

# Citizen's Perception on Korea Hallyu Gastrodiplomacy: A Netnography Research

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## ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the effectiveness of gastrodiplomacy that has been carried out by Korea in Indonesia through the entertainment industry. Korean wave or Korean culture is currently growing rapidly and expanding globally in recent years. The existence of this information tends to be accepted by people from various circles, one of which is in Indonesia, its impact can be felt in everyday life. There are so many Indonesian cuisines that have adapted the typical Korean taste. Even fast food which is a franchise license from the superpower America also adopts a distinctive Korean taste for their processed foods such as bulgogi or Korean spicy-samyang. This study was conducted using a qualitative. The data analysis from social media Platform. The results showed that the gastrodiplomacy carried out by Korea has succeeded in the world of entertainment. Food and Beverage Industries field that serve Korean specialties have started to dominate the Indonesian market both with the concept of dine-in and even instant food. Not only has an impact on Indonesian people's knowledge of Korean culture, the success of this gastrodiplomacy has also provided benefits in the Korean tourism sector. There is an increase of up to 60% every year. In 2017 the number of Indonesian tourists visiting Korea reached 20,114 people, while in 2018 it reached 30,365 people.

**Keywords:** *Korea Hallyu, Gastrodiplomacy, Netnography*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Hallyu, or Korean wave or Korean culture is currently growing rapidly and expanding globally in recent years. The existence of this information tends to be accepted by people from various circles, one of which is in Indonesia, its impact can be felt in everyday life. The development of information technology, especially social media, has become a trigger for the great enthusiasm of the community for the culture in Korea. Korean Wave is synonymous with the world of entertainment such as music, drama and varietyshow which showcase Korean culture. Over time, many implementations in everyday life have adopted Korean culture, starting from food, language, fashion and makeup [1].

Starting from 2000, when most Asian countries experienced an economic crisis, South Korea actually formed a special K-Pop department within the Ministry of Culture to support economic growth through the entertainment world [2]. The standards possessed by every actor in this field also meet the criteria of 'perfect' in the eyes of Asia. The government also built concert auditoriums and bars and made it easier for agency businesses to protect the entertainment industry. In addition, the Korean government urges the use of public facilities, nearby

tourist attractions to be displayed in the process of making video clips or shooting films or dramas in this industry.

The biggest impact of the entertainment world is that many tourists come to Korea, Korea has also become a favorite destination in several countries for the last 5 years, the places that are featured in making video clips or filming make many tourists interested in visiting in person. One example is Nami Island, where there is a statue of a phenomenal Korean drama couple in 2002. In the records of the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) in 2018 it states that in 2017 international tourists reached 1,136 million people, or an increase of 86% from the previous year. And continues to increase every year.

Korean culture and lifestyle become a popular culture today among the international community. Judging from this, it will allow the formation of interest and consumption behavior in people who have an interest in Korean products [3]. In fact, in the last 2 years, local cosmetic products made in Indonesia, which are popular among teenagers and also beauty influencers, have partnered with Korean artists as their Brand Ambassadors. This is in contrast to cosmetic advertisements in the 2000s in Indonesia, where Indonesia used local Indonesian artists who at

that time were 'on the rise'. Of course, collaboration with Korean artists is one of the strategies of business actors to get people's attention. Unmitigated, they even collaborate with phenomenal artists because of the booming drama at this time.

One of the Food and Beverage company, the Hollywings club, even went viral for raising issues that occurred in Korean dramas that the public was busy talking about to get attention. In fact, when reviewed, the Hollywings market target is not for Korean lovers, the genre of music they adopt in their club is not even the K-pop genre. More on houseclub or slowbar. This is done to get people's attention. It's proven true, their posters by displaying drama issues have gone viral on several social media ranging from Instagram, tiktok, twitter, and facebook.

This Hallyu phenomenon explains the development of Korean culture to the international world. Korea's success in exporting cultural products has made it into the top ten cultural exporting countries. Gastronomy is a topic that is currently in demand for research in recent years. While most of this research is in the field of tourism and the culinary industry, its influence on city branding or the attractiveness factor of a place and country [4], [5]. However, this gastronomy is not only limited to culinary but also history, culture, economy and politics. This is a link in cultural interaction that is useful in the long term for international political power [6]. This method has been used by many countries as a new communication tool for diplomacy.

