

Hallyu pop culture and the motivation of generation z in visiting South Korea

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Received May 24, 2024/Accepted September 13, 2024

Abstract

Popular culture is known to have an influence in building human behavioural intentions. Moreover, now, popular culture from South Korea or often referred to as 'hallyu' has become a phenomenon among Generation Zs in Indonesia. Along with the 'hallyu' phenomenon that is occurring, data shows that there is an increase in the tourist trend in South Korea. This then raises the question of whether there is an influence of 'hallyu' on intentions to visit South Korea. Thus, this research aims to build a model and discover the influence involved in South Korean pop culture on the motivation to visit South Korea. Data collection was made by distributing questionnaires online to 361 respondents from the population who like 'hallyu' popular culture in West Java. The data collected were processed using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM). The findings of this research indicate that the Gen Zs motivation to visit the country can be influenced by factors related to South Korean popular culture. Situational involvement significantly influences the formation of individual visiting intentions, whereas lasting involvement does not have a significant influence

Keywords: Hallyu, Pop Culture, Visit Motivation, Generation Z

Introduction

There are several research discussing the factors that influence a person to travel. It is generally known that culture, recommendations from friends, and media influence can encourage someone to acquire the desire to travel. However, there is still a lack of research that discusses the influence of traveling supported by popular culture. This urge is important to be analysed as popular culture has now become a culture that is hard to separate from today's daily life. Moreover, its impact on tourism, which is also one of the human needs that is necessary to be met, that is also a reality that needs to be discovered. Leisure and tourism are not only basic human needs but are included in basic rights and human rights that are universally recognized (Hermantoro, 2020; Mill & Morrison, 2012). Another study also explains that Maslow agrees that tourism needs are present at every level of basic needs (Zohar & Marshall, 2004).

One of the most produced cultures is a pop culture from South Korea called 'hallyu' (한류) or 'Korean wave'. This term was popularised by Chinese media in 1999 and was used to refer to a phenomenon of young people in China who enjoy Korean culture such as serial drama and popular song (Jang et al., 2016). In recent years, Hallyu has also been characterised by Korean pop music, and visual media such as dramas and broadcasts (Bae et al., 2017). In Indonesian society itself, consumption of hallyu content has increased particularly during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic (Drianda et al., 2021). At that moment, hallyu contents emerged as a choice to occupy their leisure time, sustain social and emotional connections, and surmount various mental health syndromes they have experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic (Drianda et al., 2021). Thus, many people also have the desire to travel but are hampered by the pandemic. This phenomenon led to a globalisation of culture because the cultural tradition, the places, and the visuals shown by Korean dramas made them curious and changed their desire into their "dream place" to visit after the pandemic.

The occurrence of globalisation has pushed the development of civilization in a more modern direction and intervened in humans' needs for recreation and travel (Dwyer, 2015). Globalisation is defined by sociologists Martin Albrow and Elizabeth King as a process that unites the world's population into one single society (Albrow, 2004). Apart from that, Anthony Giddens also defines globalisation in 'The Consequences of Modernity' as the intensification of world social

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relations that connect distant locations so that presence in one place can be influenced by events that occur in other places many kilometres away (Giddens, 2007). This definition is in line with the current phenomenon; where the internet connects people around the world who are hundreds or even thousands of kilometres apart. From the relationships built via the internet, information exchanges also occur which influence each other. In this case, cultural exchange cannot be excluded, it has even become an exchange that sells well.

