BLACKPINK, and EXO fuelled this interest, as their music and performances reached Indian audiences via social media and streaming services. According to a report by Facebook Analytics, there are over 15 million consumers of Korean cultural products such as K-pop music and K-dramas in India, and the number is growing.

The Hallyu cultural phenomenon has not just captivated audiences across Asia but also gained significant attention globally, especially in regions like North America, Europe, and the Middle

East (Kim, 2018). The influence of Hallyu extends beyond entertainment, impacting various sectors such as tourism, with fans visiting South Korea to experience the culture firsthand, and education, with an increasing number of students learning the Korean language and studying Korean culture. The rise of social media and digital platforms has further amplified Hallyu's reach, enabling real-time interaction between global fans and Korean artists, thereby creating a highly engaged and passionate fanbase. Moreover, the commercial success of Hallyu has led to significant economic benefits for South Korea, with the export of cultural products contributing to the country's GDP and creating numerous business opportunities both domestically and internationally. This cultural export has also influenced global trends, with Korean fashion, beauty products, and even food gaining popularity around the world. Cultural exchange has been further supported by Korean cultural festivals and events held in India, as well as increased media coverage of Korean entertainment. Educational initiatives, such as Korean language and culture programs, reflect a deeper interest in Korean culture. Overall, Hallyu's rise in India signifies a significant cultural shift, with Korean pop culture increasingly impacting Indian entertainment and lifestyle preferences.

Kerala which has a vibrant music scene primarily revolves around traditional Indian music, film music, and various regional genres. The Korean Wave has swept across Kerala, captivating the hearts of many residents and leaving a significant imprint on the state's entertainment and cultural scene. The widespread popularity of K-Pop music, K-dramas, and Korean cuisine has contributed to the increasing influence of the Korean Wave in Kerala. The present research is an attempt to examine the influence of the Korean wave on youth in Kerala.

1.2 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

This study is rooted in the concept of **cultural globalization**, which refers to the global spread and exchange of cultural products and ideas, leading to the blending of local and global cultures. Hallyu, or the Korean Wave, exemplifies this phenomenon, as South Korea's popular culture has permeated various societies, including India, influencing the lifestyles, values, and identities of youth. In Kerala, traditionally influenced by Indian cultural norms and regional heritage, the rise of Hallyu represents a shift in how young people engage with global cultures in the digital age. This study examines the impact of Hallyu on Kerala's youth, exploring how their cultural preferences, practices, and identities are shaped by the interaction between global

influences and local traditions, highlighting the dynamic interplay between globalization and cultural identity in contemporary society.

1.2.1 Youth

According to the United Nations, "youth" is defined as individuals between the ages of 15 and 24 years. In the 21st century, youth are typically interested in technology and digital media, such as social media, gaming, and streaming services. They are heavily engaged with pop culture, including music, movies, and fashion. Social issues like environmental sustainability and social justice are also significant, with many young people participating in activism. Education and career development are priorities, along with health and wellness, including fitness and mental health awareness. Additionally, there is a strong interest in travel, creative expression, and experiential learning, reflecting a desire for diverse and enriching experiences. Individuals in this age group are often in the process of defining their identities, making career choices, and developing social relationships. They are also typically more open to and influenced by global cultural phenomena like K-pop. Studies show that Hallyu is popular among Youth (Johnny 2023). In his study, Johnny explores how the global popularity of Hallyu among youth is driven by these factors, emphasising the role of digital media and cultural appeal in its widespread adoption.

1.2.2 Globalisation

Globalisation is the process through which businesses, technologies, or philosophies spread across borders, leading to increased interconnectedness and interdependence among countries. It affects various domains, including economics, culture, and politics. Globalisation, as defined by sociologist Anthony Giddens, refers to the intensification of worldwide social relations, which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa. This process involves the increasing interconnectedness and interdependence of the world, driven by advances in communication, transportation, and technology (Giddens, 1990).

Globalisation has played a crucial role in spreading Hallyu, or the Korean Wave, across the globe. The interconnectedness facilitated by globalisation has allowed South Korean pop culture to transcend national boundaries and reach international audiences. The global flow of media content and the rise of fandoms across different countries, including India, have been instrumental in embedding Hallyu into the daily lives of young people worldwide.

Globalisation, therefore, has been a key driver in turning Hallyu into a global cultural phenomenon. The globalisation of Hallyu can be understood through various dimensions, including the role of digital media and technology in disseminating Korean content globally, the strategic use of cultural export and soft power by the South Korean government, the formation and engagement of international fan communities, and the impact of transnational collaborations between Korean artists and global entities. The globalization of Hallyu has had a substantial economic impact, driving significant growth in South Korea's cultural and entertainment industries. As Korean dramas, films, and K-pop gain international popularity, they contribute to increased tourism, with fans travelling to South Korea to experience the culture firsthand and attend live events. Additionally, the global success of Korean entertainment has led to substantial revenue from international sales of music, films, and merchandise, benefiting Korean companies and artists. The widespread appeal of Korean culture has also bolstered South Korea's global brand, enhancing its economic influence and attractiveness as a destination for investment and trade. Overall, Hallyu's global reach has become a vital component of South Korea's economic strategy, showcasing the power of cultural exports in driving economic growth and international engagement. Additionally, the economic impact of Hallyu, through the growth of cultural industries and market penetration, is significant, while cultural adaptation and localization strategies have enabled Korean content to resonate with diverse global audiences. However, challenges such as cultural homogenization and appropriation arise, as well as the profound influence of Hallyu on global youth culture and trends.

1.2.2.1 The Role of Social Media in the Globalization of Hallyu

The global accessibility of Korean cultural products through social media has transformed Hallyu into a truly transnational phenomenon. Platforms such as YouTube, Twitter, and Facebook have empowered fans to engage directly with content, fostering a more interactive and dynamic global fandom. This highlights the significant role of digital media in shaping contemporary cultural trends and identities. The success of Hallyu, therefore, is not merely due to the intrinsic quality of Korean cultural outputs but also the strategic utilization of digital platforms to connect with a worldwide audience. However, this raises critical questions about cultural homogenization and the sustainability of Hallyu's global appeal amidst rapidly evolving digital landscapes.

Manuel Castells' concept of the "network society" provides a valuable framework for understanding the global spread of Hallyu. According to Castells, the network society is characterized by the proliferation of digital networks that facilitate the flow of information and cultural products across the globe, creating a highly interconnected and dynamic social landscape (Castells, 1996). In the context of Hallyu, the network society has enabled the rapid dissemination of Korean pop culture through digital platforms, social media, and global streaming services, allowing K-pop, Korean dramas, and films to reach audiences far beyond South Korea's borders. However, Castells' theory may overlook the complexities of local cultural responses and the strategic efforts by South Korean producers and government policies in promoting Hallyu. While it effectively explains the mechanics of cultural dissemination, a more nuanced view would consider how local contexts and economic factors also shape the global impact of Hallyu.

1.2.2.2 Cultural export and Soft-power

Cultural export and soft power are pivotal in understanding the globalization of Hallyu. Cultural export involves South Korea's strategic dissemination of its cultural products, such as K-dramas, films, and K-pop, to international audiences. By investing in high-quality content and leveraging global distribution channels, South Korea has effectively promoted its culture abroad. Soft power, a concept introduced by Joseph Nye, refers to a country's ability to influence others through cultural appeal and diplomacy rather than coercion. South Korea has harnessed Hallyu as a tool of cultural diplomacy, using it to enhance its global image and foster positive international relationships. Government initiatives, including funding for cultural projects and organizing global events, have further supported this effort. As a result, Hallyu has significantly increased South Korea's cultural influence, bringing Korean culture into the global mainstream and contributing to the country's economic and cultural impact on the world stage.

1.2.2.3 Global Fan Communities and Transnational Collaborations

The formation of global fan communities and strategic transnational collaborations has significantly fuelled the rise of Hallyu. The growth of international fandoms has played a crucial role in promoting and sustaining the Korean Wave. Fans from around the world engage actively with Korean content, forming fan clubs, participating in online communities, and

initiating fan-driven projects. These global fan bases help spread Hallyu by creating a buzz around Korean dramas, films, and K-pop, while also organizing events and sharing content across various platforms. Their enthusiasm and commitment contribute to the global popularity of Korean culture, ensuring its continued expansion and influence.

Transnational collaborations further amplify Hallyu's global reach. Korean artists and entertainment companies have engaged in cross-cultural partnerships with international musicians, actors, and brands, creating a blend of cultural influences that resonate with diverse audiences. Additionally, global concerts and tours by K-pop groups have brought Korean pop culture to new regions, allowing fans from different countries to experience live performances and connect with their favourite artists. These collaborations and international events not only enhance the visibility of Korean culture but also foster cultural exchange, reinforcing Hallyu's impact on a global scale.

1.2.4 Adorno's Culture Industry

Adorno, along with Max Horkheimer, developed the theory of the "Culture Industry." This concept critiques the commodification of culture under capitalism, suggesting that cultural products are produced and consumed like other commodities, leading to standardisation and manipulation of tastes and desires. Theodor Adorno's concept of the "culture industry" is highly relevant to analysing the global spread of Hallyu, particularly in the context of K-pop and Korean entertainment. According to Adorno, the culture industry refers to the commercialization and standardisation of cultural products, which are produced and consumed like any other commodity (Adorno, 1991). This process leads to a homogenization of cultural experiences, where entertainment becomes a tool for maintaining social order and economic profit rather than fostering genuine artistic expression. K-pop, for instance, is often produced with a focus on mass appeal and profitability, which involves rigorous marketing strategies, meticulously crafted personas and formulaic content that aims to cater to global audiences. This commercial approach can lead to a homogenization of cultural experiences, where unique elements of Korean culture are diluted to fit global market trends.

Cultural diffusion is the spread of cultural beliefs and social activities from one group to another. It can occur through various channels, including trade, migration, and media. The cultural diffusion of Hallyu, or the Korean Wave, can be understood through the lens of social

scientist James Lull's concepts of media globalization and cultural diffusion. According to Lull, media globalization involves the spread of cultural products across borders through various channels, which facilitates the integration of diverse cultural elements into different local contexts. According to Lull, media globalization involves the spread of cultural products across borders through various channels, which facilitates the integration of diverse cultural elements into different local contexts. In the case of Hallyu, global media platforms such as Netflix, YouTube, and Viki have made Korean dramas, films, and K-pop accessible to international audiences, significantly contributing to the spread of Korean culture. Social media platforms like Instagram and TikTok further amplify this reach by allowing fans to share and engage with Korean content, creating a global community around Hallyu. Additionally, cultural exchange is facilitated through international collaborations and promotional tours by Korean celebrities, which help introduce Hallyu to new markets.

1.2.5 Pop Culture

Pop culture, or popular culture, encompasses the ideas, practices, beliefs, and objects that are prevalent and widely accepted in mainstream society. It represents the cultural products and experiences that are accessible and enjoyed by a large number of people, often through mass media. Raymond Williams was a prominent writer who viewed pop culture as both a reflection of and a response to the social and economic conditions of the time. Williams saw pop culture as emerging from the everyday experiences of ordinary people and as being shaped by mass media and commercial interests. pop culture serves as a means of expressing and negotiating social identities and experiences. According to him, pop culture is heavily influenced by mass media, which both shapes and reflects societal values. This perspective is relevant when considering how K-pop, as a global pop culture phenomenon, affects and is affected by media representation and consumption patterns in India. He also discussed how people adapt and sometimes resist dominant cultural forms.

1.2.6 “Post-Covid impact”: The Impact of Lockdowns on the Youth of Kerala

The spread of Hallyu among the youth of Kerala owes largely to the “post-covid impact” or the “post-pandemic impact”, hence could be called the “Pandemic-Driven Hallyu Influence”. The term tries to describe the significant shifts in youth behaviour and cultural consumption that occurred in Kerala as a result of the COVID-19 lockdowns. During the lockdowns, Kerala's

youth, like many others globally, experienced increased engagement with social media due to prolonged periods of confinement and restricted social interactions. The lockdowns intensified online activities and introduced global cultural phenomena to new audiences (Lee,2021), also social media has played a significant role in facilitating the global reach of Korean culture during the pandemic (Kim,2022). This increased online presence facilitated their introduction to the world of Hallyu, the Korean Wave, which gained considerable attention during this period. Many young people in Kerala turned to binge-watching Korean dramas as a form of entertainment and escapism. Notable series that gained immense popularity include "Crash Landing on You," "Itaewon Class," and "Kingdom." These series captured the interest of viewers with their compelling storylines and high production values, contributing to a surge in the consumption of Korean media. Concurrently, K-pop groups like BTS, Blackpink and Seventeen saw a significant increase in their fan base in Kerala. The allure of these groups, known for their vibrant music, intricate choreography, and global appeal, resonated strongly with the youth.

The rapid spread of Korean pop culture, facilitated by digital media, social networks, and strategic cultural exports, reflects the profound impact of globalization on local cultural landscapes. By exploring how Kerala's youth engage with and adapt to Hallyu, this study highlights the evolving dynamics of cultural identity in a globalized world, shedding light on how global phenomena like the Korean Wave reshape local practices and preferences in increasingly interconnected societies.

1.5 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The Hallyu or Korean Wave, characterised by the global spread of Korean popular culture, has experienced exponential growth in recent years, with particular attention to the global influence of K-Pop, K-Dramas, and Korean cuisine. While this cultural phenomenon has found its way into various parts of the world, the extent and nature of its influence on the youth in Kerala remains largely unexplored. This gap in understanding is significant, as the youth demographic in Kerala is increasingly connected to global cultural trends, especially in the post-COVID era, where social media has become a dominant force in shaping cultural consumption. The present research seeks to address this gap by examining the depth and breadth of Hallyu's influence on Kerala's youth, exploring how Korean culture is received, adapted, and integrated into their lives, and what this reveals about the broader dynamics of cultural globalisation in the region.

As the Korean Wave continues to gain momentum, it becomes increasingly important to investigate not only the visible manifestations of this cultural trend but also the underlying reasons for its appeal among young people in Kerala. This study will also consider the role of media, peer influence, and the changing landscape of youth culture in Kerala, offering a comprehensive analysis of how global cultural phenomena like Hallyu are shaping the social and cultural fabric of the region.

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The Korean Wave, driven by the rise of digital platforms and the strategic efforts of entertainment companies, has emerged as a global phenomenon, captivating audiences worldwide. The entry of K-pop into the Indian cultural consciousness began in 2012 with Psy's viral hit "Gangnam Style," which marked the first significant exposure of K-pop to Indian audiences. While numerous studies have explored Hallyu at both international and national levels, research focused specifically on Kerala remains scarce. This study seeks to address this gap by investigating the influence of Hallyu on Kerala's youth, thereby contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon within this regional context. The significance of this research is multifaceted. By filling the existing gap in knowledge, it will enhance societal awareness of Hallyu and its cultural implications. Additionally, the study provides an opportunity to explore a new cultural landscape and examine social facts from fresh perspectives influenced by global culture. Importantly, this research will contribute to the broader discourse on cultural globalisation and its impact on local traditions and practices, offering valuable insights into how global cultural trends can integrate with and influence local cultures. Moreover, the study will enrich the sociological understanding of youth culture and the role of popular culture in shaping societal norms and behaviours. Ultimately, it will serve as a reference point for future research at the intersection of local and global cultures, highlighting the evolving dynamics of cultural exchange in a globalised world.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The global spread of Hallyu, or the Korean Wave, has been a subject of growing academic interest, particularly in the fields of cultural studies, sociology, and media studies. Through a systematic examination of scholarly research, this review identified key themes, gaps, and trends in the study of Hallyu's influence on the youth of Kerala. The review also explored the methodologies employed in existing studies, ranging from quantitative analyses of cultural consumption patterns to qualitative investigations involving in-depth interviews and ethnographic studies of youth engagement with Korean popular culture. Through this comprehensive exploration of the literature, the review aims to illuminate the extent and nature of Hallyu's impact on Kerala's youth, with the ultimate goal of informing future research directions, cultural policy initiatives, and interventions that address the evolving cultural preferences and identities of young people in the region.

2.2 STUDIES ON THE SPREAD OF HALLYU

The Hallyu or Korean Wave has evolved as a significant element of South Korea's cultural diplomacy and soft power (Kim, 2007). South Korea strategically uses its popular culture, including music, television dramas, and films, to enhance its national image and influence people abroad. The spread of Hallyu is attributed to the Korean government's support, the global appeal of Korean cultural products, and the role of digital platforms in reaching international audiences. According to Kim, Hallyu has become a potent tool in improving South Korea's soft power by fostering a favourable global image, boosting tourism, and promoting Korean cultural products globally. This Korean phenomenon is particularly noted for how it enhances South Korea's cultural and economic influence, making it a key aspect of the country's public diplomacy efforts.

The evolution and global impact of Hallyu are heavily attributed to the emerging convergence of technological advancements, especially the proliferation of smartphones and social media around 2008 (Jin, 2016). These technological changes, allowed for more efficient dissemination and consumption of Korean cultural products across borders. This shift enabled Korean media to reach a broader, more diverse audience, contributing to a significant reversal in the global flow of cultural content, from predominantly Western to increasingly Eastern

influences. Dal Yong Jin explains that the South Korean government played a crucial role in the spread and sustainability of Hallyu by actively supporting creative industries through various policies and initiatives. The government recognized the economic potential of cultural exports and implemented strategies to foster the growth of these industries. This included funding for cultural content production, promoting Korean cultural products overseas, and establishing international cultural exchange programs. Furthermore, the government leveraged intellectual property rights to protect and monetize Korean cultural products, ensuring that creators could benefit financially from the global popularity of Hallyu. This approach not only encouraged more production of cultural content but also allowed South Korea to maintain control over its cultural assets in the global market. By integrating cultural diplomacy into its broader economic strategy, the South Korean government was able to amplify the global reach of Hallyu, transforming it into a significant source of soft power and economic benefit for the country (Jin, 2016).

The rapid emergence of the Korean Wave has not only revolutionized the way the world views Korean culture, but it has also played a major role in reinforcing the country's cultural content economy, resulting in an unparalleled uptick in the export of Korean media and entertainment goods (Oh & Park, 2012). These authors suggest that the export-driven success of K-pop, dramas, and other cultural products has boosted Korea's soft power, making it a global cultural hub. This aligns with the notion that digital technologies and global platforms like YouTube have accelerated the international dissemination of Korean content, influencing global pop culture trends and contributing to Korea's national identity as a leader in cultural exports.

The spread of Hallyu is particularly highlighted through the idea that Korean media, including K-pop and dramas, appeal to global audiences due to their less aggressive and more aesthetically pleasing content compared to Western media. This appeal, coupled with the strategic repackaging of traditional elements, has enabled Korean culture to gain a significant foothold in the global entertainment market, marking Hallyu as an exemplar of contemporary global hybridity (Ryoo, 2009).

Hannah Rachel Abraham (2018), explores how the rising popularity of K-pop among the Indian youth has gained a dedicated fan base. She further says that the allure of K-pop is beyond music, as the fans engage themselves in discussions related to Hallyu content via social media and understand the lyrics on a deeper level concerning the cultural contexts. K-Pop serves as a

gateway to Korean culture, significantly influencing language learning trends among Indian youth.

2.3 POST-PANDEMIC CONTEXT

In a study of COVID-19's effects on social media use and cultural consumption, Lee et al. (2021) explain how the pandemic changed online behaviour patterns and media consumption habits, especially for younger audiences. They talk about how the lockdowns and restrictions caused a big spike in the usage of social media, which throughout the epidemic became the primary sources for entertainment and cross-cultural communication. This change contributed to the expansion of cultural phenomena, such as the Hallyu, in addition to increasing the consumption of digital content. In particular, the article mentions how users' increased engagement with Korean content—such as music, dramas, and films—on social media during the pandemic led to the global spread of Hallyu. The rapid growth of Korean popular culture among broad foreign audiences has been assisted by the accessibility and shareability of content on platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok. During and after the COVID-19 epidemic, Hallyu's prominence as a major global cultural force was further solidified by this additional exposure.

The COVID-19 pandemic saw a surge in global consumption of digital content, with platforms like YouTube, TikTok, and Netflix becoming significant conduits for the dissemination of Korean music, dramas, and films (Kim, 2022). This period witnessed the consolidation of Hallyu as a global phenomenon, particularly with the rise of K-pop groups like BTS and BLACKPINK, who leveraged social media to maintain and expand their fan bases worldwide. While confined to living inside the four walls of their homes, people found entertainment through social media which broke the geographical boundaries and allowed fans worldwide to engage with Hallyu content anywhere anytime. Viral content being the thriving factor for social media platforms, during the lockdown the effective utilisation of these platforms for dance challenges and music video reactions to BTS, Blackpink and other Kpop groups gave rise to more international attention to Korean pop culture. Modern technological advancements like real-time engagement with K-pop idols through platforms like V Live and Twitter (X), fan loyalty and community. Also, algorithmic promotion invited many who were first to Hallyu content to stay and explore Hallyu further. Collaborations of K-pop artists with internationally famous artists especially pop singers like Dua Lipa, Halsey, Jason Derulo, DJ Steve Aoki, etc boosted Hallyu spread internationally.

2.4 YOUTH ENGAGEMENT WITH SOCIAL MEDIA

The emergence of digital media technologies has played a crucial role in the globalization of the Korean Wave, enabling Korean pop culture to transcend national boundaries and become a genuinely global phenomenon (Jin, 2020). Jin's observation highlights the symbiotic relationship between Hallyu and digital technologies, emphasizing how platforms like YouTube, social media, and streaming services have been instrumental in spreading Korean pop culture globally. During the COVID-19 lockdowns, digital platforms became the primary medium through which young people engaged with K-pop and other aspects of Korean culture, reinforcing Jin's point about the centrality of technology in Hallyu's global reach. Furthermore, Jin's analysis invites a critical examination of how digital technologies not only facilitate cultural dissemination but also reshape consumption patterns, potentially leading to new forms of cultural hybridity and identity formation among youth. Owing to the widespread use of digital platforms and the tenacious efforts of entertainment firms, the Korean Wave has become a global phenomenon. Social media sites like Facebook, Viki, and YouTube have been instrumental in expanding the reach of South Korean cultural content in international cultural marketplaces since the early 2010s (Jin,2020). Jin's analysis also highlights a significant shift in the global cultural landscape, where non-Western cultures, like South Korea's, leverage digital media to compete on a global stage. Thus, they compete with dominant Western cultures on a worldwide level, at the cost of their local unique cultures, by trying to impress a global homogenous audience.