### ***Gastro Diplomacy Korean Food***

Gastro diplomacy is a branch of public diplomacy, where the strength of a country arises from small things. Since the last few years, gastro diplomacy has received extra attention and symbolizes culture or in this case is food for the diplomatic strength of a country. Culinary needs preceded the need for diplomacy which eventually opened trade routes and routes that eventually became international trade routes. Gastro diplomacy has actually existed since the war era when colonialism was carried out to obtain food sources or natural sources of income. Silk roads and trade routes are currently formed from the need for spices, which eventually serve as a country's bargaining power and strengthen relations between countries [7]

Gastro Diplomacy is one of the nation's branding strategies. The power of gastro diplomacy is not only in the culinary field of a nation but is also able to grow national values and increase the popularity of culture in the international environment. Gastro diplomacy is a very subtle strategy to attract the world's attention through the culinary field. Democratic values are marked by the international acceptance of cuisine, from general to special dishes that are only served at festivals or at traditional ceremonies at certain times. In the end, culture begins and ends on a plate [8]

Food is a strong marker of cultural identity and cultural symbol [9], [10]. Kimchi is a traditional Korean food that is used as a crucial ingredient in almost every processed dish, the Korean government stipulates and registers kimchi as a Korean specialty in international institutions. Kimchi also won the award for being the healthiest plant-based food in the world. In 2009, Korea had done soft diplomacy with one of its specialties, namely kimchi, which was named kimchi diplomacy. In this kimchi diplomacy program, it aims to increase attractiveness and of course gain world recognition for South Korea, which in the long run, aims to maintain economic investment, tourism and foster a positive image of Korea abroad [11]

KFF or Korean Food Foundation is the official Korean government agency in charge of Korean culinary diplomacy. Before this KFF organization entered Indonesia and promoted Korean culinary, there were already several collaborations that were running with Indonesia in the culinary field. Some of the actions taken to promote traditional Korean cuisine include holding a culinary festival, promoting drama or mini shows, seminars on Halal topics that are in line with Indonesian culture, as well as cooking demonstrations with Korean actors/actresses. The number of Korean foods shown in the drama makes Korean lovers feel like tasting the culinary menu. Various kinds of food such as Bibimbap, Ramyeon, Kimchi and even Soju can be enjoyed at several local restaurants in Indonesia. There are so many Indonesian cuisines that have adapted the typical Korean taste. Even fast food which is a franchise license from the superpower America also adopts a distinctive Korean taste for their processed foods such as bulgogi or Korean spicy-samyang.

## **2. RESEARCH METHOD**

### ***Netnografi overview***

This study uses a qualitative method with a netnographic approach. Netnography is a technique adapted from ethnographic studies. Ethnography is the interpretation of a culture or social group system that studies behavior patterns, habits and ways of life [12]. This method involves a fairly long observation of a group, as well as studying the meaning of behavior, language and interactions. This ethnographic approach studies cultural events that show a view of life as an object of study [13]

[14] states that the ethnographic description includes universal cultural elements, namely language, technological system, economic system, social organization, knowledge system, art and religion. In this study, the criteria used were Korean culinary connoisseurs. Ethnographic research has a central element, namely reflexivity [15], participant observation and cultural analysis [16] Netnography is considered effective in this case because it is flexible, less expansive and pragmatic. What makes the difference is the method of investment, namely:

- a. Focus on culture: understanding a phenomenon, the complexity, context and meaning of human understanding of a culture
- b. Social media data: netnography is based on social media interactions across all online networks (Pew Research Center, 2017). In this study, we use the most active social media platforms chosen by 80% of Indonesians [17]
- c. Participants: Netnographic researchers engage physically, socially and emotionally with a community or subject being studied and become reflective learners

Previous research conducted by [18] in examining the formation of Korean Kpop fan culture using an ethnographic approach stated that this fan group or commonly called fandom changes or uses attributes that describe their idols in everyday life. Even in certain situations they feel they represent their idol. Not only on their attitudes and traits but also on non-physical identities such as passion, hobbies and motivation.

