

Chapter 10

“Hallyu and Confucianism” Researches

1. Introduction

We can safely say that the year 2019 was the year of the Korean movie Parasite and the K-pop group BTS in the global cultural scene. Parasite, directed by Bong Joon-ho, premiered in May at the 2019 Cannes Film Festival. It attracted more than 10 million viewers in South Korea alone, and the Parasite sensation spread across the world with its releases in France, the United States, Japan, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and so on. It even won four Academy Awards, for best picture, best director, best original screenplay, and best foreign language at the 2020 Oscars. It was a great achievement that would leave an indelible mark on Korean film history.

At the same time, BTS from Big Hit Entertainment held its comeback stage performance on April 13 with Boy with Luv at the popular comedy show “Saturday Night Live” in the United States. It scored No. 1 on the Billboard 200 album chart for three consecutive years and won two awards at the 2019 Billboard Music Awards; both events were unprecedented in Korean pop music history. Furthermore, in their world tour that started in June, single stadium concerts were held in the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Japan, Saudi Arabia, and so on. This achievement was also a monumental event that left a crucial imprint in the landscape of Korean pop music.

Thus, 2019 was a landmark year in the history of Hallyu. This report examines the trend of papers and articles related to Hallyu or K-pop published on the websites of major journals in Korea, China, Japan, and the Anglo-American world in 2019 and presents articles on “Hallyu and Confucianism.”

2. Hallyu-related research in Korea

A search on the website of the National Assembly's Digital Library(<http://dl.nanet.go.kr/>) with the keywords “Hallyu” and “K-pop” by year yielded the following graphs representing the numbers of articles on Hallyu and K-pop, respectively, published in the Korean language each year(2000–2019).

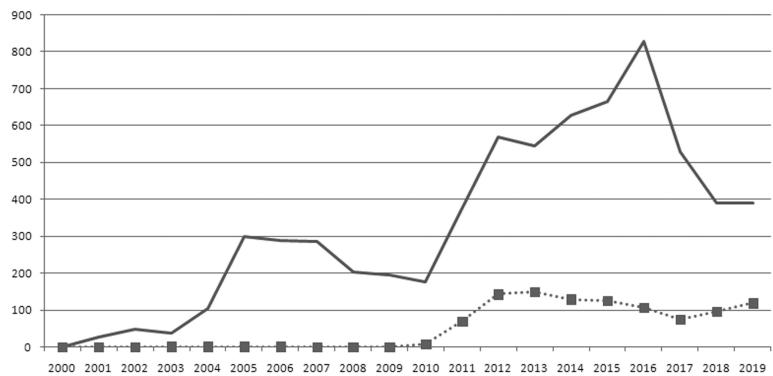


Figure 1. Numbers of articles on Hallyu(solid line) and K-pop(dotted line)
2000–2019(Source: National Assembly's Digital Library; retrieved 2020-07-09
from <http://dl.nanet.go.kr/>)

The Hallyu research trend graph shows that articles on Hallyu began to appear in 2000 and peaked in 2016, followed by a sharp decrease in 2017 and 2018 and stagnation in 2019. The year 2016 is when the drama *Descendants of the Sun* was aired and it enjoyed great popularity in China and Southeast Asia. In that year, Park Chan-wook's *Handmaiden*, Na Hong-jin's *Gokseong* [wailing], and Yeon Sang-ho's *Train to Busan* were released in the United States, France, China, Japan, and Taiwan, attracting large audiences. A total of 828 Hallyu-related research papers, including academic papers, monographs, and dissertations, were published that year.

This uptrend was then reversed by the Hallyu Ban(限韓令 Chinese: Xian Han Ling; Korean: Han Han Ryeong) in China and the anti-Korean sentiment in Japan. However, this temporary downtrend was broken in 2019, with 391 research papers vs. 390 in 2018.

