

KOREAN DRAMA AS EDUCATIONAL TOOLS THAT DEVELOP MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN COUNTRIES

Farah Nabila Hamdan; Norlis Ismail
UTAR

nabila@utar.edu.my; norlis@utar.edu.my

Abstract -- This paper presents a Korean drama as educational tools for public. When the word of education appears, most of people will related it with books. People often to overlook it but there are many ways for education besides books. Meanwhile, drama have been categorized as entertainment medium. Purpose of this study is to changes the perception of drama as only for the entertainment but also can be educational methods. With the existence of Cultural Proximity Theory in the drama, mutual understanding can be develop within the country and automatically it will become the educational tool for public. The four elements in Cultural Proximity that educates public while they are watching drama are language proximity, visual proximity,

culture proximity and value proximity. Winter Sonata play an important role in raising up the tourism industry and promoting wonderful places in South Korea. This drama also helps viewers to understand the Korean culture. Besides that, statistics of Singaporeans learn Korean Language increased about 60% because of their interest towards Korean drama. This study aims to identify, to analyse and to review the Cultural Proximity elements that leads Korean drama to become one of the successful tools in education. In addition, the study could be reference to Malaysian film and entertainment industry. This study also refers the previous study that related to drama and Cultural Proximity studies. It used a qualitative approach to identify the perception and response of respondents towards the Cultural Proximity elements leads Korean drama to become education tool.

I. INTRODUCTION

Media is a medium that can give impacts to the viewer. Sulong & Mawadda (2010), "media is a tool that can stimulate and influence people's attitudes and behaviours including the whole aspects of life. While Aminah (2012) stated that mass media play an important role "in the formation of personality and individual knowledge."

In this new era, mass media is part of medium that can influence people's lifestyle. Noor Shuhadawati (2011), stated that mass media responsible in distributing propaganda and it automatically become the reason of values and cultures formation in the society. This is because of the fast-speed of information that been channel to

the viewers. Mass media channel that usually give impact to the viewers is television.

Besides influencing people lifestyle, mass media also can educate people through the useful knowledge that been distribute to the viewers. Samsudin (2008) stated, viewers can receive lot of information through television because that channel "provide culture space which have similar elements in ritual, symbols and background of culture that identifies identity of the society." This statement proved that television is an important medium in the formation of society's value and socio-culture.

This research is conducted based on the previous research done by Aminah (2012) which stated that Korean wave in Malaysia leads viewers towards Korean culture such as lifestyle and norms, fashion sense, food consume, music and etc. As everyone know, television and the advance of the technology is the factors of Korean wave been spread in Malaysia. If the television show negative values to the viewers, then there is higher tendency of viewers to involve in immoral activities.

Television is part of interactive medium which majority of the viewers are teenagers and adults. Muda (2010) stated that majority television viewers is teenagers. This is because television always show the popular culture focusing younger generations. Synonyms with teenagers' attitudes that easily get influence by the surrounding, it is easier for them to follow the trend of cultures and values that been showed in the television.

In this globalization era, television is not the only medium that can influence the public because with the existing of internet, society easily can receive any information according to their need in any place at any time. For example, society can only watch drama through television but with the internet access, they can watch drama through mobile phone in LRT or anywhere they want.

II. PROBLEM STATEMENT

The influence of external culture displayed on the television screen has slightly affected the cultural values of the local community. Mass media is a medium that transcends the influence of

external culture to society. Typically, external cultural influences are channel through entertainment programs such as drama, music films and advertising.

It is undeniable that the mass media can influence the culture and values of the local community. According to Aminah (2012), "the influence of the mass media seeks to create a new form of thought, value and culture." According to Abdullah Sulong & Mawadda (2010), local people are trying to adapt the outer culture seen on television such as science, fashion and the norms of society in their daily lives.