In this study, we followed [19] where there are six procedures shown in Figure 1.

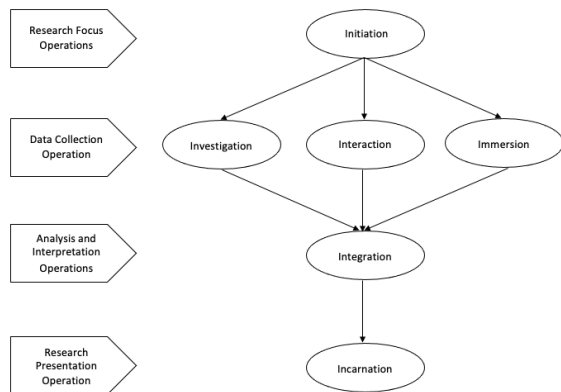


Figure 1. Six procedural movement of netnography

According to [20] netnography includes six procedures ranging from research planning, entry (reasons for joining a particular group or scope), data collection, interpretation, and adhering to ethical standards and representation. Netnography can use the internet as a source of data to the existing phenomenon representation.

**Netnografi Analysis**

Indonesia is considered a country that has the potential to carry out gastro-diplomatic activities by Korea due to its high population and the high popularity of Korean culture in Indonesia. Not only in the field of entertainment but also culinary. The purpose of this study is to understand the perception of the Indonesian people about Korean cuisine in the case of gastrodiploamacy. Is it their interest in hallyu or the world of Korean entertainment that makes them try and even like Korean food. This research started from our desire to find Indonesian people's point of view

about Korean culture. In this case, we examined several Korean lovers communities on Instagram social media. People in this community are people who like or follow developments in the world of Korean entertainment, whether K-pop or K-drama. Next, the study considers the behavior of these community members in the Korean context.

This condition is our main factor in conducting netnographic research. In addition, we consider the ethical issue of respecting ethnographic procedures in netnographic research. We are aware of asking for permission to share messages and also have special discussions with them regarding their interest in Korean cuisine, especially some Korean specialties must be adapted to the culture that exists in Indonesia and adapt to the Indonesian market. One of the cases that occurred in mid-2020 where one of the local culinary entrepreneurs in Indonesia labeled their products with "Halal Soju" to be marketed. However, the label is considered ambiguous by the public because many are aware that soju, a typical Korean drink, contains alcohol. Of course, the labeling is considered inappropriate. We also strive to respect the anonymity of personally identifiable sources from us.

**Data Collection**

In this stage, our research team takes research data through the social media platforms Instagram and YouTube where both platforms are. The following statement is supported from data that has been processed by the Global Web Index as follows:

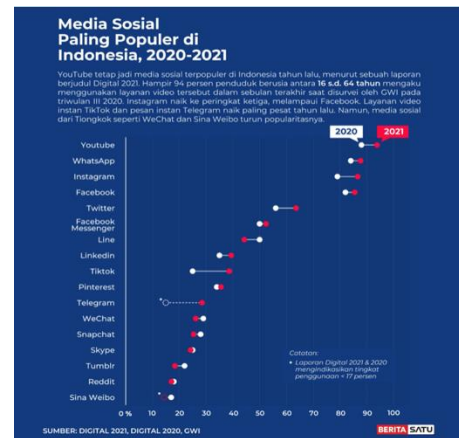


Figure 2. Popular Social Media in Indonesia 2020-2021

From these two platforms, we focus on Korean lovers' accounts both from hallyu or entertainment including K-pop and K-drama as well as existing culinary. From the two platforms, there are several excellent accounts that have 852 thousand followers, namely @wowkdrama.id in that account, not only discussing hallyu but various kinds of information about Korea from hallyu as well as culinary and tourism. This account is an account owned by Indonesia. It can be interpreted that around 800 thousand Indonesians follow the development of

the entertainment world in Korea. This account is also a business account due to high interaction through the number of likes, shares and comments in one post, so users of this account use it as a paid promotional media.