In the book *Hallyu 2.0: The Korean Wave in the Age of Social Media*, edited by Sangjoon Lee and Abé Markus Nornes, the authors explore the significant role that social media and other digital technologies have played in the global dissemination of Korean pop culture. Due to the participatory culture of social media, Korean cultural products have become accessible worldwide, making Hallyu a transnational phenomenon. The participatory nature of social media platforms like YouTube, Twitter, and Facebook has enabled fans to engage directly with content, creating a more dynamic and interactive global fandom. This transformation underlines the power of digital media in shaping cultural trends and identities in the 21st century. It suggests that the success of Hallyu is not just a product of the quality of Korean cultural products but also of the strategic use of digital platforms to engage with a global audience. However, this also raises questions about cultural homogenization and the sustainability of Hallyu's global popularity in the face of rapidly changing digital landscapes.

There is a complex relationship between social media, identity, and youth, particularly in regions of the Global South such as Africa, Asia, and Latin America (Ngwainmbi, 2024). Social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram influence the psychosocial well-being of young people, addressing both the positive and negative impacts. These impacts include the potential for social media to foster economic independence and social responsibility among youth, while also highlighting risks such as cyberbullying, online radicalization, and the renegotiation of identity in developing countries. Social media channels have become instrumental in disseminating South Korean culture across the Global South, influencing youth cultures in these regions by shaping new forms of cultural identity and hybridization. This phenomenon is part of a broader discussion on how social media is reshaping youth identities in various parts of the world, underscoring its significance in the global cultural landscape.

Consuming Hallyu content has a positive impact on the mental health of youth as it gives a feeling of connectivity and comfort (Kim, 2021). Often these contents help the youth escape their harsh realities, alleviate them from loneliness and stress, and create a sense of belonging in them. Many K-dramas portray scenarios that are relatable to youth who face identity crises and loneliness. These connection feelings make them feel less lonely and make them realise they are not alone. According to the study conducted by Lee (2022), consuming positive Hallyu content has shown improved mood and emotional control, also lowered symptoms of depression among young viewers.

2.5 CHANGES IN YOUTH BEHAVIOUR AND LIFESTYLE

According to Kim Tae Young and Kim Ji Young(2017), Korean dramas are a resource for learning Korean language. Learning language based on certain contexts portrayed in dramas helps the viewers acquire a more authentic conversational level of language usage in patterns and usage. Due to the increased usage of Hallyu content, people all over the world are interested in learning about the Korean language and culture. Entertainment content like music, movies and dramas are often engaging for youth thus influencing them to develop skills like speaking, listening and comprehension (Park & Lee, 2020). Like any other digital media, Hallyu content also has played the dual role of entertainment and education, thus making the language learning process very enjoyable and effective. Audiences around the world might have also faced the barriers of subtitles, which is why they are very much engaged in learning the language. The consumption of Hallyu online content in their authentic language without dub versions shows how audiences are enthusiastic to acquire the language in its authenticity along with cultural

experience (Choi & Kim, 2021). Hallyu has significantly increased the number of Korean language learners on a global level.

The influence of Hallyu on Kerala's youth extends beyond their viewing habits. Many young fans have been inspired to travel to South Korea, immersing themselves in the cultural experiences they have seen portrayed in their favourite Korean dramas (Lee, 2020). This phenomenon has led to the emergence of a new form of "Hallyu tourism," where fans seek to re-enact the scenes and locations they have witnessed on-screen, further strengthening the cultural connections between Korea and Kerala.

According to Anoushka Nag (2023), the growing fascination of the Indian youth towards Korean entertainment content has motivated many to learn the language and feel more connected to the content. This novel trend has prompted many to learn the language highlighting the impact of Hallyu and the power of pop culture in shaping language preferences and patterns, especially among youth. Hallyu has introduced new cultural elements to the Indian scenario and also created a trend among Indian youth in Korean language acquisition that keeps them in touch with Korean media.

The unique storytelling, cinematography, high production quality and aesthetics of K-dramas have contributed to the replacement of Indian serials with Korean dramas (Lee & Choi 2021). Thus the standardised quality of Hallyu content has ensured a stable fanbase across the world. The preference for Kdramas over Indian content shows how Hallyu content is successfully overcoming the barriers of language and culture. The global success of K-dramas, as highlighted by Lee & Choi (2021), is a testament to the universal appeal of high-quality storytelling combined with cultural specificity.

The influence of Hallyu content does not just impact the entertainment industry but also impacts fashion trends, usage of Korean skin products, food preferences, etc. They have made a profound impact on international dress styles. Fans are influenced by K-pop idols and actors into adopting new fashion trends which directly affect the new stock in the clothing industry that includes more Korean fashion trends. This influence is evident in the growing popularity of Korean-inspired outfits, accessories, and beauty products, which have permeated fashion scenes across various countries. The article highlights the significant role of Hallyu in

redefining global fashion standards and the way it drives cross-cultural exchange through style (Park & Jang, 2021).

Korean dramas and movies have also paved the way for a growing interest towards Korean cuisine (Choi and Heo, 2020). The portrayal and romanticisation of Korean food in Korean dramas have led to the rising interest and curiosity of non-Korean fans to explore Korean food and subsequent appreciation for the same outside Korea. Hallyu content also imparts Korean culinary practices among its fans. Thus, media exposure has led to increased demand for Korean cuisine, resulting in the opening of Korean restaurants abroad, the inclusion of Korean dishes in global food markets, and a general heightened interest in Korean culinary practices.

The study addresses how K-pop and K-dramas have influenced Indian youth's entertainment choices and integrated them into their daily lives. Indian audiences' tastes and interests have been impacted by the introduction of new cultural aspects through Korean media forms. Indian youth's fascination with the Korean language and culture has been sparked by the popularity of Hallyu. To better comprehend and relate to the content they enjoy, many fans have started learning Korean. This is part of a larger trend of cultural involvement made possible by media consumption. Dhawan and Kumar (2023), further investigate how Indian youth's social relationships and sense of self have been influenced by Korean pop culture. According to the study, K-pop idols and K-drama characters frequently behave as role models, affecting social attitudes as well as lifestyle decisions and fashion of youth. The commercial is also included in the article. One of the primary factors contributing to the widespread acceptance of Hallyu among Kerala's youth is the relatable and emotion-driven nature of Korean dramas. These dramas often tackle themes of family, relationships, and personal growth, which resonate with the experiences and aspirations of young viewers. Moreover, the lack of overtly sexual content and violence in these dramas, in comparison to Western media, makes them more appealing to the conservative and traditional social values that are prevalent in Kerala.

2.6 CULTURAL HYBRIDISATION

Ryoo (2009) explores the Korean Wave, or "Hallyu," within the framework of cultural hybridization, emphasizing the complex interplay between globalization and local cultural identity. He further argues that the success of Hallyu is not merely a result of cultural imperialism but a hybrid phenomenon where global and local cultures intersect, creating a unique, transnational media culture. This hybridization allows Korean cultural products to

resonate with international audiences by blending traditional Korean elements with modern, globalized aesthetics. Unlike many countries that try to impose their culture upon other countries through colonialism and imperialism, South Korea has captivated the world through its soft power and not hard power like the military.

In the study conducted by Minereri & Purnomo (2023), they explore the broader socio-cultural effects of the Korean Wave (Hallyu) on youth across various Asian countries and investigate how Korean pop culture has influenced cultural and social trends among young people in Asia. The study looks at how Asian youth's cultural choices have significantly changed as an outcome of Hallyu. Korean entertainment has grown to be a significant cultural export, influencing tastes in music, fashion, and way of life. The authors point out that young audiences throughout Asia are now exposed to new cultural norms and trends as a result of Korean media's widespread popularity. The study talks about how youth culture has become more globalized as a result of the Korean Wave. It has encouraged cross-cultural understanding and interaction by creating a feeling of shared cultural experience and identity among fans in many nations.

Kanozia & Ganghariya (2021) look into how Kerala, India's youth population has been affected by the Korean Wave (Hallyu). The study focuses on how Korean media, especially K-dramas and K-pop, has permeated this particular geographical setting and what impact it has had. The study looks at how Kerala's youth have embraced Korean media. According to the report, K-dramas and K-pop have gained popularity as entertainment genres, affecting regional cultural tastes and bringing in fresh fashion and lifestyle trends. The social and psychological consequences of Hallyu on young people in Kerala are examined by the authors. They talk about how young people's social interactions, identity formation, and self-expression have been affected by the popularity of Korean media. The study compares and contrasts traditional Indian media and cultural activities with the rising popularity of Hallyu. It looks at how local cultural norms are impacted by worldwide Korean content, resulting in a fusion of regional and global cultural expressions.

Iwabuchi (2002), examines how Japanese popular culture has been a key player in the global cultural landscape, particularly focusing on its role in transnationalism and globalization. He discusses how Japanese media, including anime, manga, and J-pop, has transcended national boundaries and influenced global audiences, contributing to a broader discourse on cultural

exchange and hybridization. The article spends a good deal of time discussing the idea of cultural hybridization and the opposition to it. He emphasizes how Japanese popular culture has been accepted and modified in diverse international settings, giving rise to fresh modes of cultural expression that incorporate aspects of other customs. As a result of this hybridization process, local and global influences frequently interact dynamically to produce distinctive cultural products that are representative of their many sources. The essay also addresses opposition to cultural fusion, pointing out that although Japanese popular culture is extensively embraced and incorporated into international media environments, there are times when this integration is greeted with resistance or suspicion. Frequently, worries about cultural authenticity and how outside influences affect indigenous customs are the root of this opposition. Iwabuchi examines these conflicts and offers perceptions on how, in various cultural contexts, globalization might elicit both resistance and adaptability.

2.7 RESEARCH GAP

The phenomenon of Hallyu has attracted a lot of scholarly attention, with several studies examining its effects on audiences around the world. The majority of research has examined many aspects of Hallyu's impact on East Asia, Southeast Asia, and Western nations, including cultural consumption, identity formation, and soft power. Researchers have also examined how K-pop, K-dramas, and Korean beauty standards have spread over the world, revealing the elements that contribute to their popularity. Though these studies provide insightful information about Hallyu's global significance, there is a noticeable gap in the literature concerning its influence on specific regional contexts within India, particularly in Kerala. These studies often highlight the role of social media, fan communities, and cultural events in facilitating the spread of Hallyu. However, the unique cultural and social dynamics of Kerala, a state with a distinct cultural identity and history of global cultural exchanges, have not been sufficiently explored in the context of Hallyu. Additionally, although a few studies have mentioned the impact of Hallyu on Indian youth, they frequently do not delve deeply into the specific ways that Hallyu interacts with and may even change regional cultural practices. Additionally, there is a lack of research on the "post-COVID effect," which describes how increasing digital consumption during the epidemic enhanced Hallyu's exposure and popularity. There is still more research to be done on the long-term effects of this phenomenon on youth's development of identities and cultural assimilation in particular areas like Kerala.

Regarding regional differences, long-term consequences, and the specific dynamics of cultural hybridization and resistance, there are still gaps in the literature. To fill up these gaps, future studies should look at how Hallyu's influence varies by location, analyze long-term patterns in language acquisition and cultural fusion, and calculate the genre's degree of influence using quantitative metrics. Hallyu's impact needs to be studied in a more in-depth manner, as it has already seeped into local cultural elements without much evident changes. Filling in these gaps will help comprehend Hallyu's influence on modern global society in a more complex way.

2.8 CONCLUSION

Research on Hallyu emphasizes how much of an impact it has on the youth culture around the world, especially when viewed through the prism of Korean dramas, K-pop, and associated media. Research shows that in addition to capturing the interest of viewers everywhere, Hallyu has had a significant impact on social behaviours, language acquisition, and cultural preferences. This research will address the existing gap in Hallyu's impact on the youth of Kerala. It will look at how regional entertainment, fashion, beauty standards, and eating habits are influenced by Hallyu. The study will also present the idea of the post-COVID effect, looking at how the pandemic has sped up Kerala's adoption of Hallyu. This study will provide insightful information for future studies on cultural globalization.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines the research methodology employed to gather and analyse data pertinent to the research. Creswell and Creswell (2018) define research methodology as the systematic plan for conducting research, which encompasses the strategies, techniques, and tools utilised to collect and analyse data. This chapter defines the approach taken, whether qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods, and details the specific methods employed, ensuring that the research process is rigorous, valid, and reliable. The methodology ensures the research is conducted in a thorough, credible, and valid manner, providing a structured approach to guide researchers in making decisions throughout the research process and interpreting their results effectively.

3.2 TITLE OF THE STUDY

THE HALLYU OR KOREAN WAVE AND ITS INFLUENCE ON YOUTH IN KERALA

3.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

3.3.1 GENERAL OBJECTIVE

- To explore the influence of Korean pop culture among young people in Kerala.

3.3.2 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- To determine the frequency of Hallyu content consumption among youth in Kerala.
- To identify the types of Hallyu content (e.g., K-pop, K-dramas, Korean movies) that are most popular among the youth in Kerala.
- To examine cultural integration by determining the extent to which Hallyu has influenced daily habits, such as beauty routines, dietary practices, and fashion choices.
- To analyse the preference trends between Korean and traditional Indian entertainment, fashion, and music among the youth in Kerala.
- To explore the adoption of fashion trends influenced by Korean culture among the youth in Kerala.

3.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

3.4.1 GENERAL RESEARCH QUESTION

- How does the consumption of Hallyu content influence the lives and perspectives of youth?

3.4.2 SPECIFIC RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- How deeply has Korean culture impacted various aspects of the lives of youth in Kerala?
- In what ways has Hallyu contributed to the well-being and personal growth of the youth in Kerala?
- How do the youth in Kerala perceive the differences and similarities between Indian and Korean culture?
- What are the thoughts of the youth in Kerala on the potential downsides of becoming excessively obsessed in Hallyu content?

3.4.3 VARIABLES OF THE STUDY

Independent Variable

Exposure to Hallyu Content (Korean Wave)

Dependent Variables

Music preferences, Fashion choices, Beauty standards, Entertainment choices, Integration of Korean culture with Indian traditions, Social Relationships

3.5 DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

3.5.1 YOUTH

Conceptual: The United Nations defines ‘youth’ as those persons between the ages of 15 and 24 years.

Operational: The respondents taken for this study are those between the age group of 15 and 24 years.

3.5.2 HALLYU CONTENT

Conceptual: Hallyu content refers to the various forms of media and cultural products originating from South Korea that have gained popularity worldwide. This includes music (K-pop), television dramas (K-dramas), films, variety shows, webtoons, and other entertainment and cultural exports.

Operational: For this study, Hallyu content is defined as any media or cultural product based on South Korea consumed by the participants.

3.5.3 CONSUMPTION

Conceptual: Consumption refers to the act of using or engaging with Hallyu content, encompassing the frequency, duration, and manner in which individuals interact with these media and cultural products.

Operational: In this study, consumption is measured by the frequency, duration, and type of Hallyu content consumed by the respondents.

3.6 RESEARCH DESIGN

According to Bryman (2012), a research design serves as a framework for data collection and analysis, reflecting the researcher's priorities throughout the research process. In this research, a mixed-method approach is adopted, integrating both quantitative and qualitative methods to provide a comprehensive analysis of the research problem. According to Bryman (2016), a mixed-method approach involves the combination of quantitative and qualitative research strategies within a single study, allowing for a more complete understanding of complex phenomena. By employing this approach, the study leverages the strengths of both methods, ensuring that the findings are both statistically robust and contextually rich.

The research adopts a sequential explanatory research design, which is characterized by a two-phase approach where quantitative data collection and analysis are conducted first, followed by qualitative data collection and analysis. The purpose of this design is to use qualitative data to help explain or build upon initial quantitative results. This design allows for the quantitative results to be explained in more depth with the help of the qualitative data, providing a comprehensive understanding of the research problem. The sequential explanatory design is particularly useful when the researcher aims to interpret the quantitative findings through the exploration of participants' perspectives and experiences (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). This method involves first gathering numeric data to identify trends or patterns, which are then elaborated upon with qualitative data to offer deeper insights into the reasons behind those trends.

3.7 PILOT STUDY

A pilot study was conducted to understand the feasibility of the research. A pilot study is a small-scale preliminary test that is conducted to refine research instruments and procedures before the main study. It involves administering the questionnaire to a small sample similar to the target population to identify and address any issues with clarity and effectiveness. The insights gained from the pilot study help in improving the reliability and validity of the research tools.

3.8 SAMPLING

For this research on the impact of Hallyu, a non-probability sampling method known as snowball sampling was utilised. Snowball sampling is defined as a technique where the researcher begins with a small group of initial participants who are familiar with the phenomenon under study. These participants then refer the researcher to additional potential participants who meet the study criteria (Bryman, 2016). This method was particularly suitable for the study as the researcher had access to a small, informed group of participants knowledgeable about the Korean wave, which facilitated the identification of further respondents through referrals.

The sample size for the quantitative data included 98 respondents, while the qualitative data comprised 5 case studies. Studies indicate that Hallyu is notably popular among youth; thus, the study specifically targeted youth aged 15-24 (Johnny, 2023). **The universe** of the study encompasses youth in Kerala, with each youth serving as **the unit of study**. The research was conducted within the geographical area of Kerala.

3.9. SOURCES OF DATA

Both primary and secondary sources of data are collected for the research.

3.9.1 Primary data

Primary data for this research was collected using a self-administered questionnaire designed by the researcher. This questionnaire was specifically crafted to capture the respondents' perspectives and experiences related to the impact of Hallyu. By developing the questionnaire, the researcher ensured that the data collected was directly relevant to the research objectives, allowing for detailed and specific insights into the phenomenon under study.

3.9.2 Secondary data

Secondary data was gathered from various sources, including journal articles, internet sources, and relevant books. This data provided a broader context and background for the research, supporting the analysis of primary data by offering existing knowledge and previous findings related to the Hallyu wave and its impact. The secondary sources helped in understanding the broader trends and theoretical frameworks that underpin the study.

3.10 TOOLS OF DATA COLLECTION

For this research, data was collected using a questionnaire and an interview guide. The questionnaire, designed by the researcher, was administered digitally through Google Forms, which facilitated streamlined data collection and organization. This platform allowed respondents to conveniently complete the questionnaire online, ensuring efficient data management and accessibility. The questionnaire comprised 37 questions, covering a range of topics including demographic questions related to age and economic stability, providing a comprehensive understanding of the respondents' profiles. Additionally, an interview guide was used to conduct in-depth qualitative interviews, offering detailed insights into participants' experiences and perceptions regarding the impact of Hallyu. These tools collectively enabled the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data, essential for a thorough analysis of the research topic.

3.11 TOOLS OF DATA ANALYSIS

The research utilises quantitative and qualitative approaches, necessitating a diverse analytical strategy. Quantitative data were analysed using the statistical software SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) to identify trends, patterns, and correlations within the data. The qualitative data provides an in-depth understanding of the obtained quantitative data by providing diverse insights of the respondents. This combination of statistical and descriptive analysis allowed for a thorough examination of the research findings, integrating numerical data with rich, contextual insights.

3.12 PRE-TEST

A pretest was conducted among a few respondents before finalising the tool. A pretest involves trialling the research instruments with a subset of the target population to evaluate their effectiveness and clarity. It is used to ensure that the questionnaire and data collection process

are effective and to make final adjustments based on feedback. This step is crucial for ensuring accurate and consistent data collection in the main study.

3.13 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study has certain limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the use of snowball sampling, while effective for reaching a specific population familiar with Hallyu, may introduce selection bias, as participants are referred by others within their network. This could limit the diversity of perspectives and reduce the generalizability of the findings. Second, the reliance on self-reported data from questionnaires and interviews may lead to response bias, as participants might provide socially desirable answers rather than their true opinions. Additionally, the study's focus on youth aged 15-24 in Kerala means that the findings may not apply to other age groups or geographical locations. Finally, qualitative analysis is inherently subjective, and the interpretation of interview data may be influenced by the researcher's perspectives. These limitations suggest that the results should be considered within the context of these constraints and may require further research to validate and expand upon the findings.

CHAPTER IV

DATA ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the analysis and interpretation of the data collected for this study. The analysis was conducted using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) and Microsoft Excel, which facilitated the organisation, processing, and examination of the data. The dataset was gathered from respondents through a precisely designed questionnaire, distributed via Google Forms, to capture the diverse perspectives of the youth in Kerala on the influence of Hallyu. The questionnaire was strategically structured to explore various dimensions of the subject matter, ensuring a thorough understanding of the respondents' experiences and attitudes. The results is examined in more detail in the sections that follow, providing an analysis of the patterns and trends that showed up in the data.

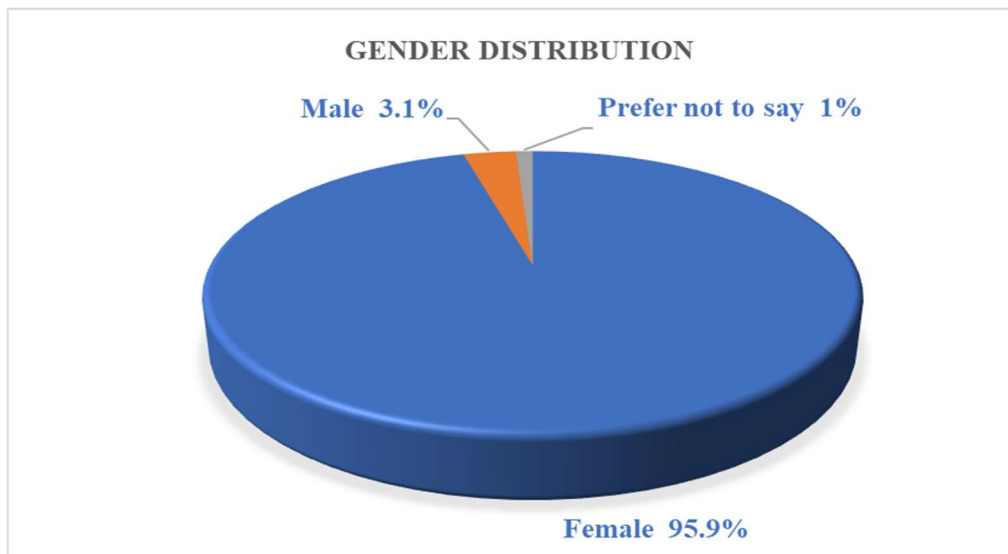
4.2 DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Understanding the demographic profile of the respondents is essential for contextualising the findings of this study. This section provides an overview of the key demographic characteristics of the participants, including their age, gender, economic stability, and geographic distribution within Kerala. These demographic variables are essential for identifying possible trends and connections between the respondents' backgrounds and their involvement with Korean culture, which is important when examining Hallyu's impact on young people. The participants taken for this study belong to the age category of 15-24 years of age, as the UN defines this age group as youth.