Cultural exchanges that continue to occur then become an important commodity and are turned into a cultural industry. The cultural industry is also recognised as a creative sector that encompasses endeavours involving the conception, development, and marketing of innovative content in the form of products or services. The term was coined by critical theorists— Theodor Adorno (1903–1969) and Max Horkheimer (1895–1973) (Horkheimer 1895-1973, 2002). This sector is also associated with late capitalism, encompassing all cultural expressions, including literature, film, and music, within the framework of the capitalist production system. According to Adorno and Horkheimer, these cultural commodities aim not only to generate profits by appealing to the masses but also to manufacture consumers who conform to the requirements of the capitalist system. They also argued that by becoming spectators of the ideal world in advertisements and films, people can forget their reality and can be manipulated easily. They also argue that mass media aims to entertain because entertainment is intended to reach an agreement, and reaching an agreement is only possible by isolating oneself from the entire social process. The costs required to produce a cultural product were very high in the 20th century, but once a product was finished, copies could be produced cheaply. This production process motivates a cultural industry characterised by the production of only a few products for the global market. This results in the culture created in a media industry having lost its artistic and cultural value. Now films, music, radio, and magazines no longer have artistic value but rather have shifted to economic value which can be created massively thereby generating profits for the media industry.

Hallyu not only influences feelings of liking and social relationships. Its influence is so impactful that it has pivoted the formation of Korea's image in the eyes of foreigners (Bae et al., 2017; S.-H. Lee & Workman, 2015). This happened because hallyu also brings traditional language, behaviour, habits, and culture from their original country. These elements are distributed through standardised and high-quality audio, visual, and audio-visual forms so that it can be easily received by foreigners. South Korean tourism has grown rapidly recently. Even after the pandemic, South Korea is one of many people's dream tourist destinations. This phenomenon occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic, many people filled the days of implementation of community activity restrictions (PPKM) by watching popular hallyu culture content. This occurrence is also called revenge travel or in Indonesian it is called "revenge journey". The Korean Tourism Organization (KTO) stated this in promotional activities, namely the Press Conference Korean Culture and Travel Festival 2023. PR & Media Executive KTO Jakarta Office said that tourists coming to South Korea from Indonesia had increased by 80%. This increase is calculated from data from January 2023 to June 2023, showing that the number of visitors has exceeded before the pandemic. In the event, it was also explained that South Korea was carrying out promotions to boost inbound tourism (Deddy Setiawan, 2023).

In this case, the internet plays a role in presenting the possibility of a radical shift in long-term marketing and advertising processes by decentralising the structure of information, cultural, and knowledge capital. Industrialisation activities and cultural commodification in mass media publicity practices with commercial purposes then also have the effect of robbing individuals of their subjectivity as active consumers. In essence, people as consumers no longer care about the quality, use value, and quality of commodities, but are instead more focused on impressive and touching advertisements. So, consumers are not buying the tangible product per se, but they are purchasing the image of the product that is being advertised. Likewise, with tourism products, many people now go on holiday because they are influenced by the image of the destination.

Indonesia is the country with the highest increase in visits to South Korea during 2013-2015. This also makes South Korea the most favourite destination for Indonesians. In the same year, the KTO also stated that Indonesia was the country that generated the highest increase in visits among other Southeast Asian countries (Lestari, 2013). Even after 10 years have passed and the

COVID-19 pandemic occurred, Indonesian tourists visiting South Korea are still increasing (Susanti, 2023).

Popular culture has been proven to influence individuals in forming an image and to increase their intention to visit (Whang et al., 2016). Gartner found that the success of the film *Crocodile Dundee* had increased visits to Australia. This research also states that popular culture is also able to change the image of an area dramatically in a short time (Gartner, 1994). Tourist visits caused by popular culture have now become a global phenomenon. From this phenomenon, the consumption of popular culture such as television shows, films, and music has become connected to the tourism industry (Kim et al., 2009). Now the involvement of specific elements of popular culture in the tourism industry is increasingly strong and easily recognised. For example, the Itaewon district in South Korea has become an important place to visit if you go to South Korea due to the drama series *Itaewon Class*. The same thing happened in England when King's Cross Station became a mandatory place for tourists due to the success of the *Harry Potter* series.