Not only on posts on the account. One of the Korean Indonesian mixed-blood YouTubers "Sunny Dahye" has a total of 2.4 million followers. The content in Sunny's youtube account itself discusses a lot of Korean sundries, ranging from Korean-style makeup, shopping unboxing from Korean websites or brands, and even has its own section on its YouTube channel with the title K-pop and Entertainment. Judging from the number of viewers, video content containing daily things or makeup has a viewer count of 150 thousand to 200 thousand, in contrast to content in the K-pop and entertainment sections which have 1 to 3.3 million views. This explains that the highest interactions on Sunny's account are those containing Korean content.

### **3. DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS**

#### ***Integration***

In this stage, we select conversations that are directly related to traditional Korean culinary in the community, not only ordinary members or Korean fandoms but also official accounts of business actors engaged in culinary fields with the theme of Indonesian specialties. In the community conversation, we distinguished the main categories that were used as topics of their conversation, ranging from traditional culinary types, restaurants serving halal food, and home-to-home services which are currently busy due to pandemic conditions where several eating places or restaurants enforce policies, take-away or home service delivery.

In addition to comments, we also analyze several messages in the form of videos or photos uploaded on the Instagram platform via hashtags. The content on the platform that uses *#koreanfood* is 8.2 million posts that have been uploaded with a frequency of 20-23 per day.

#### ***Content Analysis***

Community members' perceptions of Korean cuisine are mostly positive. This is evidenced by expanding the food and beverage industry with a Korean theme or even serving Korean specialties. Not only in the layout of the restaurant or the physical appearance of their restaurant/cafe but also the dishes and also the presentation of their food. One example is the Korean BBQ Grill with the all you can eat concept. In the last 2 years there have been around 50 small-scale restaurants growing in Indonesia, and there are about 4 large-scale brands that have started to develop franchise systems such as Pochajjang, Posarang, Kimbab Ina, and Simhae Korean BBQ.

Research conducted by [21] states that more than 75% of Yogyakarta residents have tried Korean

specialties or visited restaurants that serve Korean specialties. About 20% of these residents do not dare to try culinary because they still doubt its halal. Even the instant food exporting company in Korea which has the highest sales of instant food in Indonesia has issued a halal edition that can be enjoyed by Muslims.

The brand is Samyang. Samyang Foods has obtained a halal certificate in 2014, in 2016 the company Samyang Foods achieved the highest export record of 1.29 trillion rupiah. This sales record was accompanied by an increase in the Korean wave that year and also the viral challenge program carried out by the company through social media. PT Animo Resto Primera with the market brand Mujigae is also an example of a successful Korean food company in Indonesia. Not only known as a dine-in type restaurant, Mujigae began to enter the instant food market at the end of 2019 yesterday with its flagship product, Topokki, which is one of a variety of other favorite Korean street food. Topokki in this instant form has begun to enter retailers in Indonesia like instant noodles. Content uploaded using the hashtag *#mujigaeresto* on Instagram has reached 73 thousand uploads, while content containing reviews through the Youtube channel has reached 4 million views by 12 youtubers.

### **4. CONCLUSION**

This research shows the general public and researchers that the Gastrodiplomacy that has been carried out by Korea through the entertainment industry has been successful in Indonesia. Indonesians who tend to follow trends will easily follow the waves of the times that will affect not only the needs and desires of consumers but also demand. In the study of netnography and its application on social media platforms used by the majority of Indonesian people, it shows that there is effective interaction and communication. Furthermore, this platform can be used for Korean gastrodiplomacy. This study provides a little insight to Indonesia about the country branding strategy that Indonesia can do to increase knowledge, so that it is not only Bali that is in the spotlight but more widely.

Gastrodiplomacy not only has an impact on the development of the entertainment world but also the tourism sector. The number of tourists in Korea has increased every year, even the Korean Tourism Organization (KTO) has recorded an increase of up to 60% every year. In 2017 the number of Indonesian tourists visiting Korea reached 20,114 people, while in 2018 it reached 30,365 people.

This study has several limitations, namely it only focuses on the community and interactions on social media without any other qualitative approach such as interviews or FGDs. In addition, it does not consider a number of large community platforms, namely Whatsapp, to analyze people's perceptions more deeply. Therefore, further research can take advantage of this gap.

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