In this era, Malaysians are encouraged to watch various types of drama and not just local drama. According to Aminah (2012), "the Malaysian viewer tastes of drama on television are also changing over time, the influence of surroundings, the power of drama and the promotion of the media." The same researcher also stated that since the late 1990s, Korean products such as television drama, movies and pop songs have received tremendous popularity in Southeast Asian countries.

In 2016, The Korea Times on its website stated that the Descendants of the Sun, the latest Korean drama performed by Song Joong Ki and Song Hye Kyo created history in Korea and China. The Korea Times also reported that the Thai Prime Minister called on the Thai people to watch the Descendants of the Sun drama where he saw the drama rich in patriotism, sacrifice, obedience, obedience and loyalty.

Most Korean drama viewers can be categorized as teenagers. According to Khariah (2011), teens are young people who are easy to adapt to change through the use of existing space and opportunities in their environment. Continuing of advance technology, teenagers not only depend on books as their educational methods. Mansureh, Atsusi & Bai (2010), stated that "student who played the mathematics computer games scored significantly higher on the district-wide math benchmark exam than students who did not play the games."

III. RESEARCH

3.1 RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

1. To identify on ways of Korean drama can be the educational tools to the viewers.
2. To analyse the factors that turns Korean drama as a tools that develop mutual understanding between countries.
3. To review the impacts of Cultural Proximity elements that shown in Korean drama towards viewers.

3.2 RESEARCH QUESTION

1. To identify how Korean drama can be the educational tools to the viewers?
2. What are the factors that turns Korean drama as a tools that develop mutual understanding between countries?
3. What are the impacts of Cultural Proximity elements that shown in Korean drama towards viewers?

IV. LITERATURE REVIEW

4.1 Drama

Drama is part of entertainment system which leads to the formation of the values and culture of a society. Besides that, drama also can be educational medium for the viewers. In Malaysia, with the development of drama industry, local viewers are easily get influence by the external culture. Aminah (2012) stated that foreign product "create agony towards local society in terms of the way of thinking, tradition values and the identity of the society."

In this era, most of Malaysian like to watch variety of drama which is not only a local drama. Aminah (2012) stated "Malaysian viewers taste towards television drama change according to the time passed by, surrounding factor, the power of the drama and the media promotion." Since 1990's, Korean product such as television drama, film and KPOP song became popular in most of ASIA countries.

Most of Korean drama viewers can be categorized as teenagers and adults. Khariah (2011) stated that teenagers is a young generation that easily adapting to the change through the use of space and opportunities in their surroundings. According to Hugo (1802-1885), drama and film viewers had been categorized into three groups which are group of thinkers who need specializations, group women who need enthusiasm and adventurous group of people who are really into actions and challenges.

In Malaysia, Winter Sonata is the starting point of Korean wave (The Star, 2012). This article also stated that, Managing Director of Korean Tourism Organization, Yun Jae Jin said Winter Sonata play an important role in raising up the tourism industry and promoting variety of wonderful place in South Korea. Besides that, this drama also help viewers to understand the Korean culture. Yun Jae Jin also said that Malaysia is the fastest growing domestic market for Korea with

growth of 40% in 2011 and 44% in 2010 (increased by 113,675 from 80,104 in 2009).

The Star (2012), based on the research been done through internet and social media, more than 53.3% from 12,085 of 102 country choose KPOP as the most demand Hallyu aspect. Based on Nielsen research, about 1.1 million Malaysian viewers choose KBS worlds from November to December 2010. According to Serges (2000), Korean entertainment industry growth from "limited industry" toward ASIA entertainment industry. This statement proved that Korean entertainment industry received good responses from ASIA viewers.

According to Utusan Malaysia in March 19th, 2011, the growth of 'Hallyu' phenomena started around 2000's in Malaysia and it to the whole world. Besides Malaysia, other countries been affected by 'Hallyu' phenomena are Philipnes, China, Indonesia, Thailand, Singapore and Taiwan.