Gender Distribution

In the figure 4.1 below a high rate of female involvement with Hallyu and subsequent cultural resistance to Hallyu could be identified among the young men of Kerala. Traditional gender norms and expectations might influence how men engage with K-pop. Some might perceive K-pop as being more associated with feminine interests, leading to a reluctance to express enthusiasm openly. Attitudes towards K-pop can be shaped by peer groups and community opinions. If K-pop is viewed negatively within a particular social circle or community, individuals may be influenced to adopt similar views.

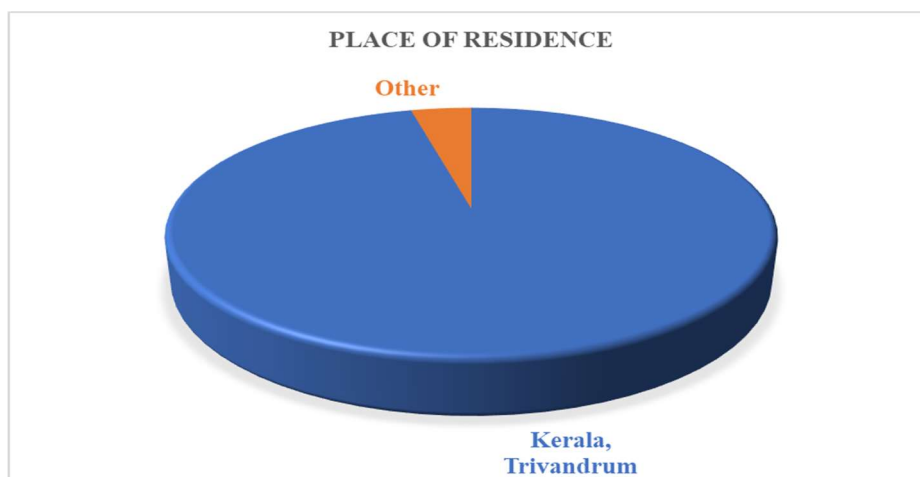
Figure 4.1 Gender distribution



The fact that 95.9% of respondents were female, suggests a strong appeal of Hallyu content to females and indicates a skewed sample that limits generalizability. This predominance shapes the findings to reflect female perspectives more heavily. Future research should aim for a more balanced gender distribution or conduct targeted studies on male respondents to provide comprehensive insights. This also highlights social dynamics and content appeal favouring females.

Geographical distribution

Figure 4.2 Geographical distribution



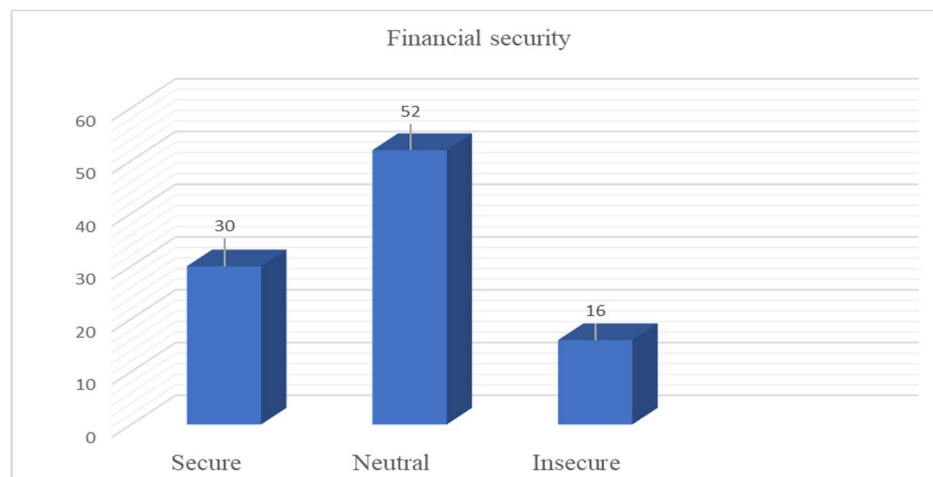
The geographical distribution of respondents in this study was influenced by the snowball sampling method, resulting in 80% of participants coming from Trivandrum. This means that most of the data reflects the perspectives of youth in Trivandrum. The remaining 20% of respondents were from other districts in Kerala, such as Kollam, Kochi, Kozhikode, and

Pathanamthitta. This concentration in Trivandrum suggests that the findings might be more relevant to urban areas where access to global cultural trends, like Hallyu, may be higher. However, it also means that the study might not fully represent the experiences of youth across all regions of Kerala. For a more balanced understanding, future research should aim to include respondents from a wider range of districts.

Financial Security

Financial security is an important factor in this study as it provides insight into the socioeconomic background of the respondents, which can influence their consumption patterns and engagement with Hallyu content.

Figure 4.3 Financial Security



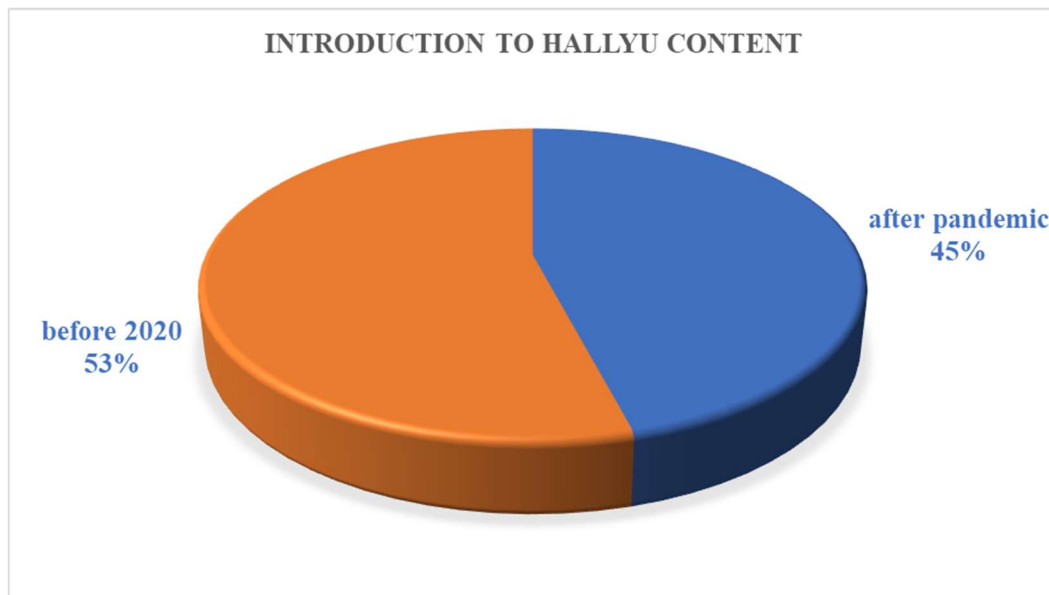
The data shows that 30% of respondents feel financially secure, 52% reported a neutral stance, and 16% feel financially insecure. These findings suggest that the majority of respondents fall into a middle ground regarding financial security, with over half feeling neither secure nor insecure. This neutrality might indicate that while financial stability is not a major concern for most, it may still play a role in shaping their access to and interaction with Hallyu. The 32% who feel financially secure might have more disposable income to spend on Hallyu-related products or experiences, while the 9.3% who feel insecure may engage with Hallyu content in ways that are less financially demanding. Understanding these dynamics is essential for interpreting how socioeconomic factors influence cultural consumption.

4.3 IMPACT OF HALLYU ON YOUTH

Introduction to Hallyu Content

Understanding when respondents were first exposed to Hallyu is crucial for analysing how their experiences and levels of engagement may differ.

Figure 4.4 Introduction to Hallyu Content

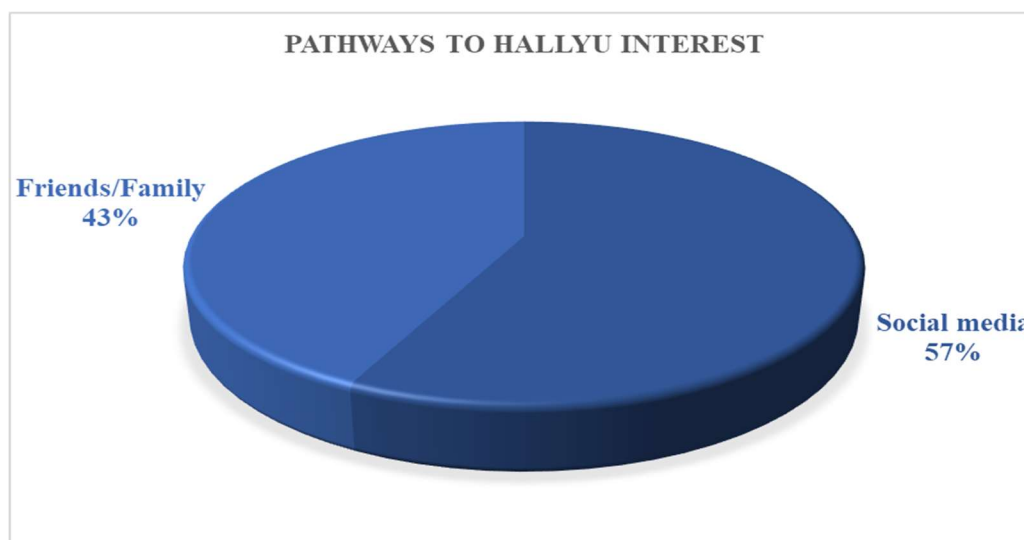


The timeline of when respondents were first introduced to Hallyu content provides valuable context for understanding their engagement with Korean pop culture. According to the data, 45 respondents (approximately 46.4%) were introduced to Hallyu since 2020, coinciding with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. This suggests that the pandemic, and the resulting lockdowns, may have significantly contributed to the increased consumption of Hallyu content, as people spent more time at home with access to digital media. On the other hand, 53 respondents (about 53.6%) were familiar with Hallyu long before 2020, with some having known about it as early as 2012. This group likely represents early adopters of Korean pop culture, whose long-standing interest predates the global surge in Hallyu's popularity during the pandemic. These findings highlight the dual nature of Hallyu's appeal: while the pandemic may have acted as a catalyst for many, there is also a dedicated group with deep-rooted interest in Korean culture, spanning nearly a decade.

Pathways to Hallyu Interest

Understanding how respondents first became interested in Hallyu provides insight into the primary channels through which Korean pop culture reaches its audience.

Figure 4.5 Pathways to Hallyu Interest



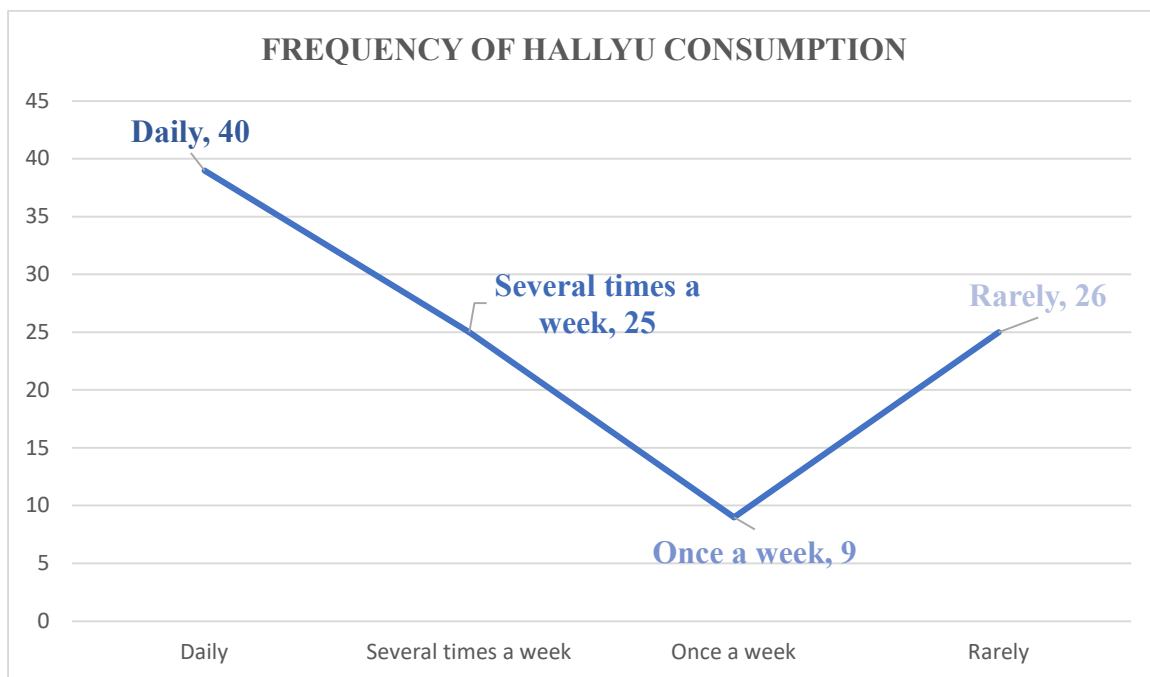
The data reveals that the majority of respondents, 56 in total, were introduced to Hallyu through digital media, such as social media, streaming platforms, and television. This emphasizes the significant role that digital platforms play in spreading Korean content globally, making it easily accessible and appealing to a wide audience. In contrast, 42 respondents credited their interest in Hallyu to friends or family. This suggests that social networks are important for the propagation of Hallyu as well, with peer recommendations and similar experiences having a big impact. These findings suggest that while digital media is the major routeway to Hallyu, interpersonal connections remain a powerful driver in sparking interest and maintaining involvement with Hallyu. This dual pathway highlights the diverse nature of Hallyu's reach, combining both technological and social elements to produce a long-lasting appeal.

Frequency of Hallyu Consumption

The frequency with which respondents engage with Hallyu content provides insight into the varying levels of interest and commitment within the fan community. A substantial portion of respondents, 40%, consume Hallyu content daily, reflecting a high level of engagement among a significant segment of fans. This daily interaction suggests a deep, consistent connection with Hallyu content, likely driven by a strong affinity for its music, dramas, and other media. Another 25% of respondents engage with Hallyu content several times a week, indicating regular, though slightly less intense, consumption. This group represents fans who integrate Hallyu into their routine but may balance it with other interests. A smaller segment, 9%, consumes Hallyu content once a week. These respondents likely enjoy Hallyu but at a more moderate pace, possibly due to time constraints or a more selective interest in specific content.

Lastly, 26% of respondents rarely consume Hallyu content. This group might represent casual viewers or those who engage with Hallyu on a more intermittent basis, possibly influenced by social trends or recommendations. This distribution highlights the diversity of Hallyu fans, ranging from highly engaged daily consumers to those with more occasional interest. Understanding these different levels of engagement helps in analysing how Hallyu resonates across various segments of the youth population.

Figure 4.6 Frequency of Hallyu Consumption



One respondent mentioned that their consumption of K-dramas depends on availability, indicating irregular patterns based on content interest:

"Depends on how I watch... If there's a drama I'll watch it regularly; otherwise, it may show up on the Instagram reels or else I won't dig up more for it."

Another respondent highlighted the cyclical nature of their consumption, engaging intensely for months and then taking long breaks:

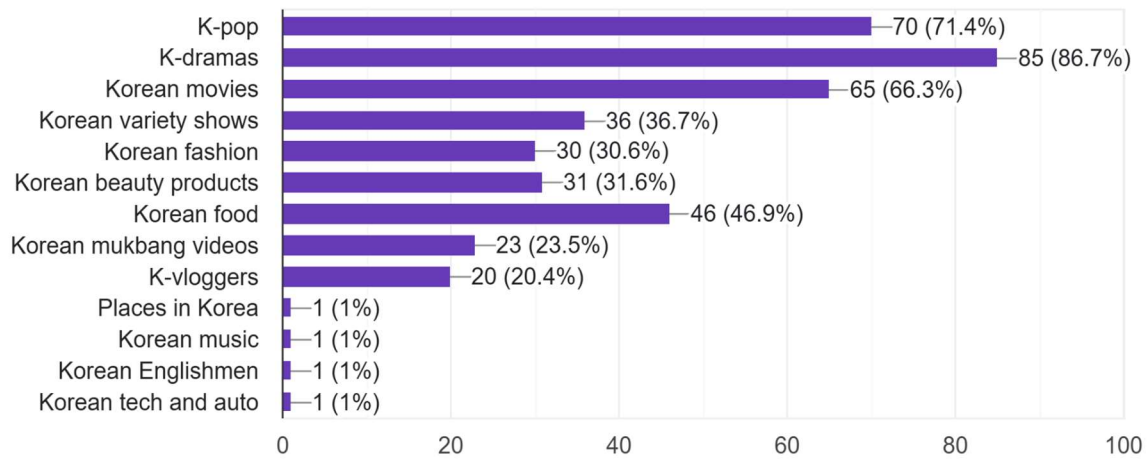
"Whenever I watch K-drama, I watch it continuously for months and then I don't for a long while."

These comments suggest that while some viewers engage with Hallyu content regularly, others exhibit more sporadic or binge-watching behaviours, which might not be fully captured by

standard frequency measures. This insight emphasises the need to consider both consistent and intermittent engagement patterns when analysing Hallyu consumption.

Most Engaged Types of Hallyu Content Among Respondents

Figure 4.7 Most Engaged Types of Hallyu Content Among Respondents

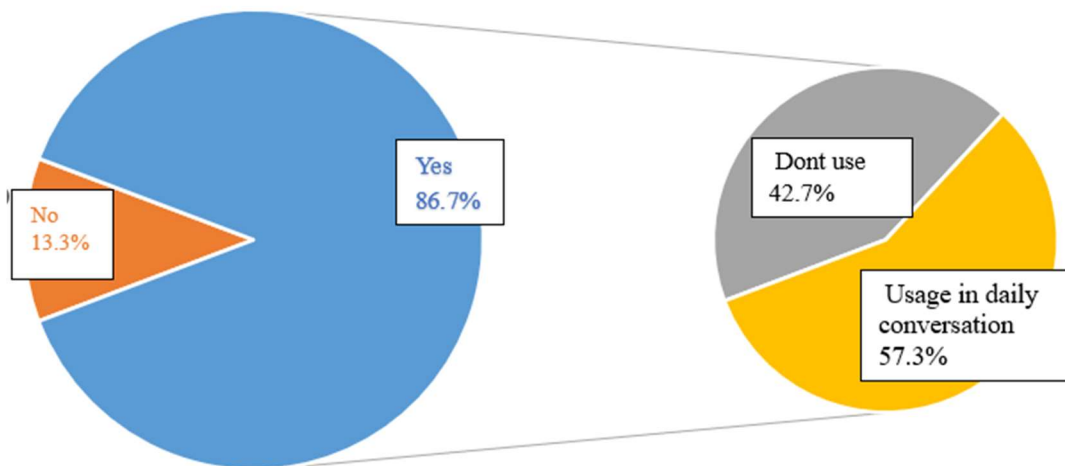


The above chart illustrates the types of Hallyu content that respondents engage with the most. In this study, respondents were allowed to select all types of Hallyu content they engage with, reflecting their diverse interests in Korean pop culture. K-dramas emerged as the most popular choice, with 85 respondents (86.7%) engaging with them, indicating their broad appeal. K-pop was selected by 70 respondents (71.4%), showing a strong interest in Korean music. Korean movies attracted 65 respondents (66.3%), underscoring the popularity of Korean cinema. Korean food was of interest to 46 respondents (46.9%), highlighting the appeal of Korean cuisine. Korean variety shows were chosen by 36 respondents (36.7%), reflecting their moderate appeal. Korean beauty products and Korean fashion were selected by 31 respondents (31.6%) and 30 respondents (30.6%) respectively, showing substantial interest in Korean style and beauty. Korean mukbang videos were engaged with 23 respondents (23.5%), indicating a niche but significant interest. K-vloggers were followed by 20 respondents (20.4%), representing a smaller, yet dedicated audience. Places in Korea, Korean music, Korean Englishmen, and Korean tech and auto were each selected by 1 respondent (1%), indicating specialized interests. The data indicates that K-dramas, K-pop, and Korean movies are the most widely consumed Hallyu content, with a large majority of respondents engaging with these forms. Additionally, the significant interest in Korean food, beauty products, and fashion points to the cultural influence of Korea extending beyond entertainment into lifestyle choices. The

specific interests in areas like mukbang videos and K-vloggers show the diversity of Hallyu's reach, appealing to different aspects of life and culture. Overall, the distribution reflects how Hallyu engages its audiences not only through traditional media like dramas and music but also through lifestyle elements like food, fashion, and beauty. The data suggests that while there is a core group of content types that attract widespread attention, there is also room for specialised content to capture the interest of more targeted audiences.