The phenomenon of increasing visits to a destination due to the consumption of popular culture can be explained by various theories. Overall, this phenomenon can be explained within the domain of consumer behaviour research. This study examines how individuals, groups, or organisations choose, buy, and utilise goods, services, ideas, or experiences. This activity is carried out to produce services which are a human need that needs to be met and satisfied. One theory within the scope of consumer behaviour studies that can explain individual behaviour is the Theory of Planned Behaviour. This theory explains that human behaviour is controlled by three types of considerations, namely beliefs about the possible consequences of an individual's behaviour, beliefs about what other people think is important for the individual to do, and beliefs about the individual's ability to carry out a behaviour (Ajzen & Schmidt, 2020). In this theory, it is also explained that the behaviour that was formed is influenced by aspects of attitudes that have been shaped previously (Ajzen, 1991). Meanwhile, attitudes are built by cognitive, affective, and cognitive aspects (Hilgard, 1980; Lavidge & Steiner, 1961; Mayer et al., 1997; Ostrom, 1969). More broadly, attitude means feelings that describe whether a person is happy or not, likes or dislikes, and agrees or disagrees with an object (Blackwell et al., 2017; Schiffman & Kanuk, 2007). Attitude is also a form of overall concept evaluation that may arise from affective or cognitive systems (Peter & Olson, 2000). The derivative of this theory is also commonly utilised to explore how pop culture can influence people's motivation to visit (S. Lee et al., 2018). So, in this research, assumptions from the theory of planned behaviour are eligible to be tested and will be tested partially.

Method

This research aims to find out more deeply about the factors within individuals in determining behaviour and its influence. Thus, a quantitative approach is used in this research to generalise and build the model. The data is collected through an online form featuring a closed questionnaire and a 1-5 likert scale, as this research employs the survey method. This is in line with the assumption that the social reality that occurs in society is considered something empirical can be observed in real terms and can be proven scientifically.

Based on the 2020 population census, the majority of Gen Z population is known to reside in West Java. There are 12,965,399 people in the age range of Gen Z that live in West Java (number of population by region, generation classification, and type of gender, in Indonesia- Dataset - 2020 Population Census - Central Bureau of Statistics, 2020). Out of a total population of 12,965,399 individuals, the sample size can be determined using the sample table proposed by Isaac and Michael. According to this table, with an error rate of 5%, the minimum sample size required is 347 samples (Sugiyono, 2010). This also can be used to facilitate sampling by establishing respondent characteristics as limitations. The adjusted characteristics are the respondent should be a fan of South Korean popular culture (Hallyu/K-Pop for at least for 1 year), Gen Z (Born 1996 – 2012) and reside in West Java.

After collecting all the data, descriptive analysis will be conducted to explain the demographic characteristics of the respondents. Additionally, descriptive analysis of the variables will be performed using SPSS software to explain their distribution. Following this, inferential

analysis will be employed to draw conclusions that address the research questions. The inferential analysis in this study comprises Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and modelling analysis.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) serves as a model for assessing latent variables measured by manifest variables. This stage aims to evaluate how well the chosen variables describe the constructs under study. Subsequently, a model will be constructed using structural equations and estimated accordingly. This step is undertaken to develop a comprehensive model derived from the research.

Results and Discussion.

Respondents' Characteristic

The results of this research have been processed using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) data analysis techniques. In this section, the results of the analysis will be presented by the tests carried out on the manifest variables that form the latent variables. The latent variables that have been tested are the KS variable (Situational Involvement) and the SP variable (Motivation to Visit). To see the results of the analysis, the following tables are showing the results:

Table 1. Respondents' Demographic Characteristics

Variables	n (%)
Sex	
Female	327 (90,6)
Male	31 (8,6)
chose not to answer	3 (0,8)
Domicile	
Bandung	229 (63,43)
Bekasi	43 (11,91)
Bogor	16 (4,43)
Ciamis	1 (0,28)
Cianjur	4 (1,11)
Cimahi	13 (3,60)
Cirebon	4 (1,11)
Depok	23 (6,37)
Indramayu	1 (0,28)
Karawang	2 (0,55)
Kuningan	1 (0,28)
Majalengka	2 (0,55)
Subang	1 (0,28)
Sukabumi	11 (3,05)
Sumedang	9 (2,49)
Tasikmalaya	1 (0,28)
Duration of liking Hallyu	
1	27 (7,48)
2	20 (5,54)
3	39 (10,80)
4	24 (6,65)
5	62 (17,17)
>5 (estimation)	15 (4,16)
6	10 (2,77)
7	18 (4,99)
8	25 (6,93)
9	13 (3,60)
10	33 (9,14)
11	12 (3,32)
12	19 (5,26)
13	19 (5,26)

14	20 (2,77)
15	12 (3,32)
16	1 (0,28)
17	1 (0,28)
20	1 (0,28)
Frequency of listening to K-Pop Music	
Everyday	255 (70,64)
Once a week	55 (15,24)
Once a month	20 (5,54)
Less than once a month	31 (8,59)
Frequency of Watching K-Drama	
Everyday	86 (23,82)
Once a week	155 (31,86)
Once a month	65 (18,01)
Less than once a month	95 (26,32)
Frequency of Watching K-Movie	
Everyday	13 (3,60)
Once a week	47 (13,02)
Once a month	109 (30,19)
Less than once a month	192 (53,19)

Source : by Author

Table above shows demographic characteristics of the respondents. A slightly majority are females (90,6%), domiciled at Bandung (63,43%), liking Hallyu for at least 5 years (17,17%), and listening to K-Pop Music everyday (70,64%), watching K-Drama at least once a week (31,86%), and watching K-Movie at least once a month (53,19%).

Descriptive Analysis

The findings from the descriptive analysis of variables conducted with SPSS are presented in the table below:

Table 2. Result of Descriptive Analysis

Variable	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
Situational Involvement	1,00	5,00	4,0134	0,68895
Enduring Involvement	1,00	5,00	3,6001	0,81374
Destination Image	1,00	5,00	3,8373	0,57527

Source : by Author

The table above shows the results of descriptive testing on the involvement variable. The first variable, namely the situational involvement variable, has a mean value that is close to the maximum value 4.0134. The level of data distribution from this variable is measured by the standard deviation value that appears 0.68895. The second variable is the eternal involvement variable. The mean value that comes out is close to the maximum value 3.6001. The level of data distribution from this variable is measured by the standard deviation value that appears 0.81374. Then, the last one is the destination image variable with a standard deviation of 0.57527 and a mean value that is also close to the maximum value, namely 3.8373.

Table 3. Result of Descriptive Analysis

Variable	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
Visit Intention	1,00	5,00	3,7302	0,89090

Source : by Author

The table above shows the results of descriptive testing on the visiting intention variable. This visiting intention variable has a mean value that is close to the maximum value, which is 3.7302. The level of data distribution from this variable is measured by the standard deviation value that appears 0.89090.

Test of Fitness Model

This test is conducted to assess the adequacy of the constructed model; below are the results of the model suitability test. The table below displays the loading factors, error values, and other pertinent results from the model testing.

Table 4. Result of Test of Fitness Model

No	Good of Fitness Measurements	Target	Estimated Value	Status
1	SRMR	0,05 > SRMR > 0,1	0,08	<i>Good fit</i>
2	GFI	0,80 ≤ GFI ≤ 0,90 (Hair, Babin, Anderson, & Black, 1995)	0,80	<i>Good fit</i>
3	RMSEA	0,08 = good fit, < 0,05 = close fit (Byrne, 1998)	0,077	<i>Good fit</i>
4	IFI	0,8 < IFI < 0,9 (Hair, Babin, Anderson, & Black, 1995)	0,87	<i>Good fit</i>
5	CFI	0,8 < CFI < 0,97 (Carmines & McIver, 1983)	0,87	<i>Good fit</i>