Through the research done by Kyung-rag Lee & Baek Seon Gi (2012) about the Taiwanese response towards 'Hallyu' phenomena, the researchers found out that Taiwan is the trigger factor that spread 'Hallyu' phenomena throughout ASIA country. KPOP fans are from all walks of life but its majority fans are among women and adolescent girls.

In this globalization era, most of viewers not only depending on the television to watch a drama because there are other medium for them like downloading from the internet, get from their friends' collections, purchasing DVD drama and etc. 'Korean fever' not only happen in Malaysia but it also happen in most of ASIA country. According to Aminah (2012), the growth of Korean wave in Malaysia encouraged viewers to be influenced towards Korean culture such as the value, the fashion, the language, the lifestyle and so forth.

A research been done by Samuel, Argus, Haesung and Kaye (2007) to track the influences of Korean drama towards Japanese tourist. The main purpose of this research is to determine the flow of Japanese tourists to Korea based on the impact of Korean serial drama, Winter Sonata. This drama indirectly raised up Korean tourism industry by portraying many of interesting places to be visit such as Nami Island. This island famous to be known for its beautiful nature.

This research proved that Korean serial drama, Winter Sonata give positive impacts among Japanese tourist towards Korea. Most of Japanese tourist admit that Winter Sonata is the main reason for them to visit Korea. This research also indirectly proved that visual elements in the drama

play an important role in delivering the message and it automatically give an impact to the viewers.

According to statistics obtained from Tourism Malaysia Korea (2016), from the data they obtained through the Korean Tourism Organization source in July 2016, the number of Malaysian tourists visit Korea in 2014 was 244,520. Meanwhile, in 2015, the influx of Malaysian tourists to Korea decreased by -8.6% which is 223,350. Tourism Malaysia Korea (2016) stated that the deterioration of Malaysian tourists to Korea is due to the MERS epidemic.

However from January 2016 until May 2016, Malaysian tourist visit Korea increased by 27.1%, 121,924 compared to last year which is from January to May 2015, 106,178. Tourism Malaysia Korea (2016) also noted that, from the sources they obtained from Air Asia X - Busan Airport office, the number of Malaysian tourists to Busan in 2015 was 20,095. The increasing of tourism inbound to Korea seem to be connected with the growing drama industry among the ASIA market.

According to Shim Dobo (2005), statistics of Singaporeans studying Korean Language or Hangul increased about 60% and it happened because of their interest towards Korean drama. According to Aminah (2012), Korean fashion become trending for adolescent in ASIA country. Most of Korean products such as fashion, cosmetics, skin care and other beauty products became successful in crossing ASIA market. This can be seen by the existence variety of Korean fashion stores, shops selling Korean beauty products and there are also plastic surgery services.

This situation can be related with Cultural Proximity elements that exist in the drama itself. The research about the Impact of Winter Sonata towards Japanese tourist showed that visual element in drama influenced viewers' behaviour while Shim Dobo (2005) research showed that language proximity played important role in influencing viewers' action. There are also other elements such as value proximity and culture proximity that being part of factors in influencing viewers' behaviour. Cultural Proximity elements leads drama to become one of the successful tools in educational methods.

4.2 Cultural Proximity Elements

In Cultural Proximity Theory, Trepte (2003) stated that this theory leads to cultural similarities derived from their own country or other region. Straubhaar (2003) defined this theory as "the tendency to love products from media that

share similar ethnics or cultures.” Straubhaar (2008) stated categorized elements in Cultural Proximity Theory into four elements which are the language proximity, visual proximity, culture proximity and value proximity.

4.2.1 Language Proximity

Language is a formation of speech that been used by local society to communicate with each other. Straubhaar (2008), language is part of important element in Cultural Proximity Theory because it facilitates the message you want to convey to the viewers. The ease of interpretation and the use of subtitles helped the sender to create better understanding of the actual message among the viewers. Besides that, the use of body language also help viewers in understanding the real meaning of the message. Kavita (2017) stated, the film that has “the usage of multiple languages indirectly portrayed the appealing aspect of living in multiracial country, allowing an open mind to society with rich culture and tradition.”