The first paper on K-pop appeared in 2003(n=1), and the number began to soar in 2010(n=8) and peaked in 2013(n=149), followed by a gradual decrease until 2018(n=96), which began to reverse in 2019(n=119), presumably driven by the global popularity of BTS.

The decreasing trend in research on Hallyu is also associated with the increasing segmentation and specialization of Hallyu. For example, a total of 76 academic articles appear as the search results for the movie Parasite in 2019. However, only one of these articles, “Increasing Artistic Value of Korean Pop Culture Contents: ‘Parasite’ Wins Palme d’Or at Cannes Film Festival(Jung Ji-wook, Hallyu now, Vol. 33, November 201),” provided Hallyu as a keyword.

Regarding academic articles written on BTS in 2019, a total of 146 search results appear. Of them, only 20 registered Hallyu as a keyword. In other words, only 20 articles were written from the perspective of Hallyu, with the remaining 126 articles dealing with BTS irrespective of Hallyu. This trend can be considered to have led to the decline in the number of Hallyu-related research papers.

Hallyu research has been conducted over the last two decades, and a study title containing Hallyu provides a rather stereotypical impression. In addition to the Hallyu-related expressions that have now become commonplace, such as movie Hallyu, drama Hallyu, and beauty Hallyu, the list of buzz words using Hallyu is expanding in a sky-is-the-limit kind of way: administration Hallyu, educational Hallyu, coffee Hallyu, security Hallyu, seed Hallyu, construction Hallyu, soccer Hallyu, fashion Hallyu, agricultural Hallyu, food Hallyu, livestock Hallyu, automobile Hallyu, tourism Hallyu, fuel cell Hallyu, broadcast Hallyu, pension service

Hallyu, and so on. In addition to the by-now familiar K-movie, K-drama, K-pop, K-beauty, K-food, and K-fashion, anything considered specific to Korea is indiscriminately K-tagged: K-administration, K-education, K-livestock, K-broadcast, K-literature, K-musical, and so on. This phenomenon of adding Hallyu or K-tagging is, of course, not to be criticized in itself. With the atmosphere of “we can do well” and “we can become the world’s best” spreading across the fields of Korean society, experts in each field are increasingly performing at the level of the K-drama or K-pop areas. This has contributed to the expansion of the application and meaning of the term Hallyu, resulting in its becoming more and more clichéd.

Nevertheless, using the term Hallyu to explain or describe an area of film, music, food, or fashion as a research subject still has its validity. The term Hallyu itself is premised on the question “What identity does Korean culture have?” That is, it is a concept presupposing a comparison with cultures of other countries. Of course, individual authors do not write a thesis or article with this specific situation in mind, but they basically assume, consciously or unconsciously, a concept of “Korean culture” underlying the word Hallyu.

The following is a list of papers dealing with the identity of Korean culture or the Korean way of thinking published in 2019:

1. *Cultural Export through K-Drama*(Feng Zhe, master’s thesis, Sejong University Graduate School, August 2019): The author, a Chinese student studying in Korea, presented Korean dramas, pointing out the following characteristics: “Korean TV soaps naturally express the charm of the East, bringing the deep insights into family, marriage and interpersonal relationships to the fore. Also, they convey the traditional moral values such as “elders first” in generational relationships and “thicker-than-water” in sibling relationships. This is the part that many Chinese people stuck

in the transition period are envious of or longing for"(p. 23). Without explicitly using the word Confucianism, the author pinpointed the Confucian atmosphere of Korean dramas.

2. "Philosophy of Hallyu: Five Aesthetic Codes"(Yoo Heon-sik, *Korean Studies* 2, October 2019): The author describes the philosophy of Hallyu with five aesthetic codes: openness, cohesion, precipitancy, healthy beauty, and humanism. Cohesion, for example, refers to the harmonious coexistence of differences, which enhances the integrality of Hallyu contents. The author also analyzes the BTS boy band's songs and dances as a combination of heterogeneous elements, such as R&B, rap, hip-hop, and dance, taking them as an example of Hallyu that acknowledges and harmoniously combines different elements to create eclectic synergy. A distinctive aspect he pointed out in Hallyu stars, in contrast to Hollywood stars, is their heart-warming human sensibility, and in that respect, humanism was another aesthetic code of the philosophy of Hallyu brought out by the author(Cf. Welfare TV lecture series: <http://www.wbcb.co.kr/>, 2020-07-09).