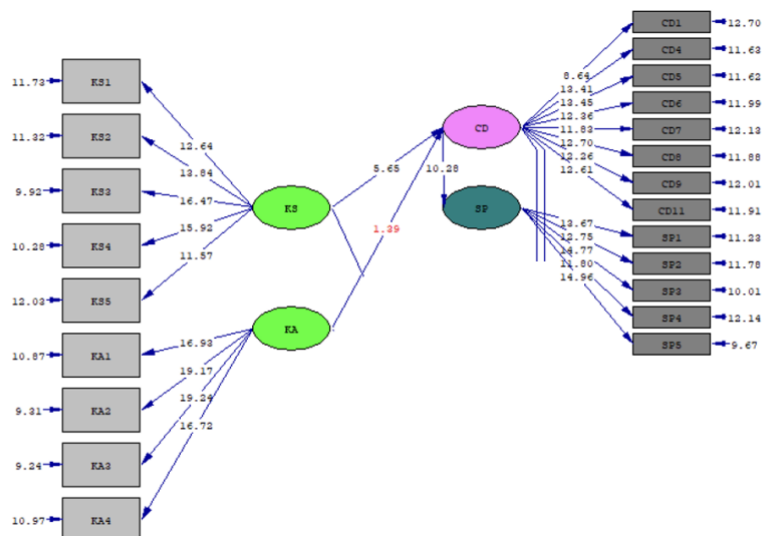
Source : Author

Based on the test results, the model that emerged can be categorised as a good fit. The values that appear show good numbers and indicate a good fit for the research model.

Test of Structural Equation Modelling

In this section, the model is tested to see the suitability of the model for manifest variables after respecification by removing manifest variables with high error values. The results of the model suitability test after respecification produce the following results:

Figure 2. Structural Equation Model Result



Source : by Author

The following table will show the detail of the model result:

Table 5. Structural Equation Modelling Value Result

Hypothesis	Variable	Relation	SLF	T-Value	Conclusion	Decision
1	KS→CD	Situational Involvement→ Destination Image	0,56	5,65	Significant	Approved
2	KA→CD	Enduring Involvement→ Destination Image	0,12	1,39	Not Significant	Denied
3	CD→SP	Destination Image→Visit Intention	0,80	10,28	Significant	Approved

Source : by Author

The Influence of the Latent Variable KS (Situational Involvement) on the Latent Variable CD (Destination Image)

The KS latent variable has five manifest variables which are reflected by questions in the questionnaire to describe the KS latent variable itself. The five manifest variables produce respective loading factor values of KS1 = 0.64, KS2 = 0.69, KS3 = 0.78, KS4 = 0.77, and KS5 = 0.60. The values that emerge provide information that all manifest variables can describe the latent variable of situational involvement well.

Structural testing indicates that the latent variable KS has a positive influence on the latent variable CD. This is indicated by the t-value which appears greater than the t-table, namely $5.65 > 1.96$. Values that exceed this t-table value decide that hypothesis 1 is accepted. Apart from that, the loading factor value resulting from the KS latent variable on the CD latent variable is 0.56, which means that the contribution of the KS latent variable influences the CD latent variable by 56%. So, every increase in one KS unit will increase CD by 0.56 units.

The Influence of the Latent Variable KA (Enduring Involvement) on the Latent Variable CD (Destination Image)

The KA latent variable has four manifest variables which are reflected by questions in the questionnaire to describe the KA latent variable itself. The four manifest variables produce loading factor values of KA1 = 0.79, KA2 = 0.85, KA3 = 0.86, and KA4 = 0.78, respectively. The values that emerge provide information that all manifest variables can describe the latent variable of lasting engagement well. Structural testing indicates that the latent variable KA does not influence the latent variable CD. This is indicated by the t-value which appears smaller than the t-table, namely $1.39 < 1.96$. A value below the t-table value decides that hypothesis 2 is rejected. So high or low the KA latent variable will not affect the CD latent variable.