Back then, lot of drama and film from Indonesian entered Malaysian entertainment industry. This situation happened because of the language been used by Malaysian is quite similar with the Indonesian. Even though without the use of subtitle, Malaysian still be able to understand the message that been delivered by the Indonesian drama and film. A research from Kristine (2011) showed that about 80% of respondents start to learn Korean Language because of their deep interest towards Korean culture.

Part of ‘Hallyu’ impacts is the fans started to learn Korean language. Besides that most of them want to visit Korea. A research from Shim Dobo (2011) proved that most of Korean drama viewers start to learn Korean Language or Hangul and they also want to visit Korea because affected by the visuals that been portrayed in the drama. That is part of the reason of the increasing tourism inbound statistics to Korea.

Berita Harian (2011), Jones 19 years old student admitted that he done a tongue surgery in order to speak Korean.

“I learn Korean Language for almost two years but my level of mastery is not that good. I tried so hard to make a certain sound but it sound weird. I have difficulties saying L in Hangul which is sound higher that L in English and my tongue is too short. So I make appointment with doctor and done a lingual frenectomy surgery in order to mastery Korean language.”

4.2.2 Visual Proximity

Visual is what have seen by the viewer and Straubhaar (2008) stated that visual proximity is the similarities that have been seen by the viewers like the image been portrayed such as the look, the style and the appearance. This element is part of earliest elements that play an important role in developing viewers’ interest. Based on research done by Kristine (2011), most of Philippines teenagers easily get influence by the KPOP image been featured in the Korean entertainment industry such as the way they dress up, the hairstyles, and the fashion.

With the existence of advance technologies nowadays, globalization and cross-culture easily been formed. According to Schluetz & Stipp (2011), most of countries being hit by 'globalization' or 'universal taste' of modern and urban.

Most of location been visualized attract the respondents to feel the experience being in that location. Visualization element in most of Korean drama is one of the most effective marketing technique. This statement proved y the research done by Hashimah & Zaharani (2011), part of the factors that caused Korean drama viewers want to travel to Korea because of the scenery that been portrayed in the drama. Besides Nami Island, Jeju Island also become favourite tourist spot.

Besides the visual aspects of the beautiful location, the visual aspects of the cast are also playing a role in developing interest among the viewers. Their makeup technique and their styles did affected the viewers. Half of the respondents admitted interested to purchase Laneige cosmetics that been use by the cast in Descendants of the Sun. In Korea Festival 2017 that been held in Malaysia, most of Laneige beauty workshop participants is the fans of Descendants of the Sun and they were attracted to learn Laneige makeup technique because of that drama.

4.2.3 Culture Proximity

Culture is part of human lifestyle that representing personality in their life. Culture can be simplify as social system, traditions, beliefs and religions. According to Straubhaar (2008), a society that shared the same beliefs, tradition and social system are the explanation of culture elements in Cultural Proximity Theory.

Straubhaar (2008) also stated that the curiosity towards foreign culture is part of the reason for foreign products become popular. According to Aminah (2012), level of understanding towards certain foreign culture products depend on three level of understanding

which are the level of educational, the level of cross-culture interaction and the level of individual exposure. Aminah also stated that, viewers feel closer to the foreign culture if there is higher frequency exposure, have high level of education and have lot of cross-culture interaction. In this modern era, the existence of advance technologies, help viewers involve in cross-culture interactions.

Based on research been done by Trepte (2011), Korean drama, film and television program portrayed lot of Korean tradition and culture. Kavita (2017) stated that film “allows better understanding of Malaysian audiences’ viewing pattern. Besides that, the mutual help that been offer by a person to another person without expecting any compliments. Moreover, this drama shows a punctuality culture that always been practiced by Korean since ages.