3. "Multidimensionality of the Ancient Spirit of Pungnyu(風流精神 [refined artistic taste]) Embedded in Hallyu"(Seong Ki-wook et al., *Culture and Convergence* 41(5), 2019): The authors sought to explain the inception, development, and spread of the "Korean Wave"(Hallyu), which emerged as an icon of the global culture in the 21st century, with the ancient Korean spirit of Pungnyu(refined artistic taste, hereinafter "Pungnyu"). They ascribed the growth and development of Hallyu to Koreans' Pungnyu in the sense of ancient Korean Pungnyu-do(Dao of Pungnyu), a spiritual culture of heaven-man union, spirit, and providence imbibed in the Myth of Dangun [the myth of the origin of Korean people], Buyeo's Jecheon ritual [Heaven worship], and Silla's Hwarangdo.

4. “The Spread of Hallyu and the Global Acceptance Trend”(Jang Won-ho, *Horizon of Knowledge* 27, November 2019): This paper highlights the main causes of the success of Hallyu according to two characteristics—change in the media environment and the compressed modernization of Korean society. Changes in the media environment refer to the development of YouTube, the penetration of social media such as Facebook in our daily lives, and the commercialization of digital satellite broadcasting. The compressed modernization of Korean society refers to the process by which Korean society has achieved rapid modernization. Jang argues that Koreans accepted the Japanese, European, and American cultural features in the process and assimilated them into their own cultural setting and that such cultural diversity, termed “hybridity” or “hybrid culture” by him, is one of the major attractions of Hallyu(p. 6–7). Jang also pays attention to the fact that Korean dramas revolve around love and familyism(p. 10). With regard to familyism, the author may have been referring to the familyism influenced by Confucianism, but did not directly mention Confucianism.

5. “On Hallyu in Japan as a Glocal Culture”(Cho Gyu-heon, *Japanese Cultural Studies* 69, January 2019): This paper focuses on the cultural hybridity intrinsic in Hallyu contents. The author argues that the transnational cultural consensus for Hallyu is based on its cultural hybridity and ascribes the hybridity to Hallyu’s characteristics of accepting both traditional and modern values. He points out that Hallyu contents concurrently embrace both the traditional value of Confucian etiquette and the contemporary trend, taking the following commentary on BTS made by the French daily Le Figaro as an example: “These ‘enfants terribles’ abiding by Confucian etiquettes have reached the summit thanks to the strong will and tremendous practice considered crucial to succeed in Korea where Samsung works like ants.” Conclusively, the author

highlights cultural hybridity as a particular attraction of Hallyu contents(p. 306).

3. Hallyu research in Japan

A search on the website of the CiNii Article Database(<http://ci.nii.ac.jp/>) with the keywords “Hallyu” and “K-pop” by year yielded the following graphs representing the numbers of the articles(excluding dissertations and media coverage) on Hallyu and K-pop, respectively, published in Japan in each year(2000–2019).

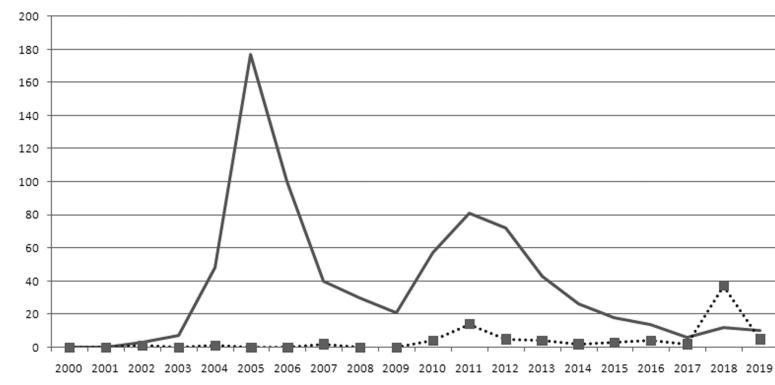


Figure 2. Numbers of articles on Hallyu(solid line) and K-pop(dotted line) published in Japan from 2000 to 2019(Source: CiNii Article Database, <http://ci.nii.ac.jp/>)