Language Learning through Hallyu

Figure 4. 8 Language Learning through Hallyu
Learning of Korean phrases from Hallyu content
and its usage in daily conversation



The data reveals that a significant majority of respondents, 86.7%, have learned Korean phrases or words from Hallyu content, demonstrating the strong educational impact of this content on language acquisition. This suggests that exposure to Hallyu not only entertains but also facilitates learning Korean language elements, even among non-native speakers. Out of all respondents, 86.7% have picked up Korean phrases or words through their engagement with Hallyu content. This high percentage indicates that Hallyu content is effective in introducing its audience to the Korean language, likely due to repeated exposure to dialogues in K-dramas, lyrics in K-pop, and phrases in variety shows. Among those who have learned Korean, 57.3% actively incorporate these phrases into their daily conversations. This practical application signifies that language learning is not superficial but is being integrated into their everyday lives. This could be due to a desire to express fandom or connect with fellow Hallyu enthusiasts. On the other hand, 13.3% of respondents have not learned any Korean language elements from Hallyu. This smaller group may represent viewers who engage with the content more passively,

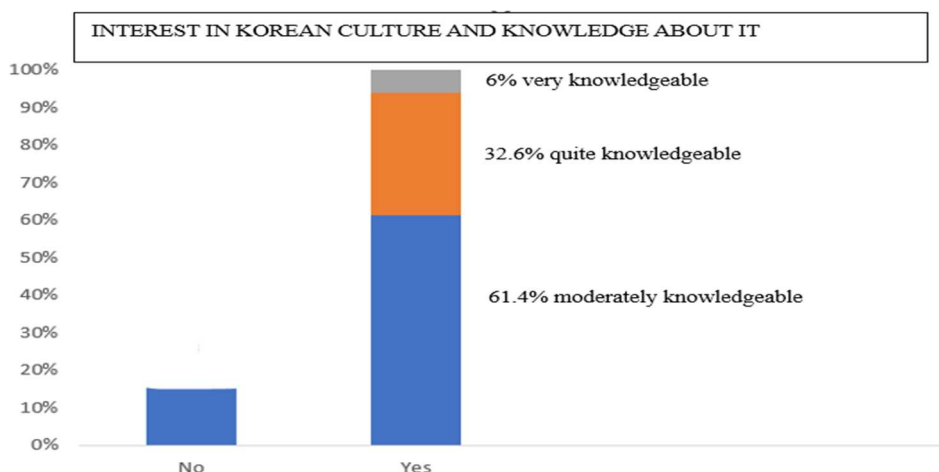
focusing on entertainment rather than educational aspects. Alternatively, it could reflect language barriers or a preference for consuming the content through subtitles without an active effort to learn the language. The data indicates that Hallyu content significantly aids informal language learning, as many respondents have picked up Korean words or phrases from it. This engagement suggests that Hallyu not only entertains but also enhances language skills, contributing to increased global interest in learning Korean. However, the 13.3% who haven't learned any Korean show that Hallyu's linguistic impact can vary based on engagement levels, with some experiencing it primarily as visual and auditory content. Overall, Hallyu serves as both entertainment and a language learning tool, highlighting its cultural and educational influence.

According to one of the respondent,

“I have adopted a lot of Korean phrases into my daily conversation which includes saying "Aigoo" sometimes, saying thank you, hello, “woah”,etc. I also make finger hearts and big arm hearts, or just in general speaking Korean while watching kdrama's way before the english subtitles show up.”

Impact of Hallyu Content on Interest in Korean Culture

Figure 4.9 Impact of Hallyu Content on Interest in Korean Culture



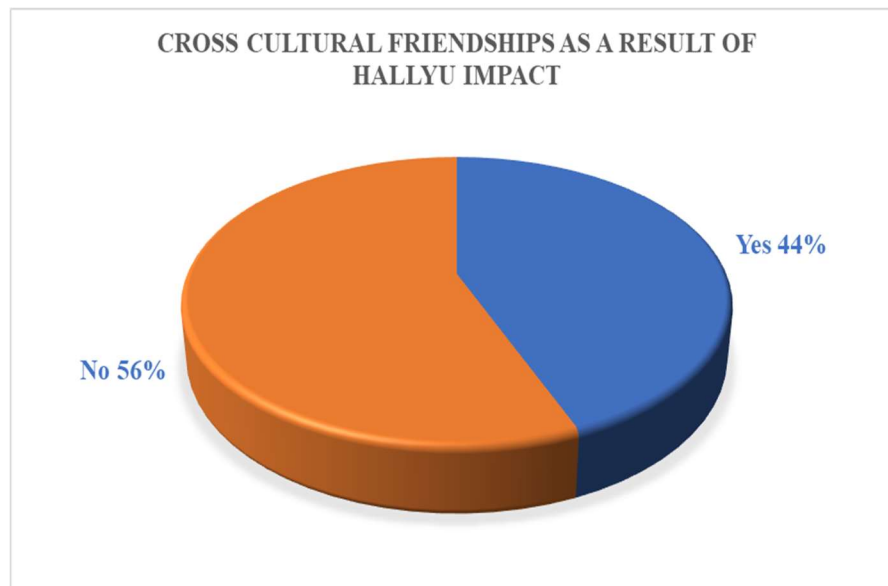
The data reveals that while 15.5% do not feel interested in Korean culture, 84.7% of respondents have developed an interest in Korean culture due to Hallyu content. Among these, 61.4% consider themselves moderately knowledgeable, 32.6% quite knowledgeable, and 6%

very knowledgeable about Korean culture. This suggests that Hallyu not only sparks interest in Korean culture but also contributes to varying levels of cultural understanding among its audience. The high percentage of respondents showing increased interest in Korean culture underscores Hallyu's significant influence. The varying levels of knowledge indicate that while Hallyu effectively raises cultural awareness, it does so to different extents, highlighting its role in broadening cultural horizons and deepening understanding.

Impact on Cross-Cultural Friendships

The data shows that 43.9% of respondents have made friends from different cultural backgrounds through their interest in Hallyu, while 56.1% have not. This indicates that Hallyu has facilitated cross-cultural connections for a significant portion of its audience, fostering friendships and cultural exchange. However, the fact that a majority (56.1%) have not made such connections suggests that while Hallyu can be a bridge for intercultural friendships, it doesn't universally lead to them. This may be due to factors like the nature of individual engagement with Hallyu content or the social environments of the respondents.

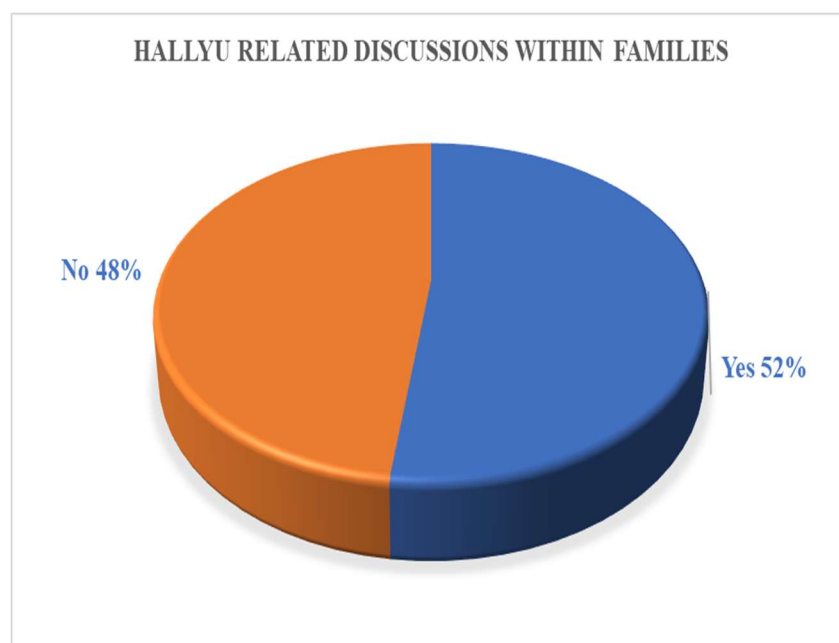
Figure 4.10 Impact on Cross-Cultural Friendships



Family Dynamics in Hallyu Discussions The research indicates a nearly equal distribution of respondents who participate in Hallyu-related family discussions (52%), compared to 48% who do not. This shows that although Hallyu has gained popularity as a cultural phenomenon, family conversations haven't always included it. The engagement of 52% of respondents in family discussions about Hallyu indicates that the Korean wave is not only an individual

interest but also a topic of broader conversation in some households. This could reflect the increasing normalization and acceptance of global cultural trends within Indian families. On the other hand, the 48% who do not participate in these discussions may suggest a generational or cultural gap where Hallyu is still perceived as a niche interest, or where family members might not share the same enthusiasm for Korean content. This divide highlights the varied levels of cultural integration and acceptance of Hallyu across different family dynamics, with some households embracing it as a shared interest and others keeping it as a more individual pursuit.

Figure 4.11 Family Dynamics in Hallyu Discussions



Younger family members tend to be more receptive to Hallyu, while older generations often exhibit reluctance or disinterest. One respondent noted,

"Relatives close to my age react positively, but elderly ones do not enjoy these contents as much as we do."

Initial resistance or indifference from family members can give way to curiosity or partial acceptance over time. As one participant shared,

"Initially, they totally avoided me. Now, they are all ears to hear what I have to say about Korean dramas and music. That doesn't mean they are interested in Hallyu, but maybe they would like to know what I am up to these days."

A different perspective was offered by a respondent who said,

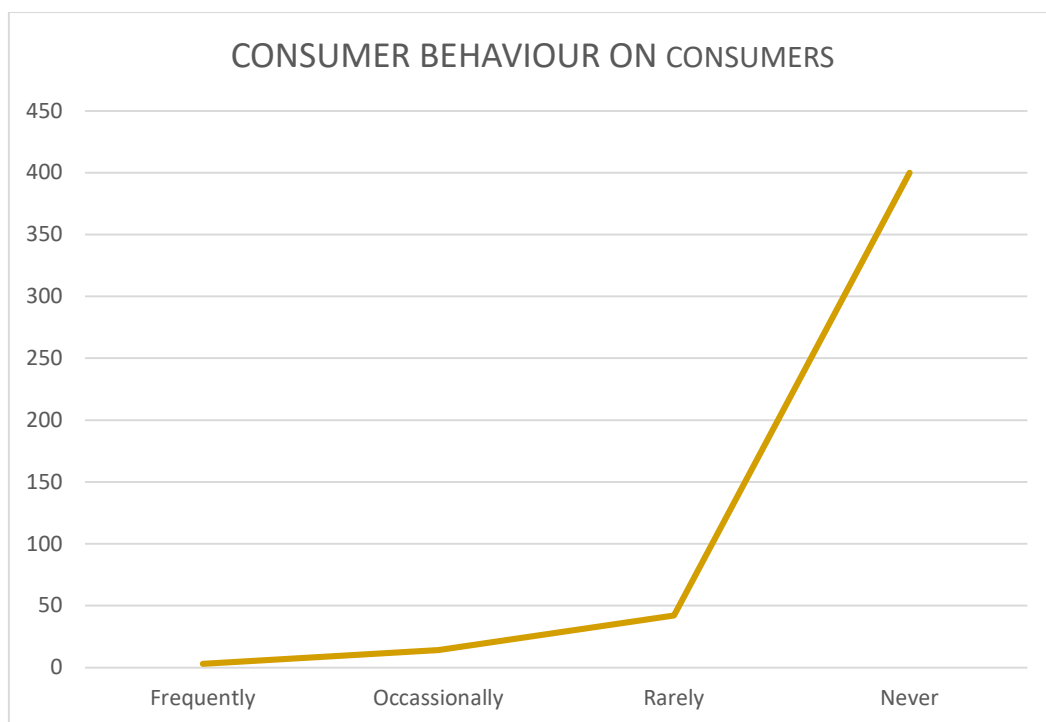
"Initially, they were reluctant and mocked me... Now that they have also realized the popularity of Hallyu, they have started to react positively. My mom likes the fashion trends in K-dramas and feels safe for the family to watch together, unlike American shows with nudity and heavy sexual content."

These comments provide a deeper understanding of the dynamics at play within families regarding Hallyu discussions. They reveal a mix of generational and cultural differences, initial reluctance that evolves into curiosity, and selective acceptance of certain aspects of Korean culture, which all contribute to the overall pattern observed in the quantitative data.

Consumer Behaviour and Spending on Hallyu-Related Products

The distribution of responses regarding the purchase of Hallyu-related products reveals that a significant majority of respondents (82.6%) either never (40.8%) or rarely (41.8%) purchase Hallyu-related products, indicating that for the majority, there is limited or infrequent spending on items such as merchandise, music, or beauty products associated with Hallyu. Only 14.3% purchase Hallyu-related products occasionally, and a very small percentage (3.1%) do so frequently.

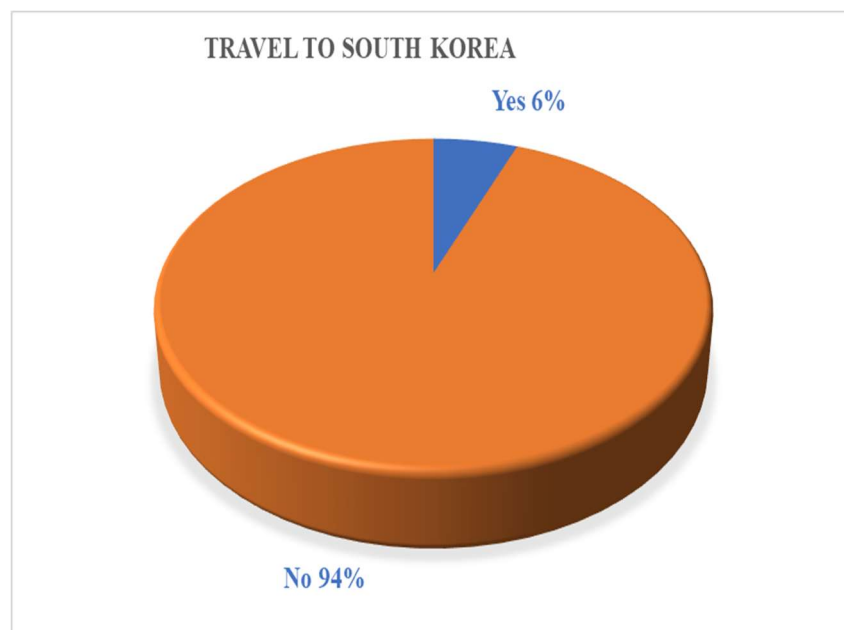
Figure 4.12 Consumer Behaviour and Spending on Hallyu-Related Products



This highlights that while there is some level of interest, it does not translate into regular or significant consumer behaviour for the majority. The data suggests that although there is considerable interest in Hallyu content, it does not strongly influence purchasing behaviour and that dedicated or enthusiastic spending on Hallyu-related products is relatively uncommon. This could imply that factors such as the cost of products, availability, or personal preferences may limit frequent consumer engagement. The low frequency of purchases could also reflect a general preference for consuming Hallyu content through more accessible means, such as streaming, rather than through physical or high-cost items. Additionally, since the majority of respondents belong to mediocre to neutral financial stability, affordability may also be a significant factor influencing their limited engagement with Hallyu-related products.

Travel to South Korea among Hallyu fans

Figure 4.13 Travel to South Korea among Hallyu fans

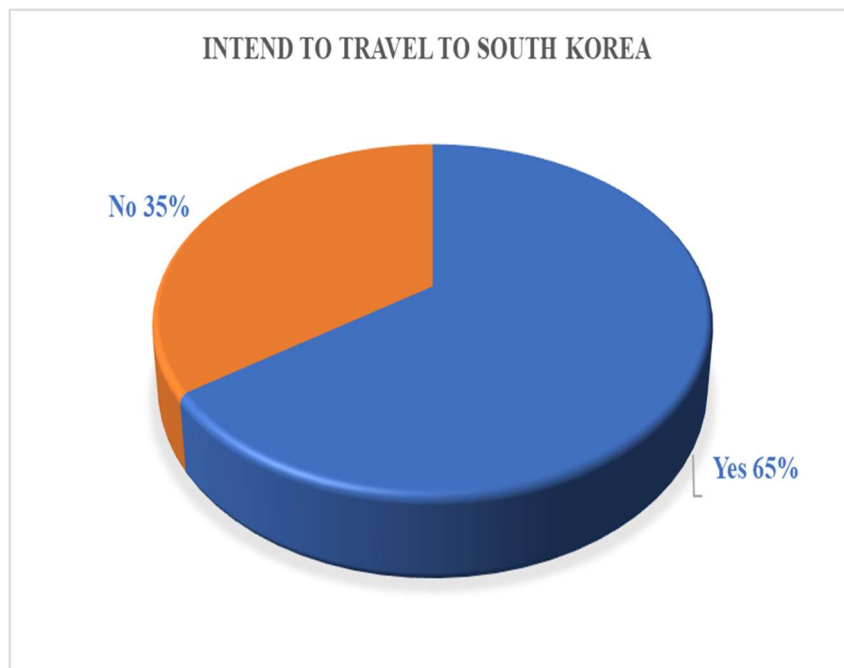


The data reveals that an overwhelming majority of respondents (96.9%) have never travelled to South Korea, while a small minority (3.1%) have made the journey. This stark contrast between the immense popularity of Hallyu and actual travel to South Korea among fans. The high percentage of respondents who have not travelled to South Korea (96.9%) suggests that while interest in Hallyu content is widespread, it does not necessarily translate into physical visits to South Korea. This gap could be due to several factors, such as the high cost of international travel, logistical challenges, or personal priorities that limit the ability to travel.

Intend to Travel to South Korea

The data shows that 65% of respondents have planned or plan to travel to South Korea because of their interest in Hallyu, while 35% have not considered this as a motivating factor, indicating a strong connection between Hallyu enthusiasm and the desire to visit South Korea, as for some individuals, Hallyu not only influences their entertainment choices but also shapes their travel plans, reflecting a deep engagement with Korean culture. Those interested in Hallyu have considered or planned to travel to South Korea because of their interest, indicating that Hallyu significantly influences travel aspirations. The remaining respondents who have not planned or do not plan to travel to South Korea suggest that while Hallyu sparks strong interest and desire among many, it does not necessarily translate into actual travel for everyone. This gap might reflect practical constraints such as cost or travel restrictions. Overall, the data highlights that while Hallyu has a compelling impact on travel intentions for many, real-world factors can limit the extent of this influence.

Figure 4.14 Intend to Travel to South Korea



The comments from case studies further illuminate the impact of Hallyu on travel intentions, particularly when it comes to career aspirations. For instance, one respondent mentioned, *"I'm planning to be a Dermatologist practising in South Korea. South Korea is a desirable place to become a dermatologist due to the country's leading position in advanced skincare and dermatology."*

This reflects how Hallyu has inspired not just leisure travel but also career-oriented moves, showing a deep integration of Korean cultural influence into personal and professional goals. Another comment reveals a profound shift in personal ambitions:

"I did not know that I had the potential to dance until I got introduced to K-pop and BTS. When I tried to learn the choreo of Butter, I realised that I could dance pretty well. Now dancing and singing is my everything, and I know it might sound delusional, but I really want to become an Idol in the K-industry."

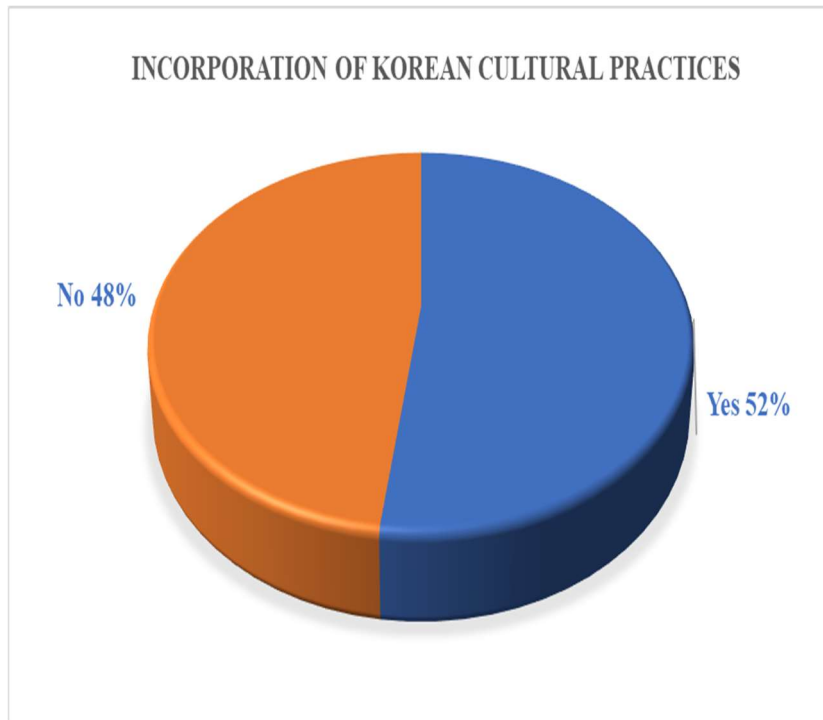
This highlights how exposure to K-pop has significantly altered personal aspirations, motivating individuals to pursue careers in the Korean entertainment industry.

These observations show that certain Hallyu followers' influence goes beyond simple curiosity and affects significant life choices and professional aspirations. While the majority might plan travel due to cultural interest, these responses highlight that for a smaller yet passionate group, Hallyu inspires serious career dreams and life-changing desires. This deeper understanding shows that Hallyu's impact can be both broad and deeply personal, influencing not only travel plans but also career goals and self-discovery.

Incorporation of Korean Cultural Practices

The data reveals that 52% of respondents have incorporated Korean cultural practices into their daily lives, such as using Korean skincare routines or cooking Korean dishes. In contrast, 48% have not adopted these practices. Just over half of the respondents have integrated Korean cultural practices, such as Korean skincare routines or cooking Korean dishes, into their daily lives. This suggests that Korean culture has a notable influence on daily habits for many individuals, primarily due to the allure of its beauty rituals, cuisine, and other traditions. The remaining 48% who have not adopted these practices may still be influenced by Hallyu in other ways and might not be as interested in incorporating these particular elements into their everyday life. Overall, the data reflects a strong influence of Korean culture, though adoption is not universal.