King Sejong is most admirable king among Koreans. It is because the culture that been practiced by him. He is very hardworking king and the creator of Hangul. Hangul itself is the symbolic of Korean culture and identity for Korean. In every drama, film and even in the music, they are always proud with their nationality and they really love their country. Korean entertainment industry not only portrayed entertainment element but it also portrayed lot of good traditions which is synonym with the basic ASIA culture.

Even though Korea is not an Islamic country but the drama did attract lot of Muslim fans. This situation seem to be odd at first because Islamic culture is pretty much different from the culture that been portrayed in Korean drama. Based on research done by Hwang Hae Young & Baek Seon Gi (2012) found out that entertainment and culture products from Korea been favoured and accepted positively by the Muslim viewer countries in Malaysia.

Quoted from Harian Metro newspaper October 30, 2011, Nadiah, 28, said

“Because of interest and always watching Korean drama and listen to KPOP music, I started to take basic Korean Language class. The main purpose of taking this class is because my interest but then after attending the class, I started to understand the Korean language and their culture. To feel the culture by myself, I went to the country with my family in 2007 and the main location is the popular location in Korean drama.”

According to Nadiah, the uniqueness of Korean drama is the elements that been portrayed and it does not cliché and typical like the other dramas. Most of Korean drama viewers like to watch Korean drama because they have a chance to learn

about Korean culture which is for them is quite related with Asia culture.

4.2.4 Value Proximity

According to Straubhaar (2008), value proximity is about the sharing of the foreign value culture with the local value. Based on research been done by Aminah (2012), factors that been influenced in the value of certain culture are the history, socio-economy, and also religions. The researcher also defines value as a norm that been practiced by the society since ages. This norm been practice in their daily life based on the guidelines been set by culture, religion, and interpretation of gender roles.

The value of certain culture also related with social aspect in the society. Based on research done by Aminah (2012) which is studying about Korean waves found out that Korean drama often portraying lot of noble values such as respecting each other, maintaining good family bonding, high level of loyalty in friendship, effective work culture, sincerity in daily life and loyalty in romance. Basically these all positive elements become good motivation for the viewers.

Hwang Hae Young & Baek Seon Gi (2012) stated, the positive acceptance of Muslim viewers towards Korean drama is because the product emphasizes noble values such as love in a family, sincerity in relationships, respect for older people, loyalty in friendship and so on. In Harian Metro (2011) Norhayati stated that values in Korean drama still maintaining ASIA culture.

Quoted from Harian Metro newspaper October 30, 2011 Norhayati, 30, said

“Korean pop did focusing to entertainment but the approach used in it still following the ASIA high cultural value. The sexually element and the violent element in their drama does not extend beyond the limits of the family. The messages that are being delivered are also effective and relevant to the current situation.”

V. METHODOLOGY

The purpose of research methodology is a way to find out the answer of research questions. According to Jennifer (2011), “different sources use different type of methods for solving the problem.” As for this research, the researchers used qualitative approach to identify the perception and response of respondents towards the Cultural Proximity elements leads Korean drama to become education tool.

According to Wimmer & Dominick (2011), qualitative approach used to have depth understanding about the studied areas. In addition, this method also will assist researchers to have in-depth answer towards several general issues in social science study. Regarding this matter, researchers used in-depth interview technique towards four youth as the respondents for this study.

VI. FINDINGS

Based on the research been done, all respondents admitted that they interested to learn Korean Language because of the level of frequency of watching Korean drama. Level of frequency become the factor for the to learn Korean Language and half of the respondents admitted that they are learning basic Korean Language from the drama while one of the respondents admitted that he want to pursue study in Korea because of Korean drama.

All respondents admitted that one of Korean drama *Descendants of the Sun* highlighted about patriotism value throughout the plot of the drama. Respondents' answer somehow support the report from Korea Times which they reporting that Thailand Prime Minister asked Thailand society to watch this drama. According to him, this drama is full of patriotism message and high level of fighting spirit in defending the country. It also portrayed the value of obeying superiors and dare to face challenges.