The graph for Hallyu research shows two periods toward their peaks, 2004–2005 and 2010–2011, called the First and Second Hallyu Booms, respectively. The First Hallyu Boom was the K-drama boom that began with Winter Sonata, and the Second Hallyu Boom was the K-pop boom stirred by Korean singers such as Girls’ Generation, Kara, and BIGBANG.

In recent years, that is, since 2017, there have been signs of Third and Fourth Hallyu Booms. The Third is about K-food, K-cosmetics, and K-fashion in vogue along with the rising popularity of Twice and BTS among Japanese adolescents, and the Fourth is about K-culture, which has spread among middle-aged men, mainstream men in particular. As Japanese opinion leaders who were attracted to K-culture through the movie Parasite gravitate toward K-dramas streaming on Netflix, such as Crash Landing on You and Itaewon Class, such films are being widely discussed in Japanese society.

Contrary to this Hallyu boom trend, the graph shows a minimal increase in Hallyu research after 2017. Instead, the overall Hallyu research trend is declining. In 2019, only 10 articles on Hallyu were published.

In the second half of 2018, the Korean court ruled that Japanese companies could be held liable for compensation payments to the Koreans forcefully recruited during the Japanese occupation period. This ruling was rejected by the Japanese government, deteriorating Korea–Japan relations, and the growing economic conflicts between the two countries ended up exploding in 2019. Japan banned exports of major industrial products to Korea, and Koreans responded to this action with a nationwide boycott of Japanese products, which had ripple effects on the diplomatic and political relations between Korea and Japan, marking the worst year to date. Under the influence of this social atmosphere, research interest in Hallyu in academia was insignificant despite the Hallyu boom brewing among the general population.

On the K-pop side, BTS successfully performed stadium tours in Japan several times in 2019, and scored number one on the Oricon Chart. In 2019, the girl group Twice also successfully completed their first dome tour as the first Korean girl group. K-pop groups' activities in Japan continued without any significant changes, as if to defy Korea–Japan political conflicts.

Unlike K-pop activities, the graph for K-pop research(dotted line) shows a sharp rise in 2018 and a sharp fall back to the 2017 level in 2019. Looking at K-pop alone, K-pop went through two booms. The first boom was from 2010 to 2011, and the second boom from 2018. Although the results of K-pop research in 2019 are lower than 2018, five cases that can be said to be average levels have been announced. The K-pop research trend shows two boom periods: 2010–2011 and 2019. Despite a decline in the number of articles on K-pop in 2019 compared to 2018, five articles were published in 2019, maintaining the average level.

The following list shows the main Hallyu-related articles published in Japan in 2019:

1. “Penetration and Settlement of K-Entertainment as Experienced Personally and Heard from Students”(中町綾子, *Galac* 603, September 2019)
2. “Amid the Deteriorating Korea-Japan Relationship, Contents Are Innocent. There Is a Need to Recognize Good as Good”(古家正亨, *Galac* 603, September 2019)
3. “Asia’s Rapidly Expanding Health Gourmet Market: Hallyu, FTA-driven Leap for Korea and Stagnation for Japan”(成瀬道紀, 金融財政 business(10810), 03-18-2019)
4. “Now, 16 Years since the Yonsama Boom, Why are K-literature and K-pop Popular(金承福 et al., 中央公論 133(11), November 2019)
5. “Korea’s National Content Strategies Behind the Boom”(黃仙惠, *Galac* 603, September 2019)
6. “Hallyu is Outward Obscurantism”(室谷克実, *Hanada*(39), August 2019)
7. “Hallyu that Makes a Constitution with National Sentiment”(吳善花, Will: マンスリー ウィル 169, January 2019)