The Influence of Latent Variable CD (Destination Image) on Latent Variable SP (Visit Intention)

The CD latent variable has eight manifest variables which are reflected by questions in the questionnaire to describe the CD latent variable itself. The five manifest variables produce respective loading factor values of CD1 = 0.47, CD4 = 0.70, CD5 = 0.70, CD6 = 0.65, CD7 = 0.63, CD8 = 0.67, CD9 = 0.65, and CD11 = 0.67. The values that emerge provide information that all manifest variables can describe the latent variable of situational involvement well.

Structural testing indicates that the CD latent variable has a positive influence on the SP latent variable. This is indicated by the t-value which appears greater than the t-table, namely $10.28 > 1.96$. The value that exceeds the t-table value decides that hypothesis 5 is accepted. Apart from that, the loading factor value resulting from the latent variable CD on the latent variable SP is 0.80,

which means the contribution of the latent variable SP influences the latent variable CD by 80%. So, every increase in SP units will increase CD by 0.80 units.

This research has succeeded in showing that a person can have a desire to visit a destination because of the image of the destination that exists in the individual's mind. The destination image that exists in an individual's mind is proven to be able to be formed because the individual has consumed popular culture and been involved in it. In line with research by Whang, Yang, and Ko in 2016 which showed that situational involvement can encourage to visit a destination (Whang et al., 2016). The Theory of Planned Behaviour tested in this research has also been partially validated. This theory states that visiting intentions can be built by attitudes which are also reflected in the test results in this research.

These results support previous research suggesting that situational involvement influences destination image (Setiawan, 2016; Whang et al., 2016). However, this research diverges from previous studies and contributes new insights by demonstrating that enduring involvement does not significantly influence the formation of an individual's destination image. Thus, the involvement that involves better on the individual is the situational involvement. Previous research by Park and Lee in 2020 stated the same as what this research found destination image can be built by the popular culture consumed by a person (Park & Lee, 2020). Furthermore, previous research aligns with the findings of this study, suggesting that motivation to visit can be influenced by the destination image formed in individuals' minds after consuming pop culture content (Setiawan, 2016; Whang et al., 2016).

Overall, this research has proven that the Theory of Planned Behaviour and other previous research show the same assumptions as the results of this research. That is, where popular culture is consumed by individuals and is involved with these individuals, it can build a destination image in the minds of consumers and create an urge to visit. In this case, someone who consumes South Korean popular culture may be influenced and form an image of South Korea which they watch in cultural content, and then create a feeling of wanting to visit South Korea as their tourist destination.

Conclusion

The results of this research reveal several facts relating to the hallyu pop culture and the Indonesian Gen Zs motivation of travelling to South Korea. This research produces a research model that has passed the goodness of fitness test. All the values from the test of goodness of fit exceed the minimum score. Visiting motivation is known to be influenced by situational involvement through individual destination image building since the value of the test shows 5,65 over 1,96 minimum score. It could be concluded that individuals who are situationally exposed to popular culture content (in this study, South Korean popular culture) may develop a positive image of the country or destination from which the popular culture's origin. This phenomenon may occur because popular culture content often presents visually appealing depictions of the country or tourist destination it represents. When individuals are exposed to such idealised images of a tourist destination, their desire to visit the origin country of the popular culture becomes stronger. From this research, we glean insights into the significant influence of popular culture in attracting tourists to a destination, particularly when the destination image portrayed by popular culture content is favourable. The findings of this study contribute to the Theory of Planned Behaviour by highlighting how the involvement of pop culture influences the dimensions of the theory. This suggests that individuals' behaviour, including their decision-making processes, can be influenced by factors inherent in their daily lives.

The findings of this study also highlight the influence of pop culture on the motivation to visit South Korea among hallyu fans. Future research could delve deeper into understanding the specific mechanisms through which pop culture and other considerable factors such as salary, word of mouth, and many individual aspects. Moreover, longitudinal studies can investigate the long-term effects of consuming pop culture contents.

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