The findings of the study shown that all respondents gained lot of knowledge about careers throughout Korean drama. One of the respondent said that even though he is not pursuing study in university level but he learn a lot about variety of career from Korean drama. Another respondent also admitted that most of Korean drama used element of career as the backbone of their storyline.

Quote from Respondent A:

"I am interested to learn Korean language. By watching Korean drama, I can understand a basic conversation that they usually use in the drama."

Quote from Respondent C:

"I am keep on watching Korean drama and it became a huge factor for me to pursue study in Korea."

In 2016, *Descendants of the Sun* hit Asia countries until raised the attention of countries such as China and Thailand government. Besides this drama, there are many Korean drama that used element career as their backbone of the storyline such as *While You Were Sleeping* that used

element of court cases, reporter's, prosecutor's and lawyer's life as its' storyline.

There are also Korean drama that used their history as the storyline such as *The Great King Sejong* and *Scarlet Heart Ryeo* which both drama highlighted about their dynasty era. The interesting part about Korean drama storyline is the explanation about specific matters will be explain using the caption. Even though the caption is in Hangul but due to the existence of subtitle, it makes viewers have better understanding about it.

Quote from Respondent B:

"As we can see, Korean drama usually use career as the main storyline in their plot. It will makes audience understand about the difficulties in that specific career. Their research is really useful compare to the local drama in Malaysia. Besides that, I gained lot of knowledge about Korean history from Korean drama because they will state using caption the accurate timeline like the year of the ancient dynasty."

According to the respondents, they are not only have in-depth understanding about element of career but they also become interested with the values that been portrayed in Korean drama. It cannot be deny that values such as patriotism, make a-right-call, be on time, obeying the orders from superior did influence their daily life.

Quote from respondent D:

"Even though I am not a university student but I gained lot of knowledge while watching Korean drama. They teach me about the highlight career in the storyline. Besides that, I be able to learn about Korean cultures and their belief such as obeying orders from the superior or the elders. I adore their respect towards each other and I feel like this quality should be in the local drama as well."

Other than that, cultural proximity elements such as mutual respect towards elders and among themselves, loyalty in friendship, team spirit, gracious and manner are part of factors in Korean drama that develop mutual understanding. According to respondents, such values are declining among the present society. It is a good effort if production keep on promoting these values in their drama.

Last but no least is the visual element that influence respondents interest to travel and explore Korea and its' culture by themselves. Most of Korean drama such as *Winter Sonata*, *Scarlet Heart Ryeo*, *My Love from the Star* and *Descendants of the Sun* used beautiful scenery to attract viewers to go to Korea. Because of the effectiveness of visual

impact, all respondents admitted that they want to go the places that been portrayed in Korean drama.

VII. CONCLUSION

When the word of education appears, most of people will related it with books. People often to overlook but there are many ways for education besides books. In this globalization era, in order for ASIA countries build a true and lasting partnership that have deep mutual understanding between each other, effective and interactive methods should be use. This research highlighted drama as the methods that can be used as educational tools based on several previous research that had been done.

In Malaysia there was a film aired in 2016 called *Ola Bola*. Kavita (2017) stated that *Ola Bola* has elements of multicultural and it is a great film that can be a method in uniting Malaysians. This statement supported by Zabedah, Sualman and Eka (2013) by stated film that has multicultural elements can be educational tools for Malaysian as their live in the same nation. Even though the research proved that film can be used as educational tool to develop mutual understanding among the society who lives in same country but film and drama is the same medium that portrayed value to the audiences.

A drama can be effective and interactive educational methods that can develop mutual understanding if the drama have all four elements of Cultural Proximity Theory. Indeed, the barriers will exist in every situation but there are also several ways to handle it. Based on previous research had been done, the barriers managed to be reduced and in the meantime it also create mutual understanding between each of ASIA countries.

As for the conclusion, based on the facts, the statistics and the research had been done, drama is one of most effective and interactive educational methods that can develop mutual understanding between countries. In this advance technologies era, drama is a digital platform which is suitable for countries to use it as educational methods.

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