The fifth entry in the above list addresses the Korean government's national strategies behind the Hallyu booms, which is a view often observed in Japan's academia and broadcasting industry. It cannot be denied that the Korean government supports private cultural activities, but Japan tends to overestimate this characteristic, presumably because Japanese society values the role of the government and the state. Articles 6 and 7 can be categorized as studies evaluating Hallyu based on anti-Korea sentiment.

Although Hallyu research in academia is stagnant, the situation outside academia is quite different: interest in Hallyu in Japanese society is still explosive. A search for “韓流”(Hallyu) on Yahoo! JAPAN(<https://www.yahoo.co.jp/>; retrieved on 2020-07-10) yielded 500,000 uploads within 1 day(last update), 13 million searches within one month, and 53 million searches over the past year.

Whereas “Hallyu” + “Confucianism” yielded zero results in 2019 in the CiNii Article Database, a search on Yahoo! JAPAN reveals that close to 10,000 sentences with the mention of “Hallyu” and “Confucianism” were uploaded in the past year(7/10/2019 to 7/9/2020). Even admitting that irrelevant articles are intermingled due to it not being an advanced search, there is an unimaginably high number of articles that mention Hallyu and Confucianism together. Expressions frequently appearing in these articles are “Confucian country Korea,” “because Korea is a Confucian country,” or “unimaginable in a Confucian country.” This shows that the idea of Korea being a Confucian country and Hallyu being a product of Confucian culture is widely accepted in Japan. However, in-depth articles discussing the relationship between Hallyu and Confucianism are quite rare given that the data were extracted from general articles.

4. Hallyu research in China

The graphs below present the search results of Hallyu-related articles on the website of the China National Knowledge Infrastructure(CNKI, 中國知網, <http://www.cnki.net/>) with the keywords “韓流”(Hallyu) and “K-pop” or “韓國流行音樂”(this database includes media coverage as well). The search category was “title”(篇名): that is, articles containing the keywords in the title.

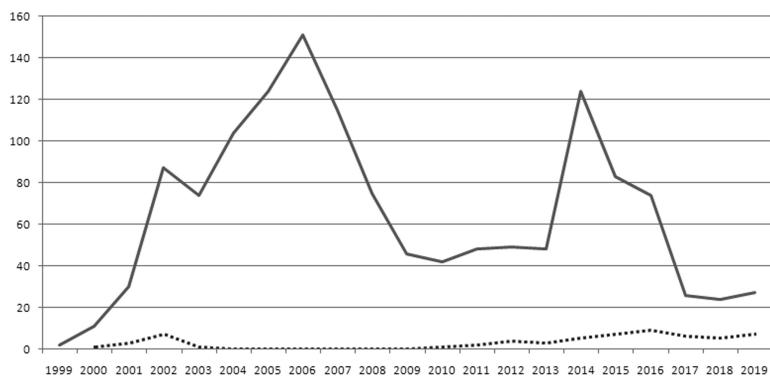


Figure 3. Numbers of articles on Hallyu(solid line) and K-pop(dotted line) published in China from 2000 to 2019(Source: CNKI, 中國知網, <http://www.cnki.net/>)

The Hallyu graph shows three boom periods: 2001–2002, 2004–2006, and 2013–2014. “Autumn in My Heart” was aired across the country in 2002, “Dae Jang Geum” from late 2005 to early 2006, and “My Love from the Star” in 2014, enjoying enormous popularity. Hallyu research, which had been gradually decreasing after the end of the third boom, nosedived in 2017 in the aftermath of the Hallyu ban, and it has been stagnating since.