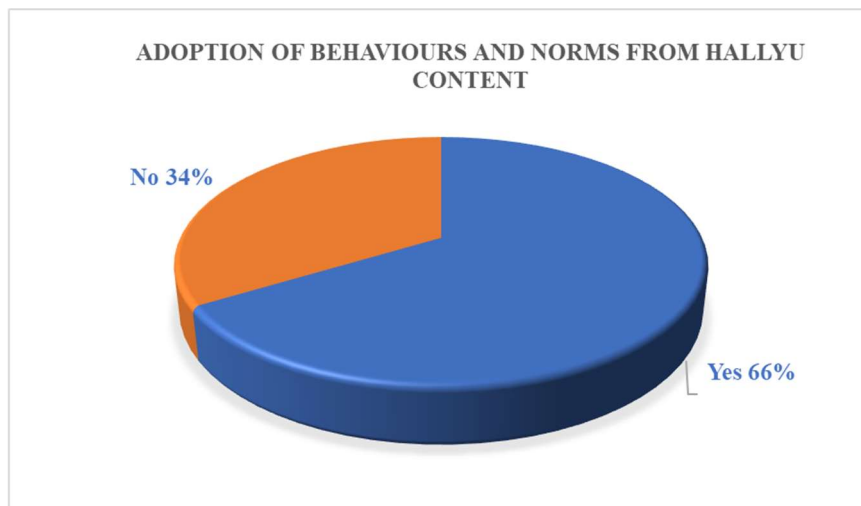
Figure 4.15 Incorporation of Korean Cultural Practices



Incorporation of Behaviour and Norms from Hallyu Content

The data indicates that 66.3% of respondents have adopted behaviours or norms from Hallyu content, such as finger hearts, using honorifics, or Korean dining etiquette.

Figure 4.16 Incorporation of Behaviour and Norms from Hallyu Content



Conversely, 33.7% have not integrated these behaviours into their lives. The majority of respondents incorporating Hallyu-inspired behaviours and norms into their daily lives demonstrate a significant influence on Korean culture. This indicates that elements like finger hearts and Korean etiquette have resonated strongly with many individuals, reflecting the broad

impact of Hallyu on personal behaviours and social interactions. The remaining who have not adopted these norms may have different cultural preferences or may not engage as deeply with Korean content. Overall, the data shows that while a large segment of the audience embraces Hallyu-related behaviours, there is still a notable portion that does not, highlighting the varied extent of Hallyu's influence.

Comments from the case studies reveal that this adoption often manifests in subtle ways, such as using gestures like finger hearts and bowing to show respect, which have become part of their daily routines. For example, one respondent mentioned,

"The way Koreans show respect to their elders by bowing their heads has influenced me. I believe we had that tradition once, but now it's gone. I involuntarily started doing that whenever I saw elders or higher officials, but not in a very noticeable way, but yeah slightly noticeable. When someone appreciates me, I say thank you by bowing my head slightly. Even I was surprised to see me doing this. I don't know how I started doing this. Obviously, Kdramas."

Other respondents noted that,

"Various poses for pictures like cheek heart and inverted V often are inspired by new trends set by Kpop idols and certain slangs also get stuck in our heads through addictive Kdramas".

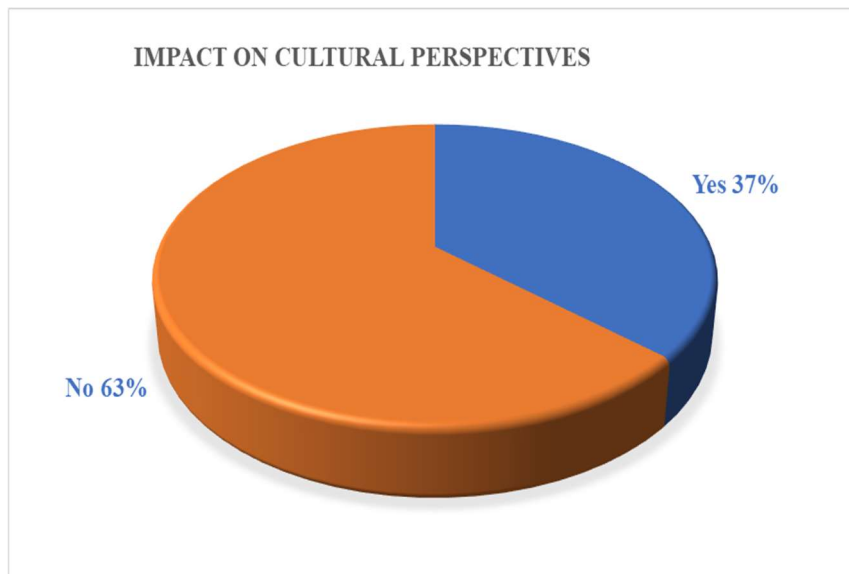
"I use finger hearts and thumps up often, it has become an integral part of me to express myself evidently through actions which i believe i own to Kdramas and Kpop. I realised this when one of my friends pointed out that i have unique behaviours like butterfly claps, etc".

"Yes, I've noticed the widespread use of the finger heart gesture, the incorporation of certain dining etiquettes such as waiting for elders to start eating before beginning a meal. These norms from Hallyu content have become quite popular globally."

The widespread adoption of these behaviours highlights the deep engagement with Hallyu content and its capacity to shape personal expressions and social interactions.

Incorporation of Behaviour and Norms from Hallyu Content

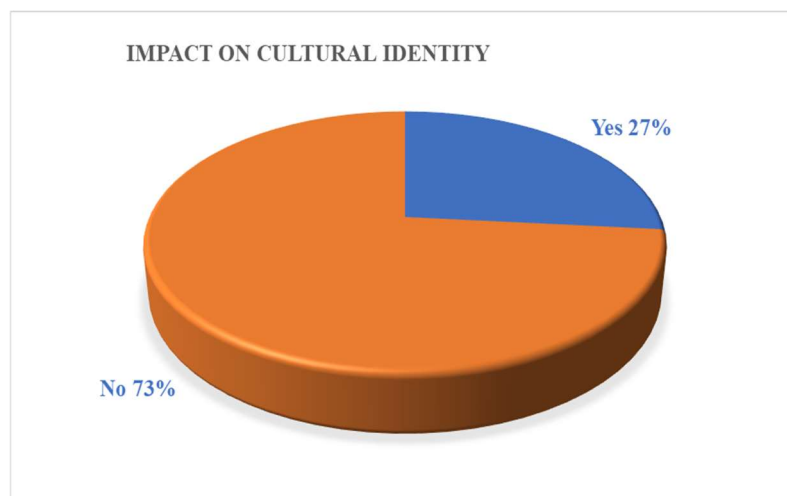
Figure 4.17 Impact of Hallyu on Perceptions of Traditional Indian Values



The data shows that 63.3% of respondents do not feel that Hallyu has changed their perspective on traditional Indian values, while 36.7% believe it has. This suggests that while Hallyu content may influence personal preferences and behaviours, it does not necessarily lead to a reassessment of deeply held cultural beliefs for most individuals. Conversely, few of the respondents feel that their perspective on traditional values has been influenced by Hallyu, highlighting that for some, exposure to Korean culture has prompted a reconsideration or modification of their views. The responses suggest that cultural exchanges can affect individuals differently, depending on their openness to and engagement with new cultural ideas.

Impact of Hallyu on Cultural Identity

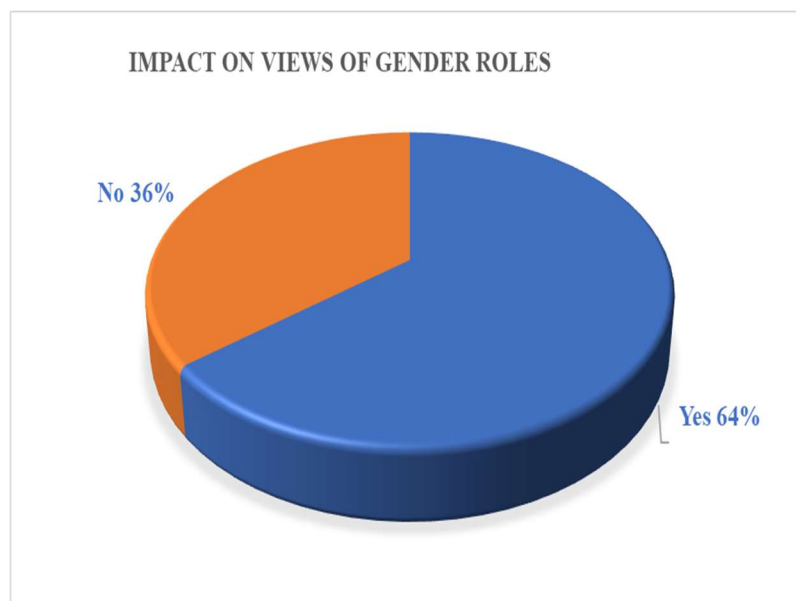
Figure 4.18 Impact of Hallyu on Cultural Identity



The data indicates that 73% of respondents feel their cultural identity has not changed since engaging with Hallyu, while 27% believe it has. This suggests that, for most individuals, their sense of cultural identity remains stable even with exposure to foreign cultural influences. In contrast, for a few of the respondents Hallyu has affected their cultural identity, indicating that for some, interaction with Korean culture has led to a shift in how they perceive or express their own cultural identity.

Impact of Korean Culture on Views of Gender Roles and Expectations

Figure 4.19 Impact of Korean Culture on Views of Gender Roles and Expectations



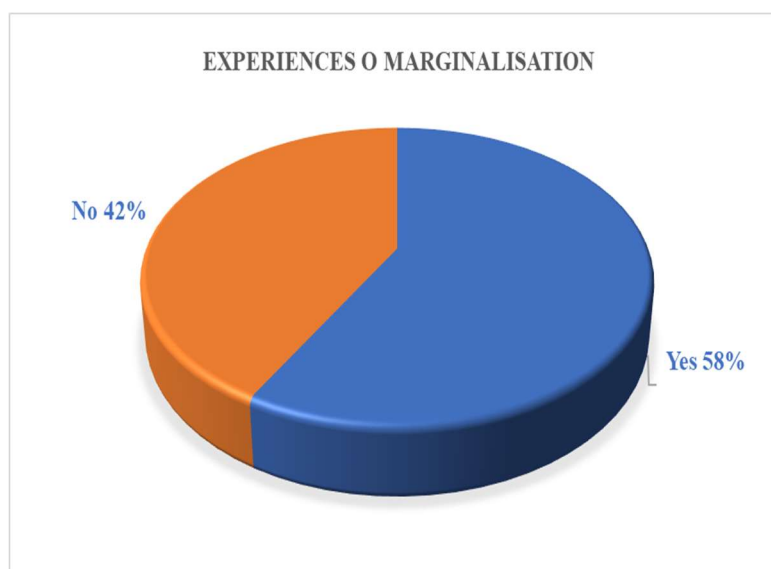
The data reveals that 64% of the respondents feel their views on gender roles and expectations have considerably changed after exposure to Korean culture, while 36% do not believe their views have been affected. A majority of the respondents report a shift in their perspectives on gender roles and expectations as a result of engaging with Korean culture. This suggests that Korean media, including K-dramas and K-pop, may challenge or expand traditional notions of gender roles by presenting diverse and progressive portrayals. The influence of Korean culture appears to be significant for many, potentially offering new insights or alternative viewpoints on gender expectations.

Experiences of marginalization faced by the respondents

The data shows that 58% of respondents have faced marginalization from mainstream society due to their admiration for Hallyu, while 42% have not experienced such exclusion; indicating

that cultural resistance is a significant issue for many fans. This marginalization could stem from various sources, including societal norms and biases that may not fully embrace or understand the global influence of Korean culture. Such resistance may be driven by perceptions of Hallyu as a niche or foreign interest, leading to negative attitudes or misunderstandings from those who are less familiar with or supportive of Korean media. The remaining who have not faced marginalization may be less affected by these cultural barriers or belong to more accepting social environments. This discrepancy highlights the ongoing challenge of integrating global cultural phenomena into local contexts and suggests a need for greater cultural openness and understanding.

Figure 4.20 Experiences of marginalization faced by the respondents

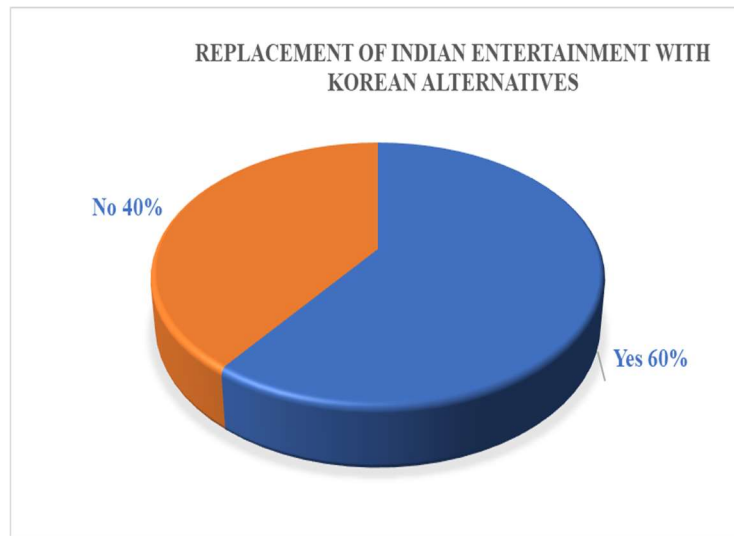


Replacement of Indian Entertainment with Korean Alternatives

60% of respondents have replaced some of their Indian entertainment with Korean alternatives, while 40% have not made such a change. The data indicates a notable shift in media consumption, with the majority of the respondents integrating Korean entertainment into their daily routines at the expense of traditional Indian media. This shift suggests that Korean content, such as K-dramas and K-pop, holds substantial appeal, possibly due to its fresh storytelling approaches, high production values, and diverse genres. Thus fans prefer the Kdramas over Indian serials. The significant adoption of Korean alternatives might be driven by a desire for new and engaging content that offers a different cultural perspective compared to what is typically available in Indian entertainment. The remaining respondents who have not replaced Indian entertainment may prefer the familiarity and cultural resonance of local media or may not find Korean content as compelling or accessible. This divide highlights the impact

of global media trends on local consumption habits and underscores the varying levels of influence that Hallyu has on different audiences.

4.21 Replacement of Indian Entertainment with Korean Alternatives



Korean dramas are celebrated for their thematic diversity, which includes historical contexts, Korean mythology, and culturally rich narratives. Some of the respondents commented,

"Korean dramas are known for their various themes that range from incorporating elements of history and Korean myths. But when it comes to India, patriarchal notions and the drama over making a dish in the household persist, particularly in soap channels. At the same time, Indian dramas available on Amazon Prime or Netflix have their own standard, but not many people can afford to watch them. The privileged can harness the same."

"I like how aesthetically they portray the beauty of the country through breathtaking visual representations, which is the main reason to get different vibes and calm experiences while enjoying most of the dramas."

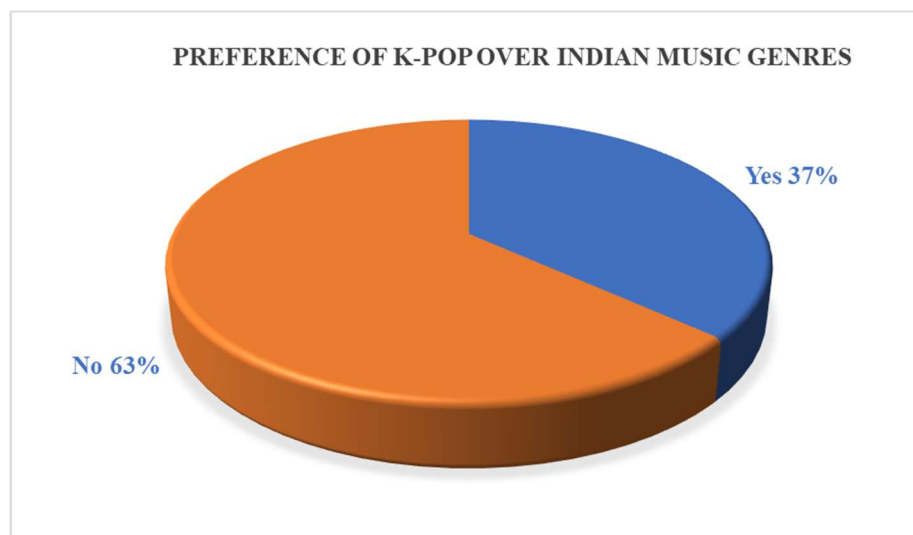
"Indian dramas, not movies—dramas alone—can be repetitive, taking too much time for the same action and sometimes promoting abusive and toxic relationships. They often show women facing all struggles just because they are women, and this is normalised. Even the fact that they are physically abused by their partners is not pointed out as abuse but as small fights that they overcome with very not-so-important apologies. Indian drama could be more, but they always stop at low-quality, cheap dramas. In terms of quality, Korean dramas win, and in terms of story creation, Indian

dramas lose. Korean dramas, in terms of the number of episodes, are concise, while Indian dramas have thousands of wasteful episodes with nothing of quality but toxicity. Korean dramas show a small frame of work with good life lessons. In this modern society, with adults being busy, Indian dramas should seriously consider their content and cut down the unnecessary amount of episodes."

These dialogues reveal a clear preference for Korean dramas among the respondents, who appreciate the thematic richness, aesthetic appeal, and concise storytelling of Korean media compared to Indian dramas. The criticisms highlight a dissatisfaction with Indian dramas, particularly in their portrayal of gender roles and relationships, which are seen as outdated and often toxic. The contrast drawn between the two suggests that Indian dramas could benefit from adopting some of the storytelling techniques and production values of Korean dramas to stay relevant and engaging to modern audiences. For Indian audiences, K-dramas provide a refreshing contrast to the often stereotypical and patriarchal themes prevalent in local dramas. This aesthetic portrayal and the breathtaking visual representation of Korean settings not only captivate viewers but also offer them a serene escape from the mundane, as mentioned by the respondents.

Preference of K-pop over Indian music genres

Figure 4.22 Preference of K-pop over Indian music genres

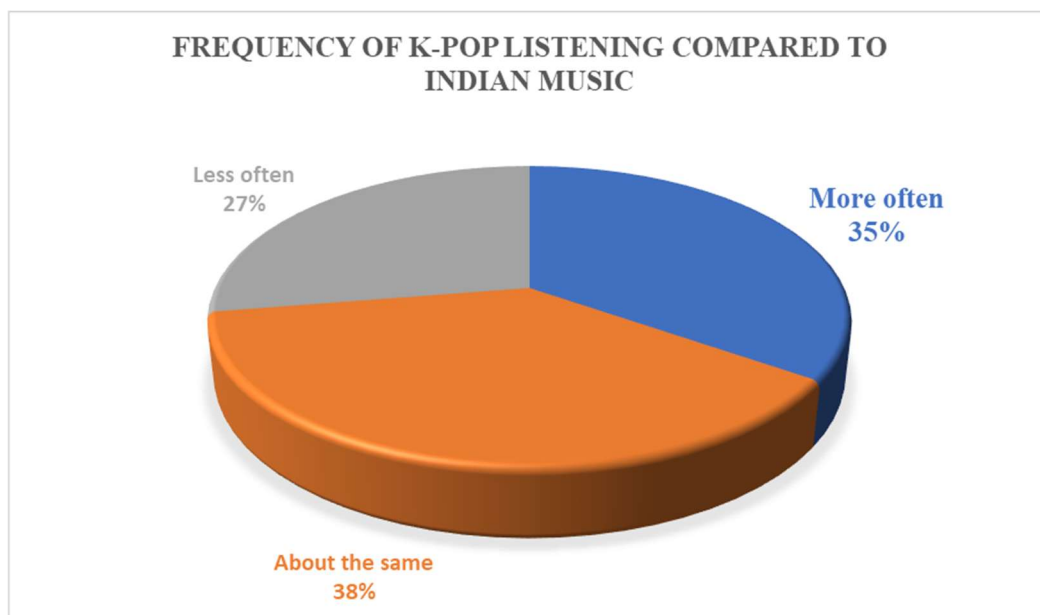


The data indicates that 63% of respondents do not prefer K-pop over Indian music genres, while 37% do. This distribution reveals that while K-pop has a significant following, the majority of respondents still favor Indian music. Indian music, with its deep cultural roots, offers a diverse array of genres, from classical to contemporary, which resonate with the cultural identity of the respondents. Indian music often reflects the traditional values,

languages, and emotions that are deeply ingrained in the daily lives of the listeners, making it more relatable and meaningful. The respondents who prefer K-pop likely do so due to the global appeal of the genre, characterized by its catchy melodies, high production values, and visually appealing performances. The rising influence of Hallyu, especially among the youth, has introduced them to K-pop, which offers a fresh and modern alternative to Indian music. The data suggests that while K-pop is gaining traction, Indian music's deep cultural significance and diversity continue to hold a stronger place in the hearts of the majority.

Listening Frequency of K-pop vs. Indian Music

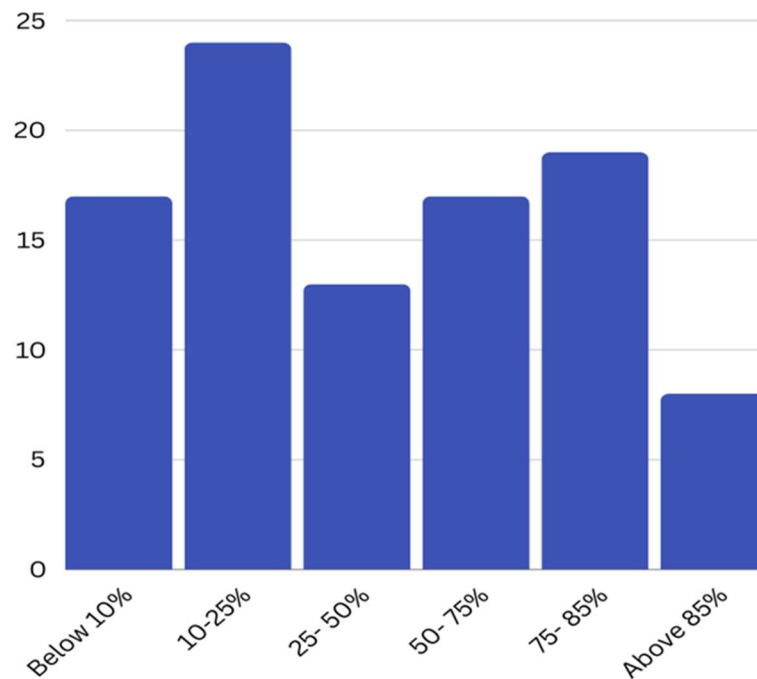
Figure 4.23 Listening Frequency of K-pop vs. Indian Music



The data reveals that 35% of respondents listen to K-pop more often than Indian pop or Bollywood music, 38% listen to both about the same, and 27% listen to K-pop less often. This distribution suggests a balanced engagement with both K-pop and Indian music among the respondents. The fact that 38% listen to both genres equally indicates that K-pop has successfully integrated into the musical preferences of a significant portion of the audience, possibly due to its global appeal and widespread availability on streaming platforms. The 35% who listen to K-pop more often may be drawn to its unique blend of catchy tunes, vibrant visuals, and the influence of the Hallyu wave. However, the 27% who listen to K-pop less often might prefer Indian music for its cultural relevance and emotional connection. This data reflects the growing, yet varied, impact of K-pop in comparison to the longstanding presence of Indian music.