K-pop research is scarce compared to Hallyu research. It began

in 2000 and went through three peaks: 2002(n=7), 2012(n=4), and 2015(n=7)/2016(n=9). Its decreasing trend was broken in 2019(n=7). Hallyu in China began, in fact, with K-pop. The term “Hallyu” was coined in 1998 in the course of a series of Beijing concerts by Korean singers including H.O.T. and Baby Vox, and it has continued to have a great impact on adolescents, but the research interest in K-pop among Chinese researchers is quite low.

The following list shows the main Hallyu-and K-pop-related articles published in China in 2019:

1. “Kitchen Entertainment Has Become a New Hallyu”(济冬 et al., 环球时报, 11-27-2019)
2. “Chinese Hallyu Fans’ Consumer Behaviors from the Perspective of Consumerism”(李涵, 新媒体研究, 11-25-2019-)
3. “Chinese’s Attitudes Toward Hallyu and Cause Searching(张德地, 艺术科技, 07-18-2019)
4. “Hallyu’s Influence on College Students’ Value System and Countermeasures”(张燕妮, 传播力研究, 04-20-2019)
5. “Background of K-pop’s Global Popularity”(字然, 黄河之声, 04-12-2019)
6. “Revelation of K-pop for Chinese Popular Music”(万涵, 戏剧之家, 08-10-2019)
7. K-pop Brands’ Expansion Strategies in the Chinese Market”(宋银玲, 现代营销(经营版), 04-01-2019)

In the third paper, while discussing the attitudes of Chinese people toward Hallyu, the author puts forth the homogeneity of Korean and Chinese culture as one of the reasons for Hallyu’s success in China, arguing that the shared Confucian culture is well-implemented in Hallyu cultural products and thus readily accepted by the Chinese. The author

pays particular attention to the similar emotional and cognitive structures of the two nations, which strikes the same chord for Korean and Chinese people in parent-child relationships, friendship, and romantic relationships. The author takes the TV series “Reply 1988” as a good example of such cultural homogeneity, which explains its great popularity in China(p. 117).

The fifth paper discusses the background of K-pop’s global popularity from three angles: 1) musical characteristics, 2) bisexual appeal of idol singers, and 3) fandom reactions(p. 144). As K-pop’s musical characteristics, the author highlighted the eclectic mix of addictive rhythms, hip-hop, dance, and R&B. Unfortunately, however, as a one-page article, this paper could not discuss this feature in more depth. K-pop’s efforts to include musically diverse elements in one piece of music may find an explanation in the context of Confucian philosophy, but the author did not enter that realm.

5. Hallyu research in the Anglo-American world

This section is dedicated to investigating the situation of Hallyu research in the Anglo-American world. To this effect, the EBSCOhost(abstract and full-text database; <http://www.ebsco.com>) was used. Humanities and social sciences databases can be searched in ASC(Academic Search Complete), where magazine articles are partially included in addition to academic papers. The graphs below present the search results(pre-2019 data retrieved 11-13-2019; 2019 data retrieved 07-11-2020).

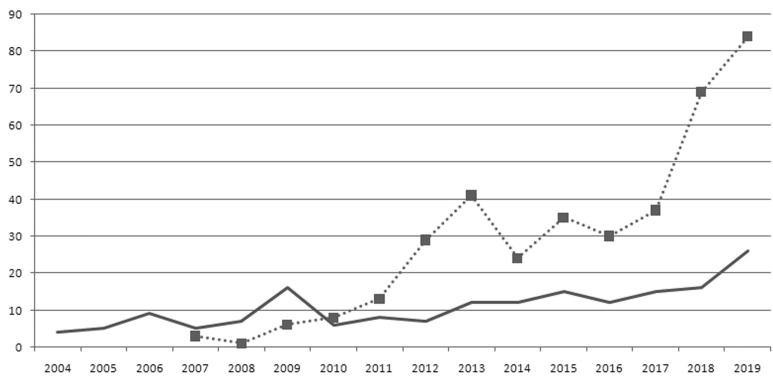


Figure 4. Numbers of articles on Hallyu(solid line) and K-pop(dotted line) published in the Anglo-American world from 2004/2007 to 2019
(Source: EBSCOhost, <http://www.ebsco.com>)

Non-English texts and irrelevant contents were excluded from the analysis data. For 2019, for example, of the 41 articles detected with the keyword “Hallyu” or “Korean wave,” only 26 were selected after excluding those not closely related to the subject. For 2019, 26 Hallyu-related and 84 K-pop-related articles were found, both marking a sharp increase compared with the previous year, more than three-fold in the field of K-pop research.

K-pop research can be segmented into research on singers($n=36$), fandom($n=5$), and others($n=43$). Breaking down the papers on singers, 15 were written on BTS, 8 on Blackpink, 3 on Twice, and 10 on other singers. These numbers do not include papers that do not use the term “K-pop.” Such cases include three papers on Blackpink and more than 20 papers on BTS. The same applies to Hallyu. More than five of the found papers deal with K-drama without using the word “Hallyu” or “Korean wave.” That is, these search results do not give information on the number of 2019 research papers covering Hallyu or K-pop. However, these numbers are significant in that they provide an overview of the research

trend compared with that of the previous year.

The Hallyu research trend(solid line) shows a gradual increase over time. The slope for 2019 is steeper than the slope for 2018, which may be due to the influence of the Korean drama and movie streaming service by the OTT company Netflix and the movie Parasite directed by Bong Joon-ho. One paper had a direct mention of Bong Joon-ho.

The K-pop research trend(dotted line) shows two sharp rises: 2012–2013 and 2018–2019. The first boom is ascribable to the global spread of PSY’s “Gangnam Style” and the second boom to the global popularity of BTS. Individual studies are not focused on BTS but examine various areas of K-pop.

The following list shows some of the Hallyu-related articles published in 2019:

1. “Geography of Hallyu Studies: Analysis of Academic Discourse on Hallyu in International Research”(Seok–Kyeong Hong et al., *Korea Journal*, Summer 2019, 59(2))
2. “Increasing Opportunity and Value in the Cultural Industries: A Comparative Analysis of the Successful Clusters and Implications for Hallyu”(Hwy–Chang Moon, *Kritika Kultura*, 2019)
3. “The Industrialization of Korea’s Performing Arts and Its Path for Globalization”(Man–Soo Cho, *Kritika Kultura*, 2019)
4. “The Fandom of Hallyu, a Tribe in The Digital Network Era: The Case of ARMY of BTS”(WoongJo Chang et al., *Kritika Kultura*, 2019)
5. “Hollyuwood: Korea’s Comparative Advantage in the Global Motion Picture Industry”(Miroudot, Sébastien, *Kritika Kultura*, 2019)
6. “The Next Growth Strategy for Hallyu: A Comparative Analysis of Global Analysis of Global Entertainment Firms”(Yeon W. Lee et al., *Kritika Kultura*, 2019)

7. “Between Technological Advancement and Protectionism: The Bumpy Evolution from MP3 Players to Smartphones in Korea”(Jimmyn Parc, *Kritika Kultura*, 2019)
8. “Fantasies of Modernity: Korean TV Dramas in Latin America”(Benjamin M. Han, *Journal of Popular Film & Television*, Jan–Mar2019, 47(1))

As shown in this list, most papers were published in the Philippines-based semiannual e-journal *Kritika Kultura* and the Korea-based *Korea Journal*. The authors are also Koreans for the most part. This provides clear evidence that Hallyu research still remains in the periphery of the Anglo-American world.

If the search is limited to the EBSCO databases with high-notch papers, hardly any papers from 2019 cover Hallyu and Confucianism. However, sentences in the papers published in 2019 in the list below, though not found in EBSCO, briefly mention Hallyu and Confucianism 2019.