Average Percentage of K-pop Songs in Personal Playlists

Figure 4.24 Average Percentage of K-pop Songs in Personal Playlists



This distribution indicates that while a significant number of respondents (24%) have K-pop occupying 10-25% of their playlists, there is a notable presence of K-pop across different ranges, with 19% of respondents having 75-85% of their playlists filled with K-pop songs. The lower percentage categories (below 25%) likely include those who appreciate a broader variety of music genres or have a stronger attachment to local music, which remains a staple in their playlists. Conversely, the higher percentage categories (50-85%) suggest a more dedicated K-pop fanbase, who prioritise K-pop over other genres. The relatively small percentage (8%) of respondents with more than 85% K-pop indicates that while K-pop is influential, it hasn't completely dominated the playlists for the majority.

Culinary Influence of Hallyu

The data shows that 76% of respondents have tried Korean food, while 24% have not. The high percentage of respondents who have tried Korean food suggests a growing curiosity and openness towards Korean culture, likely influenced by the Hallyu wave and the popularity of K-pop and K-dramas. Exposure to Korean media often includes depictions of Korean cuisine, sparking interest in trying it. Additionally, the increasing availability of Korean restaurants and products in many regions makes it easier for people to explore these culinary options. The 24% who have not tried Korean food might reflect limited access or a lack of interest, possibly due

to differences in taste preferences or cultural familiarity. Overall, this data underscores the cultural crossover and influence that Korean media has had on lifestyle choices, including food.

Figure 4.25 Culinary Influence of Hallyu



Sources of First Learning About Korean Food

Figure 4.26 Sources of First Learning About Korean Food



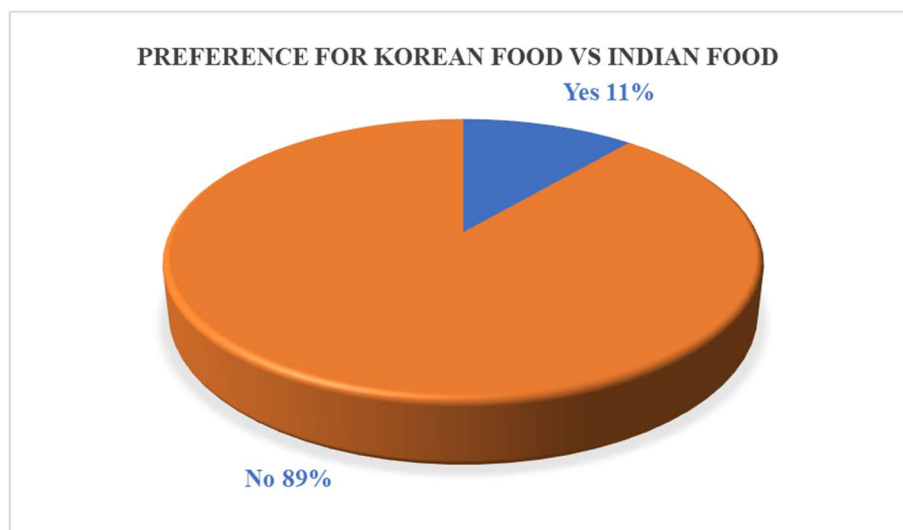
The data shows that 83% of respondents first learned about Korean food through social media (K-dramas, TV, K-pop, movies), 5% through restaurants, and 12% through friends or family. The overwhelming majority of respondents discovering Korean food through social media

reflects the significant role that K-dramas, K-pop, and other media content play in shaping interests and trends. Korean media often features Korean cuisine prominently, generating curiosity and driving interest. The relatively small percentages of those learning about Korean food through restaurants or personal connections suggest that while direct experience and word-of-mouth are factors, they are less influential compared to the pervasive impact of media. This trend underscores the power of media in influencing lifestyle choices and cultural interests, amplifying the reach of Korean culinary culture.

Preference for Korean Food compared to Traditional Indian Food

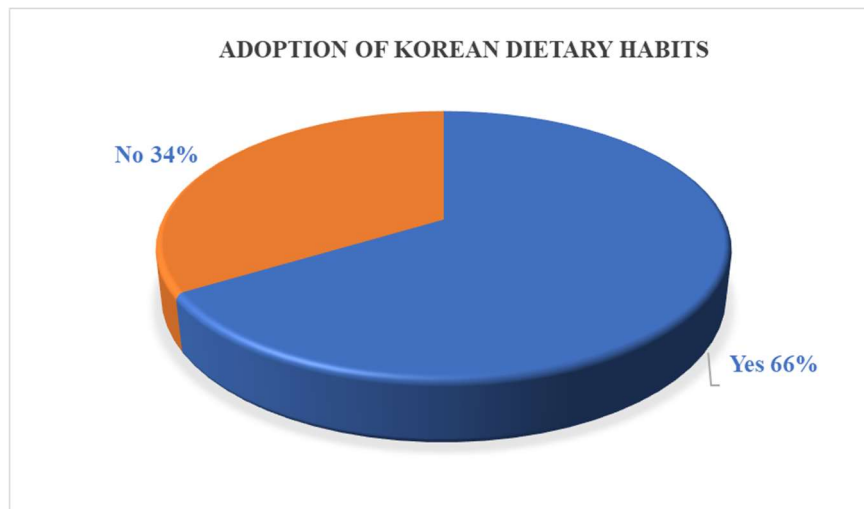
The data indicates that 89% of respondents do not prefer Korean food over traditional Indian food, while 11% do. The data reveals a strong preference for traditional Indian food, reflecting its deep-rooted cultural significance and the emotional connection many respondents have with their native cuisine. Traditional Indian food, with its diverse flavours and regional specialties, is often a staple in daily life and holds a special place in cultural and familial traditions. The relatively small percentage favouring Korean food might be due to its novelty compared to the familiar and comforting nature of Indian food. Despite growing interest in Korean cuisine, the entrenched cultural and personal ties to Indian food remain dominant, illustrating the challenges of shifting deeply ingrained culinary preferences.

Figure 4.27 Preference for Korean Food compared to Traditional Indian Food



Adoption of Korean Dietary Habits

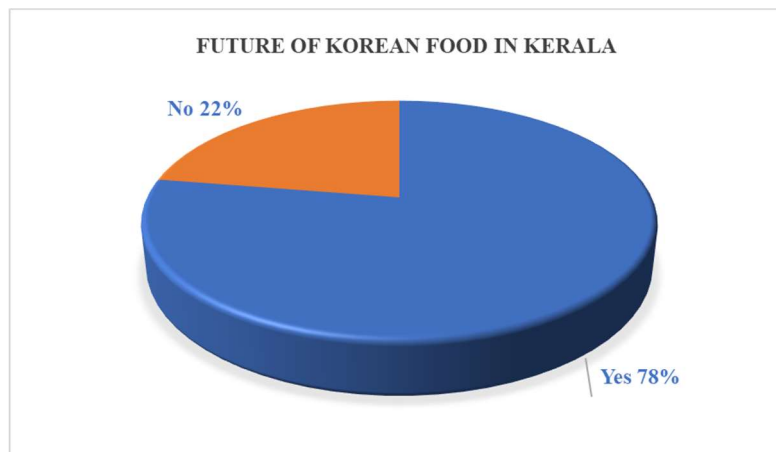
Figure 4.28 Adoption of Korean Dietary Habits



The data shows that 66% of respondents have adopted Korean dietary habits, such as eating kimchi, using chopsticks, eating noodles in a bowl or having seaweed paper as sidedish, while 34% have not adopted any of these dietary habits. The majority of respondents adopting Korean dietary habits indicates a significant level of integration of Korean cultural practices into their daily lives, likely driven by increased exposure through K-dramas, K-pop, and other media. The popularity of Korean cuisine and its unique elements, like kimchi and chopsticks, has spurred interest among many individuals, reflecting a broader cultural curiosity and openness. The 34% who have not adopted these habits may be less influenced by Korean media or may prefer to stick with familiar culinary practices. This trend highlights the growing influence of Korean culture, though it also underscores the persistence of established dietary preferences and habits.

Future Popularity of Korean Food Among Youth in Kerala

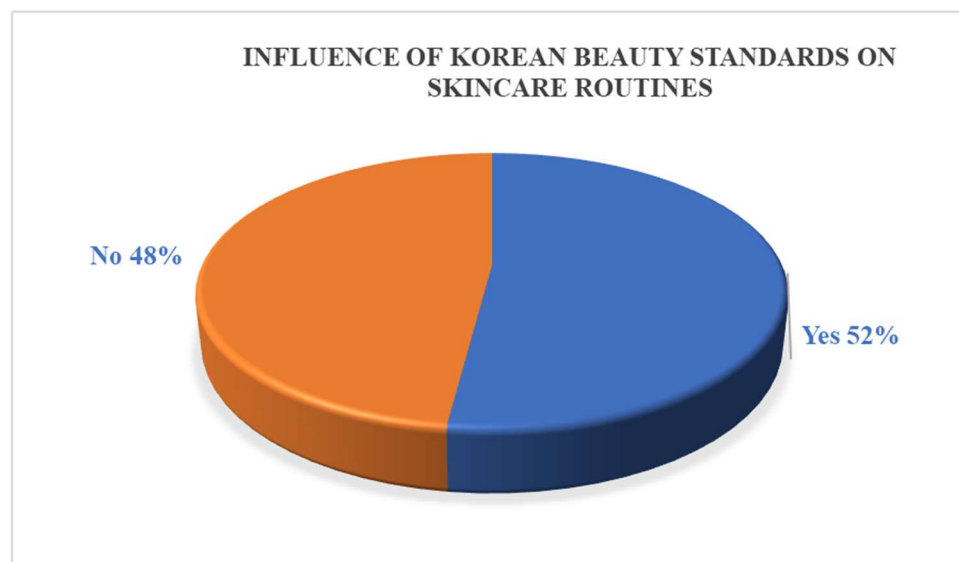
Figure 4.29 Future Popularity of Korean Food Among Youth in Kerala



The data indicates that 78% of respondents believe Korean food will continue to gain popularity among the youth in Kerala over the next few years, while 22% do not. The strong belief in the growing popularity of Korean food among Kerala's youth reflects the ongoing influence of the Hallyu wave, which has introduced and popularised Korean cuisine through media and cultural exchange. The increasing visibility of Korean food in social media and its portrayal in Korean dramas likely contribute to this positive outlook. The 22% who do not foresee further growth might be sceptical due to cultural preferences or limited access to Korean food. However, the predominant expectation of continued popularity suggests that the appeal of Korean cuisine is expected to rise, driven by increasing exposure and curiosity among the younger generation.

Influence of Korean Beauty Standards

Figure 4.30 Influence of Korean Beauty Standards

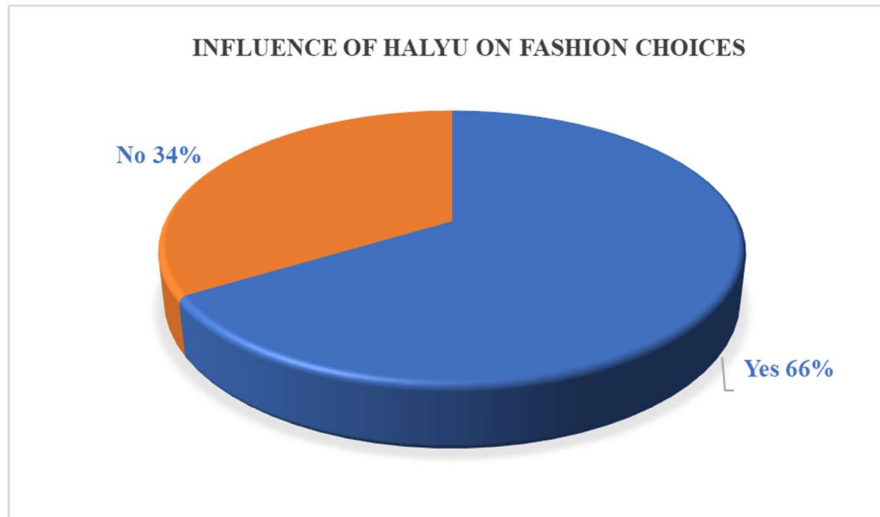


The data reveals that 53% of respondents have changed their beauty or skincare routine after being influenced by Korean beauty standards, while 48% have not. The slightly higher percentage of respondents adopting Korean beauty standards indicates a significant influence of Korean skincare trends, which are renowned for their innovative and effective approaches. Korean beauty routines often emphasise multi-step skincare, hydration, and dewy skin, which may appeal to those seeking new and improved methods for their beauty regimen. The 48% who have not changed their routines may either be satisfied with their existing practices or prefer not to adopt new trends. This distribution highlights the growing impact of Korean beauty standards, such as how many adopt the usage of rice water for Korean glass skin,

reflecting a broader trend of integrating global beauty practices while also acknowledging the persistence of established personal preferences.

Influence of Korean Fashion Choices

Figure 4.31 Influence of Korean Fashion Choices



The data shows that 66% of respondents believe Hallyu has influenced their fashion choices compared to traditional Indian attire, while 34% do not. The majority of respondents acknowledging the influence of Hallyu on their fashion choices indicates a significant impact of Korean pop culture on personal style. Hallyu, with its emphasis on trendy, stylish, and often bold fashion statements, has introduced new styles and trends that appeal to the youth. This influence is likely driven by the high visibility of Korean fashion in K-dramas and K-pop, which often showcase cutting-edge and chic outfits. The 34% who feel Hallyu has not affected their fashion choices might prefer traditional Indian attire or have a personal style that remains distinct from the current Korean trends. This data reflects the growing integration of global fashion trends into local wardrobes while highlighting the enduring appeal of traditional styles. Korean fashion offers trendy, modern styles that attract those looking for contemporary influences. Meanwhile, traditional Indian fashion is tied to cultural heritage and personal identity, making it more preferred for many. Overall, while Korean fashion is popular, traditional Indian fashion remains favoured due to its cultural importance.

Some of the respondents commented on whether they prefer Korean fashion choices over traditional Indian attires,

“I like both Indian traditional and Korean fashion. Indian dress makes me more Indian and Korean dresses make me more modern and cooler.”

“As for India and Korea, both the countries have different cultures and hence different sense of style. If we talk about style in fashion then I would say that Koreans are known to follow the latest fashion trends. In terms of fashion trends, they are always one step ahead of Indians, except for some of the north-Indian states, where people are highly influenced by Korean fashion. Korean fashion is in fact very famous across the world. There are even separate online shopping sites that sell only Korean fashion inspired clothes. Similarly, if we talk about India, we too have our own style statement. We all are fashionistas too. We may not follow the latest fashion trends in India, but we sure know how to dress ourselves to the nines. So, it's not like we can really compare the two styles as they are totally different. They wear what they look good in and we wear ours. We may not look good in their clothes and they may not in ours. It's all about one's personal preference and taste. After all, one must wear only that, he/she is comfortable in and whatever enhances their personality and make their own style.”

“Even though the clothes are a bit expensive, it is more comfy than the Indian dress. I think for our generation, the Korean fashion trend is more adaptable and comfortable.”

“I strongly believe that we're not Koreans and we can cherry pick what we like but the standards should not cross over to us. I have a background in fashion and I believe one should explore personal styles and not fall prey to trends of any sort.”

“Korean fashion trends often emphasise minimalism, contemporary styles, and a blend of casual and formal elements, which can be very appealing. However, traditional Indian fashion is rich in cultural heritage, vibrant colours, and intricate designs, which also hold a unique charm and beauty. Each has its own distinct appeal and can be appreciated in different contexts.”

4.4 QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

4.4.1 Observations on the Influence of Korean Culture and Social Interactions

The first case responded,

“Hallyu has affected my way of speech (in a good way). I use more Korean words and expressions in my speech which have made my friends more curious to know about it. They really felt entertained to use such expression like ‘thankyou’, “saranghae”, and sorry that we use often. Some have even begun to like Hallyu. Also, I’ve felt that there are times when I felt

like only certain Korean words can express exactly what I feel more than my own mother tongue.”

This comment highlights the positive impact of Hallyu on personal communication and social interactions. The integration of Korean expressions into daily speech has not only piqued friends' curiosity but also facilitated cultural exchange. The use of Korean words as emotional expressions underscores how deeply cultural elements can influence personal communication styles, leading to greater appreciation and interest in Korean culture among peers.

The second case responded,

“I’ve made friends online and offline through discussions on Korean dramas and movies. There are many Telegram and Whatsapp groups also. It’s good to make connections based on the drama or series we have watched, as we get to relate more with each other. But I’ve also encountered many friends especially males who despise Hallyu and mock at me and also mock at the Koreans for walking with clean shaves as Indian men consider beard to the characteristic of masculinity. I usually ignore them.”

This comment reflects the dual nature of Hallyu's influence on social interactions. While it has facilitated the formation of connections with like-minded individuals who share an interest in Korean media, it has also led to negative reactions from those who reject or misunderstand the cultural aspects of Hallyu. The mockery related to cultural differences, such as grooming habits, illustrates broader issues of cultural acceptance and resistance, showing that while Hallyu can build community, it can also encounter friction with traditional norms.

Third case responded,

“Some of them who do not follow the K-Content in any aspect really mock the K Culture (Certainly K-Pop) without knowing what it is. Criticisms are needed in cultural contexts and we should question things why it is the way they are. But one basic condition to criticise a particular aspect even if it is a concept, theory, situation, context, language, culture, etc. One must have clear knowledge about what they are going to criticise. Rather than it will only be a baseless judgement and perfect example of seeing things with prejudice. Some of them are curious about to know more about the K contents but the majority hate it without any reason.”

This comment addresses the issue of uninformed criticism and prejudice towards Korean culture. The lack of understanding and knowledge among critics leads to baseless judgments

and reinforces negative stereotypes. Despite some curiosity and openness from a few individuals, the prevalent disdain reflects a broader challenge of bridging cultural gaps and promoting informed discussions about foreign cultures. It highlights the importance of education and exposure in fostering cultural understanding.

Fourth case responded,

“I have been successful in turning many of my friends into K-pop as well as K-drama fans. I would like to think I have also managed to at least change their negative opinions on Hallyu and make them give it another chance. Some of my friends used to despise K-pop, but now most of them are curious about it, even my non K-pop friends use finger hearts and say thank you and hi in Korean.”

This comment illustrates the potential for positive influence and cultural exchange through personal advocacy. By introducing friends to K-pop and K-dramas, the individual has not only expanded their peers' appreciation for Hallyu but also integrated elements of Korean culture into their everyday interactions. The shift from disdain to curiosity and acceptance underscores the power of personal enthusiasm and engagement in changing perceptions and fostering cross-cultural connections.

Fifth case responded,

“My interest in Hallyu has no effect on my social interactions with peers who do not follow it. They neither despise it nor show particular curiosity about it, allowing us to maintain our interactions without any significant influence from my Hallyu interests.”

This comment suggests a neutral impact of Hallyu on social interactions, indicating that the individual's interests in Korean culture have not significantly affected their relationships with peers who are indifferent or disinterested in Hallyu. This lack of effect could be due to either a general tolerance or a lack of engagement with Hallyu content among their social circle, highlighting how personal interests can vary in their influence on broader social dynamics.

4.4.2 Mental health and character

First case responded,

“Watching K-dramas has always been an escape from reality for me. It helps me relieve my stress, it is entertaining and even motivates me.”

This respondent finds K-dramas to be a source of stress relief and motivation. The ability of these shows to provide an escape from reality suggests that they serve as a coping mechanism, offering both entertainment and emotional respite. This indicates that Hallyu content can have a positive impact on mental health by providing a constructive distraction and a sense of comfort during stressful times.

The second case responded,

“K-pop has taught me to love myself and defend myself. Also, after watching many K-dramas, now I feel like I can differentiate between fake friendships and toxic relationships. Also, I listen to K-pop music a lot that it has help me improve my mental health, sometimes it is the lyrics that comfort me or at times their music beats bring up my mood.”

This respondent highlights the positive influence of K-pop and K-dramas on both self-perception and social awareness. The content has helped them develop self-love, assertiveness, and critical thinking about relationships. The dual impact on mental health—through both the emotional resonance of lyrics and the uplifting nature of the music—demonstrates how Hallyu can foster personal growth and emotional resilience.

Third case responded,

“After my 12th I was facing a dilemma as to what to do next, I faced serious identity crisis maybe because of the teenage I have even thought of very negative rubbish thoughts. It was K-pop songs influenced me positively and helped me uplift myself.”

This respondent describes how K-pop provided guidance and positivity during a period of identity crisis and negative thoughts. The music served as a source of encouragement and empowerment, helping them navigate a challenging time. This reflects the profound impact Hallyu can have on mental well-being, particularly during critical developmental stages such as adolescence.

Fourth case responded,

“If I am facing a bad day or moody day, then I decide to watch K-pop, as it can lift up my moodiness and make me happy for the day, help me live another day happily by overcoming the moodiness.”

The respondent uses K-pop as a mood enhancer, turning to it as a reliable way to lift their spirits during difficult days. This suggests that Hallyu content acts as an emotional support tool,

providing immediate and effective relief from negative emotions, thereby contributing to daily mental health maintenance.

Fifth case responded,

“K-drama helps me go on with life. Behind the curtain my life might be messed up but while watching K-dramas or Korean variety shows I just forget the complexities of life. These contents help me forget my stress.”

For this respondent, K-dramas and variety shows offer a temporary escape from life's difficulties, allowing them to disconnect from stress and complexity. This indicates that Hallyu content serves as a form of escapism that helps individuals manage stress by providing a mental break, which can be crucial for coping with ongoing challenges.

The responses collectively illustrate the significant impact of Hallyu on the mental health and character development of its audience. For many, K-dramas and K-pop serve as more than just entertainment; they act as emotional support systems, offering an escape from reality and helping individuals manage stress, uplift their spirits, and cope with life's challenges. The content not only provides comfort and motivation but also fosters personal growth by encouraging self-love, self-defense, and critical thinking about relationships. These insights highlight the therapeutic potential of Hallyu, demonstrating how it can positively influence mental well-being and contribute to the development of healthier emotional and social behaviours, particularly among youth.

4.4.3 Influence of the portrayal of characters in K-dramas in personal lives

Case 1 responded,

“The one thing I keep looking forward to is the study modifications that we can see in those Korean and Chinese dramas, how work they are putting in for their goals, all those sleepless nights and part-time jobs they are doing even as a student. Even in the K-pop industry that is the one thing that's always in my mind, the struggles they are facing, their hard work. I am an introvert. Seeing those introverted idols who were forced to participate in all their variety shows and participate in games and have to come up with on-the-spot ideas, when seeing all those I am seeing myself. It gives me the feeling that sometimes it can be terrifying but once it's done, I will get the courage to do it more.”

This respondent is deeply influenced by the portrayal of hard work, perseverance, and the struggles of characters in K-dramas and K-pop idols. As an introvert, they resonate with the challenges introverted characters face in social situations, which provides them with a sense of identification and encouragement. The depiction of overcoming fears and achieving goals despite difficulties has a motivational impact, fostering a belief that they, too, can push through their own challenges.

Case 2 responded,

“I watch dramas for entertainment. Sometimes it helps to gain good insights into certain values and also to analyse the character development of roles in particular Stories. Rather than that, for me, there are no expectations for relationships and friendships. I am aware that there is a clear distinction between the plot and characters of drama and reality.”

This respondent approaches K-dramas with a balanced perspective, recognizing them primarily as a form of entertainment. While they appreciate the insights and values presented in character development, they maintain a clear boundary between fiction and reality, acknowledging that the dramatic portrayals of relationships and friendships are distinct from real life. This suggests a critical consumption of media, where the influence is more intellectual than personal.

Case 3 responded,

“It definitely made my standards high. By standards I mean not just in romantic relationships but overall standard of life. A perfect example is, this K-drama named 18 again, watching it changed my opinion about family and it completely changed the way I saw the world, people and my family. I actually started observing my family more, and spending more time with them and a lot of good stuff I realised after that one drama. That’s a life-changing one.”

The respondent indicates that K-dramas have significantly elevated their life standards, particularly in how they view and interact with their family. The drama ‘18 Again’ served as a pivotal influence, altering their perspective on familial relationships and encouraging them to spend more quality time with loved ones. This example underscores how K-dramas can lead to profound personal changes, reshaping viewers' attitudes toward their own lives and relationships.

Case 4 responded,

“Many K-drama characters have influenced me. They taught me to find happiness in small things, to motivate myself, be yourself. Also, it taught me about relationships, and how people

should respect each other. Also, the men are so sweet. I doubt if such real men exist. The Korean men in most dramas always set the standard so high that it's hard for anyone to surpass it.”

This respondent has been influenced by K-drama characters to adopt a more positive outlook on life, finding joy in small moments and focusing on self-motivation and authenticity. However, the portrayal of male characters in these dramas has set unrealistically high expectations for romantic relationships, leading to scepticism about whether such idealized men exist in reality. This highlights both the positive influence on personal attitudes and the potential for unrealistic expectations in relationships.

Case 5 responded,

“Korean dramas are not representative of real Koreans or real Korean culture. Korean dramas are just as unrealistic. But their portrayal of men treating women with respect in relationships has set such high standards which seems right but somehow seems unrealistic in Indian cultural background. I don't really have any expectations for finding such friendships or relationships and their dramas make me assume that Koreans are very different from us.”

The respondent is critical of the unrealistic portrayals in K-dramas, particularly in the depiction of gender dynamics and relationships. While they appreciate the high standards of respect shown in these dramas, they recognize that these portrayals do not align with the cultural realities of India, leading them to manage their expectations regarding relationships. This critical stance reflects an awareness of the cultural differences and the potential disconnect between media representations and real-life experiences.

The influence of K-dramas on personal lives varies significantly among viewers, ranging from motivational impacts to the establishment of high standards in relationships and life choices. While some viewers are inspired by the hard work and perseverance depicted in these dramas, others maintain a critical perspective, recognizing the distinction between fictional portrayals and real life. However, the idealised representation of relationships, particularly in terms of respect and romantic behaviour, has led to both positive personal growth and unrealistic expectations. This dichotomy highlights the complex role that K-dramas play in shaping viewers' attitudes, behaviours, and perceptions, with both empowering and potentially challenging effects.

4.4.4 Opinions on becoming overly obsessed with Hallyu content

Case 1 responded,

"I'm a very old Hallyu fan, my initial days I was interested in K-pop as well but not anymore, I used to listen to BigBang, Shinee, SNSD - then I used Korean phrases and was partly delulu, I also attended the Korean Cultural Center events in Delhi and my perception changed sharply, I stopped and took a huge step back because of the fandom and how I saw other severely delulu fans, I realized it's unhealthy and South Koreans have a terrible perception of Indians and they also treat people poorly, sad but true. The reality of the Hallyu wave is very ugly, this was back in 2013."

This respondent reflects on their initial enthusiasm for Hallyu, which later turned into disillusionment due to the extreme behaviour of the fandom and negative perceptions held by South Koreans toward Indians. This indicates that while Hallyu content may initially attract fans, the cultural and social dynamics within the fandom and the industry can lead to a negative and unhealthy experience, prompting a re-evaluation of their involvement.

Case 2 responded,

"There is a limit to everything. Give respect and take respect. Though we might know Korean idols and though they might do things to entertain us fans, that clearly doesn't mean they personally should know us. Think from their perspective, how creepy it would be to annoy your idols beyond a personal level. Idols have kept certain boundaries and fans should respect those boundaries."

This respondent emphasizes the importance of respecting boundaries between idols and fans. They recognize that while idols engage with their fanbase, this does not entitle fans to cross personal boundaries, which can lead to discomfort and negative experiences for the idols. This suggests a mature understanding of the need for respectful fandom behaviour to maintain a healthy relationship with Hallyu content.

Case 3 responded,

"I am quite addicted to Hallyu contents, especially Korean dramas, but can't blame Hallyu as it is my phone addiction and lack of self-control that owes to it. K-dramas are produced in such high quality that it is no wonder that people become obsessed with Hallyu content. I am also a fan who gets "delulu" at times, but never to an extent that it makes the idols or celebrity uncomfortable."

This respondent acknowledges their addiction to Hallyu content but attributes it to personal issues like phone addiction and self-control. They recognize the high quality of K-dramas as a factor in this obsession but also emphasize that their behaviour remains within respectful limits, indicating self-awareness and a balanced perspective on their fandom.

Case 4 responded,

“Being obsessed with Hallyu content is bad as there is a negative side to Hallyu. As the K culture depicted through the social media platforms will not be real in all aspects. It may be true in certain aspects of general values, language uses and food culture. Rather than that the K Culture is really materialized and profit oriented. In K-Pop industry we can list many cases of obsession and addiction over idols and most of them are youngsters. To an extent, the industry plays the role of a demon in reality. They depict the idols as something special, without any defects, satisfying the beauty standards created by the industry. This will make most of the young followers to see their idol as a particular form of product or a measuring rod of perfection who doesn't have a personal life. Restriction of any of the forementioned limits will put the fame of the idols in danger and will have to face hate. This is where the propagation of hate is induced. Worshipping and fangirling their idols is a good thing and can motivate them in several situations and bringing up them from sorrow. But it is only good until there is fan-obsession and addiction. So, the pressure to be perfect will be at its peak for the idols and actors eventually they become the prey of online predators. However, the Idols have to undergo exploitative practices by their industry and become alienated from their personal lives to satisfy the needs of the industry and the dark side of fandom.”

This respondent critically examines the darker side of Hallyu, particularly the unhealthy obsession with idols and the unrealistic standards promoted by the industry. They highlight the negative impact on both fans and idols, with the latter facing intense pressure and exploitation. This response reflects a deep understanding of the potential harm caused by excessive fandom and the commodification of idols within the Hallyu industry.

Case 5 responded,

“Some people are overly obsessed with K-pop idols to the point that they spend all their time on them and once any negative rumours of them spread, without even checking the facts or wait for the truth to come out, they bash their own idols and torment them online as well as offline by sending them offensive items and threat letters. Maybe even going to the extent of

stalking them and following them home. And to boot, the competition in this field is very high to the point their diet and interpersonal relationships are controlled. All these factors lead to the disintegration of their mental state, leading to an increase in suicide rates mostly among people from the entertainment field. And of course the entertainment field is not as glamorous and splendid as they appear, every place has their own boons and banes. The excessive obsession for a perfect and luxurious lifestyle, face, body, whitewashed look. It's the fixation on being "perfect" on all aspects that it drives the person in the spotlight to the very edge and also the guilt tripping of the netizens who consume these celebrities' content feel a sense of power to which they feel like they can take control of their whole entire life. The constant body shamming and just overall negativity towards them as if these celebs are not human. They are mostly projecting their own insecurities on these celebs. The mostly targeted celebrity category would be K-Idols. Also, most targets are women and men are easily let off steam. It's just the hypocrisy in such matters. Eg. The BURNING SUN scandal. If I have to go on, I'll have lot more to say but... yeah, I'll stop here for now."

This respondent provides a comprehensive critique of the toxic aspects of Hallyu fandom, including the dangerous levels of obsession, online harassment, and the unrealistic standards imposed on idols. They highlight the severe consequences for idols, including mental health issues and increased suicide rates, and criticize the double standards within the industry. This response underscores the damaging effects of excessive fandom and the need for a more responsible and empathetic approach to consuming Hallyu content.

The responses reveal a shared awareness among fans of the potential dangers of becoming overly obsessed with Hallyu content. While some respondents initially embraced the Hallyu wave, they later recognized the unhealthy behaviours within the fandom and the negative impact on both fans and idols. There is a clear consensus that while Hallyu content can be enjoyable and motivating, it must be consumed within healthy boundaries. The industry's portrayal of idols as perfect beings and the extreme behaviours of some fans contribute to a toxic environment, leading to severe consequences for the mental health and well-being of both idols and fans. This highlights the need for fans to maintain a balanced approach and respect the boundaries set by idols, while also recognizing the realities behind the glamorous facade of the Hallyu industry.

4.4.5 Indian culture Vs Korean culture

First case response,

“Both cultures have some similarities, like take for example families, both Korean and Indian have an attached or close family system. In western culture they have a more distant familial relationship unlike us Asians. Both Indian and Korean have conservative approaches to certain things.”

This respondent recognizes the similarities between Indian and Korean cultures, particularly in terms of close-knit family structures and conservative values. The comparison highlights the shared emphasis on familial bonds and traditional practices, which are often contrasted with the more individualistic and distant relationships found in Western cultures.

Second case response,

“Both Korean and Indian cultures are entirely different, though they might share some similarities as both are Asian cultures. Both have certain cultural characteristics such as courtesy, respect for elders. Maybe lately Indian culture is losing some of its traditional practices while Korean culture strictly follows such mannerisms.”

This respondent acknowledges both the differences and similarities between the two cultures, noting that while both cultures value courtesy and respect towards elders, Indian culture appears to be gradually losing some traditional practices, whereas Korean culture continues to adhere strictly to its customs. This suggests a perceived cultural divergence, with Korea maintaining more traditionalism compared to India.

Third case response,

“India being a country with diversities, is often open-minded to foreigners and rarely do exhibit hatred towards people of colour. But in Korea, racism is very prominent and they are people with such close mindsets.”

This respondent contrasts Indian culture’s openness and acceptance of diversity with what they perceive as a more closed and racially prejudiced mindset in Korea. The comparison emphasizes India's cultural diversity and tolerance, while highlighting concerns about racism and xenophobia in Korean society.

The respondents’ perspectives reveal a nuanced comparison between Indian and Korean cultures. While both cultures share certain similarities, such as strong family values and respect

for elders, they are also seen as distinct in several ways. Indian culture is noted for its diversity and openness, particularly in its acceptance of people from different backgrounds. In contrast, Korean culture is described as more conservative and insular, with a strict adherence to traditional practices and some challenges related to racial prejudice. These comparisons highlight the complexities of cultural exchange and the varied perceptions that arise when different cultural norms and values intersect.

CHAPTER V

FINDINGS, SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the key findings derived from the research on the influence of Hallyu (the Korean Wave) on the youth of Kerala. The study examines how Hallyu has influenced various aspects of their lives, from language learning and cultural engagement to shifts in consumption patterns, social behavior, and values. The findings are categorized into major thematic areas, each highlighting the complex interplay between Korean popular culture and local traditions, entertainment preferences, and identity formation.

5.2 MAJOR FINDINGS

5.2.1 The Relevance of Demographic Profile in Understanding Hallyu's Impact

The demographic profile of respondents plays a critical role in understanding the impact of Hallyu on youth, particularly within the context of this research. Demographics such as age, gender, educational background, and socio-economic status provide essential insights into how different segments of the population engage with Korean media and culture, and how these engagements shape their behaviours, identities, and social interactions.

Age is a particularly significant factor, as it helps to delineate the generational appeal of Hallyu. Younger individuals, especially those in their teens and early twenties, are more likely to be digital natives with easy access to global content through the internet and social media. This demographic is typically more open to exploring and adopting foreign cultural influences, making them more susceptible to the allure of K-pop, K-dramas, and other Hallyu-related content. The age-related data allows us to observe how the consumption of Korean media varies across different life stages and how this shapes cultural preferences and identity formation.

Gender also plays a pivotal role in shaping the consumption and impact of Hallyu content. The research indicates that there are gender-specific trends in the way Korean media is consumed and the aspects of Korean culture that are most influential. For example, K-pop fandoms often see a higher participation of young women, who are drawn to both the music and the fashion trends set by female K-pop idols. On the other hand, Korean dramas may appeal to different

genders for varying reasons, such as the portrayal of strong, relatable female leads or emotionally complex male characters. Understanding these gender dynamics is crucial for comprehending how Hallyu influences perceptions of gender roles and identity among youth.

Lastly, socio-economic status is a key demographic factor that affects access to media and cultural products. Youth from higher socio-economic backgrounds may have greater access to the internet, streaming services, and even the ability to purchase Hallyu-related merchandise or travel to South Korea. This financial capability not only affects the level of engagement with Hallyu but also the depth of cultural adoption, as those with more resources are better positioned to fully immerse themselves in Korean culture. Conversely, those from lower socio-economic backgrounds may still engage with Hallyu but in different, often more resourceful ways, such as participating in online fan communities where access to content and merchandise can be shared.

In conclusion, the demographic profile of respondents is not just a backdrop but a central element in understanding the differential impact of Hallyu on youth. By analysing how factors such as age, gender, and socio-economic status influence the consumption and integration of Korean culture, this research can offer a more nuanced and comprehensive view of Hallyu's role in shaping the cultural and social dynamics among the youth in Kerala. These demographic insights set the stage for the detailed exploration of the findings and conclusions that follow in the subsequent chapters.

5.2.2 The Impact of Hallyu: Language Learning, Cultural Interest, and Social Dynamics

The Hallyu wave has far-reaching effects that extend beyond entertainment, influencing various aspects of personal and social life. This chapter delves into the impact of Hallyu on language learning, the growing interest in Korean culture, the formation of cross-cultural friendships, and the dynamics of family discussions related to Hallyu. These areas reflect the profound and diverse ways in which Korean cultural products are shaping the experiences and relationships of youth.

One of the notable impacts of Hallyu is its influence on language learning, particularly the Korean language. As Korean dramas, K-pop, and other cultural content become increasingly popular, there is a corresponding rise in the interest among youth to learn Korean. The study reveals that exposure to Hallyu content has motivated many to pursue Korean language courses

or self-study. This phenomenon is driven by the desire to better understand and engage with the content in its original language, enhancing the overall experience and appreciation of Korean media.

Hallyu content has significantly heightened interest in Korean culture beyond just entertainment. The study shows that exposure to Korean media has led to increased curiosity about various aspects of Korean life, including traditions, cuisine, and social practices. Youth are not only engaging with Korean content but are also seeking to understand the cultural context behind it. This heightened cultural interest is evident in the growing popularity of Korean food, beauty products, and fashion among young people. Interviews with respondents reveal that Korean dramas and K-pop have introduced them to a range of cultural elements that they find intriguing and appealing. The impact of Hallyu on cultural interest illustrates how media can act as a bridge, connecting audiences with new cultural experiences and fostering a broader understanding of global diversity.

The influence of Hallyu extends into social relationships, particularly through the formation of cross-cultural friendships. As youth engage with Korean media, they often connect with peers who share similar interests, creating opportunities for intercultural exchange. The study highlights that many respondents have formed friendships with individuals from different cultural backgrounds as a result of their shared enthusiasm for Hallyu. These cross-cultural friendships facilitate the exchange of cultural knowledge and experiences, enriching social interactions and broadening perspectives. For some, these relationships also provide a support network for discussing and navigating cultural differences, enhancing their overall engagement with Korean culture. The formation of such friendships underscores the role of Hallyu in fostering global connections and promoting intercultural understanding.

Family dynamics are also influenced by the rise of Hallyu, particularly through discussions about Korean media. The study indicates that family members often engage in conversations about Hallyu content, which can lead to both positive and negative interactions. For some families, these discussions offer opportunities for bonding and sharing interests. However, there can also be disagreements or misunderstandings, particularly if family members are less familiar with or sceptical about the cultural phenomenon. Qualitative data suggests that Hallyu discussions can sometimes highlight generational gaps or differences in cultural values, especially when younger family members express strong enthusiasm for Korean media. These

dynamics reflect the broader impact of global cultural trends on traditional family structures, illustrating how new cultural influences can both challenge and enrich familial relationships.

5.2.3 Understanding Consumption Patterns and Engagement

As Korean cultural products ranging from music and dramas to beauty and fashion gain worldwide popularity, their influence on youth culture has become increasingly evident. Hallyu encompasses a wide array of Korean cultural exports that have captivated global audiences, especially youth. This includes K-pop, K-dramas, Korean films, beauty products, and fashion trends. The Korean Wave first gained traction in the early 2000s, but it has since evolved into a multidimensional cultural movement. For many young people, Hallyu offers a window into Korean culture through its vibrant entertainment industry and innovative lifestyle products.

The pathways through which Hallyu content reaches its audience are crucial in understanding its impact. Social media platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, and Twitter play a central role in disseminating Korean content, allowing fans to access music videos, drama clips, and celebrity updates with ease. Streaming services like Netflix and Viki have also become primary sources for accessing full-length K-dramas and films, further broadening the reach of Hallyu. Additionally, dedicated fan communities and online forums facilitate discussions and content sharing, enhancing the overall engagement with Hallyu. In the context of Kerala, social media and streaming platforms have proven to be the most effective channels for introducing and sustaining interest in Korean cultural products. The ease of access and the interactive nature of these platforms enable youth to discover and engage with Hallyu content in a manner that is both convenient and immersive. The proliferation of digital media has thus played a pivotal role in the widespread adoption of Hallyu among Kerala's youth.

The frequency with which youth consume Hallyu content provides insight into its prominence within their cultural landscape. Data from the study indicates varying levels of engagement, with a significant portion of respondents integrating Hallyu content into their daily lives. This frequent consumption reflects the growing importance of Korean entertainment in the lives of young people. K-pop, for instance, is often a staple in the personal music playlists of youth, and K-dramas are commonly watched during leisure time. The high frequency of engagement with Hallyu content underscores its role as a major cultural influence, shaping not only entertainment choices but also broader lifestyle preferences. The consistent exposure to Korean media reinforces its impact, making it a key component of youth culture.

Among the various types of Hallyu content, certain categories have garnered more engagement than others. K-pop stands out as the most popular form of Hallyu content, with its music, performances, and celebrity culture captivating a large audience. Korean dramas also enjoy widespread popularity, with their compelling storylines and high production values drawing significant viewership. Qualitative data reveals that K-pop's global appeal is driven by its dynamic and visually engaging performances, as well as the strong emotional connection that fans feel towards their favourite idols. Korean dramas are appreciated for their diverse genres and relatable themes, which offer a refreshing alternative to local entertainment. The fascination with Korean beauty and fashion reflects a broader trend of adopting and adapting global styles to personal preferences.

The impact of Hallyu on youth is profound and multidimensional, influencing not only entertainment preferences but also broader lifestyle choices. The introduction of Hallyu content through accessible digital platforms, combined with frequent consumption and engagement, highlights the significant role of Korean culture in shaping contemporary youth experiences. By understanding the pathways through which Hallyu content is accessed, the frequency of its consumption, and the types of content that resonate most with youth, we gain valuable insights into the global cultural exchanges that are redefining youth culture around the world. As Hallyu continues to evolve, its influence on youth is likely to grow, further enriching the cultural landscape and shaping future trends.

5.2.4 Consumer Behaviour and Travel Aspirations

The Hallyu wave has not only transformed cultural and social dynamics but has also had tangible effects on consumer behaviour and travel aspirations. This chapter examines how the growing popularity of Korean culture influences spending on Hallyu-related products, travel to South Korea among Hallyu fans, and future travel intentions. These aspects provide a comprehensive view of the economic and experiential impact of Hallyu on its global audience, particularly in the context of youth.

The rise of Hallyu has significantly impacted consumer behaviourism, particularly in terms of spending on Hallyu-related products. Respondents report spending varying amounts on Hallyu products, with some investing in high-end merchandise such as concert tickets and exclusive fashion items, while others opt for more affordable goods like beauty products and accessories.

The spending on Hallyu-related products not only indicates a strong market for Korean cultural goods but also highlights the economic impact of Hallyu on consumer purchasing patterns. This trend underscores the significant role of Korean media and culture in shaping modern consumer behaviour and contributing to the global economy.