1. “Power Distance in the Korean Culture as it Emerges from a K-Drama”(Elena Buja, *International Conference RCIC '19*, Vlora, 2–4 May 2019): The author(affiliation: Transylvania University in Brasov, Romania) analyzes the TV series “Descendants of the Sun” and discusses the power distance among people intrinsic in Korean society. She notes that despite tremendous economic and social development, Korean culture is still greatly influenced by the teachings of Confucius, shown by the emphasis on filial piety, respect toward the elderly, loyalty, personal morality, and courage on the one hand and oppressive culture toward women on the other.
2. “Welcoming the Concept of Modern Women in Korea”(Yee Tung

Wong, *The Public Ear*, <https://medium.com/>, 11–13–2019): The author, a Hong Kong–born woman, points out in this simple essay posted on a social network that Confucian culture is deeply embedded in the Korean mindset, which affects the creation of Korean media contents. For example, K-drama producers try to construct a submissive and weak female image through character settings and story lines, strongly tending to place the actress in a weak and passive position.

3. “Going SOFT, Going HARD: The Transforming of the Korean Man”(Marius Carlos, Jr., <https://www.breakingasia.com/>, Culture, Korea, Jan 26, 2019): The author, a Philippines–based journalist, paid attention to the soft male image in Korean singers such as BTS and in K-dramas. He regarded Korean men’s “manliness” transforming from hard to soft masculinity surprisingly as “a combination of different things, but at its core, surprisingly is the Confucian/Chinese influence,” in particular the Confucian wen(文) masculinity. He noted that wen masculinity is in essence “intelligent, refined, gentlemanly, and humble…has plenty of self-restraint and culturally nuanced, meaning he has to be good at what he does and he must show that he is absolutely consumed by personal excellence.”

6. Conclusion: Hallyu and Confucianism

This article has provided an overview of the trend of papers on Hallyu published in 2019 and the contents of some of those papers, with special reference to the relationship between Hallyu and Confucianism. No research was dedicated to Hallyu and Confucianism in 2019. However, it has been confirmed that there is widespread recognition that “Korean culture was strongly influenced by Confucian culture” in the Chinese and

Anglo-American parts of the world as well as in Japan. Several authors and papers were observed that presuppose such recognition. Quite a number of papers suggested that Hallyu attaches value to Confucian morality and ethical principles, albeit without explicit mention of Confucianism.

Several papers published in recent years in Korean and non-Korean academic circles have noted that Hallyu contents attach great value to diversity and are produced on the basis of cultural hybridity. These characteristics of Hallyu could be discussed in depth in relation to Confucian philosophy, but such attempts have not yet been observed. Neo-Confucianism, called Seonglihak in Korea, arose in the Song Dynasty(960–1279), but Confucianism was brought to the Korean Peninsula even before the foundation of Goguryeo(BC 37–668 BC) in Korea. The more remote primitive Confucianism has a much longer history, dating back to the Dangun period. China once abandoned, transformed, and turned away from that Confucianism, but the people of the Korean Peninsula have consistently abided by Confucian philosophy in all aspects of public and private life.

Confucianism is not an ideological culture belonging to China alone. It is the philosophy and life culture shared by all communities of Northeast Asia since ancient times. Its root is deeper than the history of “China” or “Korea.” The Confucian background manifested in Hallyu is far from being a shame. This is how I feel whenever I come across the attitude of avoiding or disregarding/ignoring Confucianism in a Korean academic paper. I am inclined to ascribe the lack of depth in the philosophical debate surrounding Hallyu to our insufficient knowledge of Confucianism.

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Yulgok Studies Content Development and International Dissemination Project Team

Address 124 Jukheon-gil (Jukheon-Dong), Gangneung, Gangwon

Telephone +82(0)33-642-4982

Telefax +82(0)33-647-4046

Email yulgokee@hanmail.net

Website www.yulgok.or.kr

Project team bulletin board <http://yulgok.geeo.kr/wordpress/>

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