Hallyu has also influenced travel behaviours, with the majority of the fans expressing a strong desire to visit South Korea. Though only very few of the respondents have visited South Korea; looking ahead, the intention to travel to South Korea remains strong among the majority of the Hallyu fans. The study indicates that a significant number of respondents express a desire to visit South Korea in the future, driven by their ongoing fascination with Korean culture and media. This intention reflects a broader trend of aspirational travel, where cultural interests inspire plans for future trips. Factors influencing this intention include the continued popularity of Korean entertainment, the appeal of experiencing Korean culture firsthand, and the desire to engage in activities associated with Hallyu, such as attending live performances and visiting iconic locations featured in K-dramas. For many, travelling to South Korea represents not only a personal aspiration but also an opportunity to deepen their engagement with the cultural phenomena that have become an integral part of their lives.

The influence of Hallyu extends beyond cultural and social spheres, significantly affecting consumer behaviour and travel aspirations. Additionally, the impact of Hallyu on travel behaviours is evident in the existing and aspirational travel plans of fans, who seek to experience Korean culture firsthand. As Hallyu continues to evolve, its economic and experiential impact will likely grow, further shaping consumer trends and travel patterns on a global scale. The ongoing engagement with Hallyu not only underscores its cultural significance but also highlights its role in influencing economic and travel-related decisions among youth.

5.2.5 Adoption of Practices, Behavioural Shifts, and Impact on Traditional Values

The Hallyu wave's influence extends beyond mere entertainment, permeating various aspects of daily life and societal norms. One of the most evident impacts of Hallyu is the adoption of Korean cultural practices by its global audience. The study highlights how youth, particularly those deeply engaged with Hallyu content, have begun incorporating various aspects of Korean culture into their daily lives. These practices range from dietary habits, such as eating kimchi, using chopsticks, and adopting skincare routines influenced by K-beauty standards. The

incorporation of these practices often begins with an interest sparked by K-dramas or K-pop idols, which gradually transforms into a lifestyle choice. This adoption of foreign cultural elements signifies the growing global influence of Hallyu and its ability to transcend cultural boundaries.

Hallyu content has also played a significant role in shaping behaviours and social norms among its audience. For instance, the politeness and respect often depicted in K-dramas have influenced some youth to adopt similar manners in their interactions. Moreover, the influence of Hallyu is evident in the fashion choices and beauty routines of young people, who often emulate the styles of their favourite Korean celebrities. This behavioural shift reflects the aspirational nature of Hallyu, where fans seek to align themselves with the values and aesthetics portrayed in Korean media. The widespread adoption of these behaviours and norms underscores the pervasive impact of Hallyu on global youth culture.

The growing influence of Hallyu has also sparked discussions about its impact on traditional Indian values. The study reveals a complex relationship between the adoption of Korean cultural elements and the preservation of Indian traditions. While many respondents enjoy engaging with Hallyu content, some express concerns about its potential to erode traditional values. The incorporation of Hallyu content and practices has had a notable impact on the cultural identity of youth. The study shows that for many young people, engagement with Hallyu has become a significant part of their identity, influencing their tastes, preferences, and worldview. This cultural shift reflects the fluid nature of identity in a globalized context, where the exposure to diverse cultural influences shapes individual and collective identities.

Hallyu has also influenced views on gender roles and expectations, challenging traditional norms and offering new perspectives. The study highlights how the portrayal of gender roles in Korean media has resonated with youth, particularly in challenging conventional expectations. For instance, the strong, independent female characters often depicted in K-dramas have inspired young women to rethink traditional gender roles. Similarly, the depiction of male characters in Korean media, who often embrace traits such as sensitivity and emotional expressiveness, has influenced perceptions of masculinity. This has led to a broader acceptance of diverse expressions of gender, challenging rigid stereotypes and promoting more fluid and inclusive views of gender roles. The impact of Hallyu on gender expectations reflects its

broader cultural influence, where media can play a powerful role in shaping social norms and values.

5.2.6 The Musical Impact of Hallyu

As the Hallyu wave continues to sweep across the globe, its influence on the musical preferences of youth is particularly evident in Kerala. The preference for K-pop over traditional Indian music genres among youth in Kerala is relatively low. While K-pop has gained a significant following, it has not yet overtaken the deep-rooted affinity for Indian music. Qualitative insights from the research suggest that those who prefer K-pop are often drawn to its high production values, catchy rhythms, and the global appeal of K-pop idols. However, many respondents still resonate more with Indian music due to its cultural relevance and emotional depth. For these individuals, Indian music, with its diverse genres and rich traditions, offers a connection to their heritage that K-pop, as a foreign genre, cannot entirely replace. This finding highlights the resilience of local music traditions even in the face of global cultural trends.

The frequency with which youth in Kerala listen to K-pop compared to Indian pop or Bollywood music provides further insight into their evolving musical preferences. The obtained data suggests that K-pop has become a regular part of the musical diet for a significant portion of Kerala's youth, yet Indian music continues to hold a strong position. Interviews with respondents indicate that those who listen to K-pop more frequently are often influenced by their social circles and the pervasive presence of K-pop on digital platforms. Social media, in particular, plays a crucial role in shaping these listening habits, with K-pop content being widely accessible and actively shared among peers. However, even among frequent K-pop listeners, there is an appreciation for the unique qualities of Indian pop, classical and Bollywood music, which are seen as more reflective of their cultural identity. This suggests a balanced engagement with both global and local music, where neither genre completely overshadows the other.

5.2.7 The Rise of Korean Food Among Youth in Kerala

The Hallyu wave has left its mark not only on the music and fashion industries but also on the culinary preferences of youth worldwide, including in Kerala. The study highlights a widespread reach of Korean culinary trends. Even in that social media, rather than personal recommendations or restaurant experiences, is the primary driver of this new culinary interest.

However, the study also focuses on the fact that, while Korean cuisine is popular as a novelty, it has not yet replaced or never will replace the deep-seated preference for traditional Indian dishes.

The study also explored the extent to which youth in Kerala have adopted specific Korean dietary habits, such as eating kimchi and using chopsticks, which reflects a significant level of engagement with Korean culture beyond mere curiosity. The qualitative data suggests that these habits are often adopted as part of a broader lifestyle influenced by K-dramas and K-pop, where characters and idols are seen as role models. However, the sustainability of these habits remains a question. Interviews indicate that while these dietary practices are embraced enthusiastically, they are often short-lived, driven more by a desire to emulate idols than by a genuine preference for Korean eating styles. For example, the use of chopsticks might be seen as fun or trendy, but it is unlikely to replace the traditional use of hands or spoons in the long term. This selective and temporary adoption highlights the complex nature of cultural assimilation, where elements of foreign cultures are integrated into daily life without completely displacing traditional practices.

5.2.8 Korean Beauty Standards and Fashion Choices Among Youth in Kerala

The Hallyu wave has had a profound effect on global cultural trends, extending its influence beyond music and cinema to include beauty standards and fashion. The impact of Korean beauty standards on skincare routines has been significant, reflecting the global reach of Hallyu and its cultural influence. The study reveals a substantial engagement with Korean beauty standards, which are known for their emphasis on meticulous skincare and the pursuit of flawless, radiant skin. According to the qualitative data, some respondents believe that the influences from K-dramas and K-pop idols, who often showcase flawless skin, also play a crucial role in shaping these preferences. However, some respondents showed concerns about the unrealistic beauty standards promoted by K-pop idols, noting that these ideals can contribute to feelings of inadequacy and pressure to conform. Despite these concerns, the integration of Korean beauty practices into daily routines reflects a broader trend of global cultural exchange, where international standards are adopted and adapted within local contexts. The ongoing popularity of Korean skincare products and routines among Kerala's youth highlights the growing influence of global beauty standards on personal care practices.

Hallyu's impact on fashion is equally notable, as Korean style has become a prominent trend among youth in Kerala. The study reflects the growing appeal of Korean fashion, which is characterised by its blend of modernity, trendiness, and individual expression. Interviews reveal that Korean fashion's influence is evident in various aspects of personal style, including clothing choices, accessories, and overall aesthetic preferences. Respondents often cite K-dramas and K-pop idols as major sources of fashion inspiration, noting that the distinctive and innovative styles showcased by these s resonate with their own fashion sensibilities. The adoption of Korean fashion trends allows youth in Kerala to experiment with new looks and express their individuality in ways that were less prevalent before the rise of Hallyu. However, the integration of Korean fashion into local wardrobes does not mean the complete abandonment of traditional Indian attire. Instead, it represents a fusion of global and local styles, where elements of Korean fashion are blended with traditional Indian garments. This hybrid approach reflects a growing acceptance of diverse fashion influences while maintaining a connection to cultural heritage.

The influence of Hallyu on beauty and fashion among youth in Kerala illustrates a broader trend of cultural globalisation and hybridization. Korean beauty standards have significantly impacted skincare routines, with many young people adopting new practices and products inspired by Korean trends. Similarly, Korean fashion has become a key influence on personal style, leading to a fusion of global trends with traditional Indian attire. These findings highlight how global cultural phenomena are reshaping local aesthetic preferences, creating a dynamic interplay between international influences and traditional practices. As Hallyu continues to evolve, its impact on beauty and fashion is likely to grow, further enriching the cultural landscape of Kerala's youth.

5.2.9 The Shift from Indian Entertainment to Korean Alternatives

One of the most significant findings of this research is the noticeable shift in media consumption patterns among the youth in Kerala, who have increasingly embraced Korean entertainment over traditional Indian alternatives. The study reveals that a growing segment of youth now prefers K-dramas, K-pop, and Korean variety shows over traditional Indian television serials. This shift is driven by the unique appeal of Korean content, which offers distinct storytelling, high production values, and a cultural freshness that resonates with young audiences. Respondents often cite the emotional depth, innovative plots, and relatable characters in K-dramas as reasons for their preference. This transition reflects a broader trend

of cultural globalization, where the accessibility of foreign content, facilitated by digital platforms, allows for diverse cultural experiences beyond one's own national borders. The preference for Korean entertainment over Indian alternatives also highlights the changing tastes and aspirations of youth, who increasingly seek content that aligns with their evolving identities and worldviews.

Korean dramas, for instance, are celebrated for their intricate plotlines, emotional depth, and strong character development, which provide a more immersive and satisfying viewing experience. Participants in the study expressed that K-dramas offer a form of escapism that helps them relieve stress and find motivation. This contrast with the more predictable and sometimes repetitive nature of Indian TV shows has led many to prefer Korean alternatives. Moreover, the appeal of Korean entertainment is further heightened by its contemporary and global nature, which resonates with a youth audience seeking fresh and modern content. For example, one participant mentioned how their newfound interest in K-pop not only introduced them to new music but also inspired them to pursue dancing and singing. This level of influence demonstrates how Hallyu has not only replaced Indian entertainment in many daily routines but also shaped new aspirations and career goals.

Despite this significant shift, it is important to recognize that a portion of the population remains loyal to Indian entertainment. They might continue to prefer Indian media might do so due to its cultural familiarity and relevance to their daily lives. This highlights the coexistence of traditional and global influences, reflecting the complex dynamics of media consumption in a globalized world.

5.2.10 The Marginalisation of Hallyu Fans

The growing popularity of Hallyu in Kerala has not been without its challenges, fans of K-pop and other Korean content often face marginalization from mainstream society. The study indicates that many Hallyu enthusiasts experience social isolation, teasing, or even outright discrimination due to their passion for Korean culture. This marginalization is particularly pronounced in communities where adherence to traditional cultural norms is strong, and deviations from these norms are viewed with suspicion or disapproval. Qualitative data reveals that some fans are ridiculed for their choice of entertainment, with peers and even family members questioning their attachment to a foreign culture. This encapsulates the generational divide and cultural resistance that many Hallyu fans face, even within their own families. This

social stigma can lead to feelings of alienation, as fans struggle to reconcile their love for Hallyu with the expectations of their cultural environment.

However, this marginalization is not without its complexities. While some fans experience resistance, others have noticed a gradual acceptance of Hallyu within their social circles. One participant mentioned that although their family initially avoided their discussions about Korean culture, they have become more receptive over time. This evolving acceptance suggests that while marginalization is a reality for many Hallyu fans, there is also potential for greater cultural integration and understanding over time. However, the study also finds that many Hallyu fans have formed supportive communities, both online and offline, where they can share their interests without fear of judgment. These communities provide a sense of belonging and solidarity, allowing fans to express their passion freely and connect with like-minded individuals. Through these networks, fans often find empowerment and validation, counteracting the negative effects of marginalisation and fostering a shared cultural identity that transcends national boundaries.

As Hallyu continues to influence global entertainment and social norms, it is likely that these tensions will persist, raising important questions about cultural identity, acceptance, and the boundaries of belonging in an increasingly interconnected world. The experiences of Hallyu fans, both positive and negative, offer valuable insights into the ways in which global cultural phenomena interact with local traditions and social structures, shaping the lives of those who engage with them.

5.3 SUGGESTIONS

Encourage Cultural Integration Programs: Given the significant influence of Hallyu on Kerala's youth, schools, universities, and cultural institutions could develop programs that facilitate better cultural integration. These initiatives could help young people find a balance between appreciating global cultures and maintaining connections to their own traditions.

Create Safe Spaces for Fan Communities: Since some youth face marginalization for their love of Korean culture, efforts should be made to create supportive environments where Hallyu fans can express themselves without fear of stigma or social isolation. Schools, colleges, and online platforms can offer safe spaces for these communities to connect, share experiences, and engage in dialogues about their cultural interests.

Promote Critical Media Literacy: With the rise of global cultural consumption, there is a need to promote critical media literacy among youth. Educational programs that teach young people to critically analyze media content, including recognizing stereotypes, understanding gender portrayals, and reflecting on cultural values, can help them make more informed choices about the media they consume.

Address Identity and Cultural Conflicts: Given the cultural dissonance experienced by some youth who feel torn between global and local identities, counseling and guidance programs could be provided to help them navigate these challenges. Schools and community organizations could play a role in offering support that helps youth embrace diverse cultural influences while staying connected to their roots.

Gender Sensitivity Workshops: Since Hallyu content is reshaping perceptions of gender roles, particularly in challenging traditional norms, there is an opportunity to further this progress by offering gender sensitivity workshops. These workshops could help broaden understanding of gender dynamics and encourage more inclusive behaviors and attitudes among Kerala's youth, while continuing to challenge restrictive stereotypes.

5.4 CONCLUSION

This research has delved deeply into the multidimensional impact of Hallyu on the youth of Kerala, examining how this cultural phenomenon has influenced entertainment preferences, cultural practices, identity, social norms, and values. Hallyu's influence is not limited to superficial aspects like fashion or music; it permeates the deeper layers of identity, behaviour, and social interactions, prompting a renegotiation of cultural values and norms among the youth.

The quantitative data clearly shows that Hallyu has become a dominant cultural force, with a large percentage of respondents actively engaging with Korean content and incorporating aspects of Korean culture into their daily lives. This shift is particularly evident in the replacement of Indian entertainment with Korean alternatives, where youth find the emotional depth, innovative storytelling, and aesthetic appeal of K-dramas and K-pop more relatable and aspirational than local media. The study also highlights how this cultural adoption extends to everyday practices, from dietary habits influenced by Korean food to the adoption of Korean beauty routines, which have now become part of the youth's lifestyle.

However, the qualitative data provides a more nuanced understanding of these changes, revealing both the positive and challenging aspects of this cultural shift. On one hand, Hallyu offers a sense of belonging and emotional connection, particularly for those who find resonance with the values and narratives portrayed in Korean media. On the other hand, it also exposes fans to marginalisation and social stigma, as their enthusiasm for a foreign culture can sometimes be perceived as a rejection of their own. This tension is especially pronounced in the realm of cultural identity, where youth must navigate the complexities of integrating new influences with their traditional heritage.

Moreover, the research uncovers how Hallyu is reshaping perceptions of gender roles and expectations. The portrayal of strong, independent women and emotionally expressive men in Korean media has prompted many of the youth to challenge conventional gender norms, fostering a more inclusive and progressive understanding of gender dynamics. This is a testament to the transformative power of media, which not only reflects but also shapes societal values and behaviours.

In conclusion, the Hallyu wave has significantly impacted the youth of Kerala, serving as both a catalyst for cultural exchange and a source of identity formation in an increasingly globalized world. While it has opened up new avenues for personal expression and cultural engagement, it has also brought about challenges in maintaining a balance between embracing global trends and preserving local traditions. This research highlights the importance of understanding these dynamics, as they offer valuable insights into the broader implications of cultural globalization. As Hallyu continues to evolve and spread, it will undoubtedly play a crucial role in shaping the future cultural landscape, influencing how young people around the world navigate their identities and social realities in a connected, multicultural world.

5.5 FUTURE AREAS OF RESEARCH

1. Longitudinal Studies on Hallyu's Impact

Future research could employ longitudinal methods to study how Hallyu's influence evolves over time, particularly in relation to identity development, mental health, and social relationships. This would offer insights into long-term cultural shifts.

2. Comparative Studies Across Regions

Conduct comparative studies examining Hallyu's impact on youth across different Indian states, exploring regional variations in the consumption and integration of Korean culture. This would shed light on how local cultures mediate the effects of global trends.

3. Digital Influence and Social Media

Research could focus more specifically on the role of digital platforms in promoting Hallyu. Examining how social media algorithms amplify Hallyu content and how youth engage with these platforms could provide deeper insights into digital globalization.

4. Influence on Gender Norms and Identity

Future studies could explore Hallyu's influence on gender norms, identity expression, and body image among young people. This would include analyzing how K-pop's and K-beauty's representations of masculinity and femininity affect gender perceptions in Indian society.

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APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Age
2. Place of residence along with district (eg: Trivandrum, Kerala)
3. Gender
 - a. Female
 - b. Male
 - c. Transgender
 - d. Prefer not to mention
4. How do you perceive your financial security?
 - a. Secure
 - b. Neutral
 - c. Insecure
5. When did you first get introduced to Hallyu content? (mention the year e.g:-2020)
6. How did you first become interested in Hallyu?
 - a. Friends/Family
 - b. Social Media
7. How often do you consume Hallyu content?
 - a. Daily
 - b. Several times a week
 - c. Once a week
 - d. Rarely
8. Which types of Hallyu content do you engage with the most? (Check all that apply)
 - a. K-pop
 - b. K-dramas
 - c. Korean movies
 - d. Korean variety shows
 - e. Korean fashion
 - f. Korean beauty products
 - g. Korean food
 - h. Korean mukbang videos
 - i. K-vloggers
 - j. Places in Korea
 - k. Others
9. Have you learned any Korean phrases or words from Hallyu content?
 - a. Yes

- b. No
10. If yes, do you use them in your daily conversation?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
11. Has consuming Hallyu content increased your interest in Korean culture?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
12. How knowledgeable do you consider yourself about Korean culture?
- a. Very knowledgeable
 - b. Quite knowledgeable
 - c. Moderately knowledgeable
13. Have you made friends from different cultural backgrounds through your interest in Hallyu?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
14. Do you participate in discussions about Hallyu with family members?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
15. How does your family react?
16. How often do you purchase Hallyu-related products online?
- a. Frequently
 - b. Occasionally
 - c. Rarely
 - d. Never
17. How much money do you spend on Hallyu-related products (music, merchandise, beauty products, etc.) per month?
18. Have you ever travelled to South Korea?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
19. Do you (or Did you) plan to do so because of your interest in Hallyu?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
20. Have you incorporated any Korean cultural practices into your daily life (e.g., using Korean skincare routines, cooking Korean dishes)?

- a. Yes
 - b. No
21. Have you adopted any behaviours or norms from Hallyu content(eg:finger heart, using honorifics, dining etiquette)?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
22. Do you feel that Hallyu has changed your perspective on traditional Indian values?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
23. Do you feel that your cultural identity has changed since you started engaging with Hallyu?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
24. Have your views on gender roles and expectations changed after being exposed to Korean culture?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
25. Have you faced any marginalization from mainstream society for being a hallyu admirer?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
26. Have you replaced any Indian entertainment with Korean alternatives in your daily routine?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
27. Do you prefer K-pop over Indian music genres such as Bollywood or classical music?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
28. How often do you listen to K-pop compared to Indian pop or Bollywood music?
- a. More often
 - b. About the same
 - c. Less often
29. Select from the below options the average percentage of kpop songs in your personal music playlist.
- a. Below 10%

- b. 10-25%
- c. 25- 50%
- d. 50- 75%
- e. 75- 85%
- f. Above 85%

30. Have you ever tried Korean food?

- a. Yes
- b. No

31. How did you first learn about Korean food?

- a. Social media
- b. Friends/Family
- c. Restaurants
- d. Others

32. Do you prefer Korean food compared to traditional Indian food?

- a. Yes
- b. No

33. Have you adopted any Korean dietary habits (e.g., eating kimchi, using chopsticks)?

- a. Yes
- b. No

34. Do you think Korean food will continue to gain popularity among the youth in Kerala over the next few years?

- a. Yes
- b. No

35. Have you changed your beauty or skincare routine after being influenced by Korean beauty standards?

- a. Yes
- b. No

36. Do you think Hallyu has influenced the way you dress, or your fashion choices compared to traditional Indian attire?

- a. Yes
- b. No

37. Do you prefer Korean fashion trends over traditional Indian fashion?

- a. Yes
- b. No

INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. Can you share your initial experience with Hallyu? What aspects of Korean culture—whether it’s music, dramas, fashion, or something else—first attracted you?
2. How has your involvement with Hallyu influenced your day-to-day activities, such as your hobbies, social interactions, or lifestyle choices? Can you provide specific examples?
3. In what ways, if any, has engaging with Hallyu affected your mental health, self-esteem, or personal development? Have you experienced any positive or negative impacts?
4. How do you balance your interest in Korean culture with your connection to traditional Indian culture? Has your exposure to Hallyu influenced how you perceive Indian cultural practices?
5. Have you encountered any challenges, criticisms, or misunderstandings from others regarding your interest in Hallyu? How do you deal with these responses?
6. What are your thoughts on the possibility of becoming overly immersed in Hallyu content? Do you see any risks or drawbacks, and how do you maintain a healthy relationship with it?
7. What do you believe the future holds for Hallyu on a global scale? How do you see its impact evolving in the coming years?
