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THE INFLUENCE OF KOREAN CULTURE AS THE BASE OF INDONESIAN MANUFACTURERS IN PRODUCING KOREA INSTANT FOOD

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ABSTRACT

Korean Wave or Hallyu is currently very popular in Indonesia. The popularity of the Korean Wave is one of the causes of Korean food becoming popular in Indonesia and it is easy to find Korean instant food, both those that are directly imported from Korea and those that have been produced by Indonesian manufacturers. K-drama and K-pop are Hallyu products that play a major role in popularizing Korean food in Indonesia. The occurrence of the Covid-19 pandemic caused changes in culture, lifestyle and made Hallyu increasingly popular in Indonesia. This study aims to 1) display several brands of South Korean instant products produced by local Indonesians, and 2) reveal the Role of Korean Culture in Product Promotion. This research used a qualitative method and data collection was conducted by interviewing Indonesian producers who produce Korean instant food to find out the reasons that make Indonesian producers interested in producing Korean instant food and what role Korean culture plays in the promotion of Korean instant food products. There are differences between Korean and Indonesian food cultures, and of course cultural adjustments are needed, such as the use of raw materials to taste adjustments. The popularity of the Korean Wave has become the basis for Indonesian manufacturers to produce Korean instant food because of business opportunities.

KEYWORDS: Hallyu, Korean wave, Korean food, Culture

INTRODUCTION

In the past decade, the popularity of South Korean culture or known as the Korean Wave (Hallyu) in Indonesia and in the world is increasing. Korean Wave is very synonymous with the world of entertainment such as drama, music, and variety show which are presented with Korean cultures in it. These shows often show how the food culture in South Korea makes Korean lovers also want to taste the food because eaten by Korean artists.

The increasing popularity of Korean hallyu has made many Korean food restaurants appear in Indonesia. The restaurant business in Indonesia is a very profitable business for restaurant business entrepreneurs. The profit earned from this restaurant business can reach 15% - 30%. Moreover, Korean



instant food products is also popping up in Indonesia. In addition, it is various types, ranging from those imported directly from Korea to Indonesian manufacturers that produce instant food and also launch Korean instant food products.

Not only teenagers, toddlers to middle-aged mothers are now familiar with smooth faces like porcelain on Indonesian television. Moreover, various Indonesian products continue to compete to become brand ambassadors for South Korean artists and even sell Korean products to open Korean-style restaurants that are commonly seen in Korean dramas or films. That's what is seen in the food industry today which tends to cross the original Indonesian culture (Tahir et al., 2020; Andini et al., 2022).

It was through this K-Drama that the emergence of the Korean Wave in Indonesia began to be felt, more K-Drama loving communities emerged, then the emergence of online shops selling Korean goods in Indonesia, until the opening of a Korean cultural center facility called the Korean Cultural Center Indonesia and there are universities that provide Korean-related study programs (Zahidi, 2020, p. 149; Zakaria et al., 2021; Tahir et al., 2022).

Not only K-Drama, K-Pop is also a product of the Korean Wave, Korean boy groups, girl groups, solo singers and group bands also have many fans in Indonesia. Furthermore, an attractive appearance, pleasant music to listen to as well as the uniqueness of the personnel and their abilities at an event have made many teenagers and adults in Indonesia interested in it (Lehmann et al., 2007, p. 97).

Likewise with food or K-Food, through K-Drama or variety shows, Korean food has also become famous. There are several K-dramas that have the theme of Korean food, such as *Let's Eat*, which has been around for up to 3 seasons. This drama shows what Korean food is like as well as a description of the taste of Korean food so that foreign audiences able to know what Korean food is like. In addition, there are several variety shows where Korean idols also eat snacks, and junk food such as *tteokbokki* or *ramyeon* on these broadcasts which also makes their fans even more curious about what their idols eat. Moreover there are also several variety shows which are devoted to discussing food only, such as *Moder's Touch: Korean Side Dishes*, *Three Meals a Day*, *Kang's Kitchen* and others (Kwon & Chung, 2018)

LITERATURE REVIEW

The COVID-19 pandemic has occurred since the Indonesian government declared that it was a national disaster on April 13 2021 until the Implementation of Restrictions on Community Activities which took effect January 11 2021 which continues to deal with it in Indonesia. As a result of the implementation of the work from home and lock down, many community activities, economic activities, education and other activities were hampered. At this time, restaurants were only allowed



to accept delivery or take away and were only allowed to eat at half the capacity of the place until there was a period when restaurants were not allowed to accept food on the spot so that many new instant food products were popping up, both from brands that already produced instant food to restaurants that package their products because the owners must have other options so that the businesses can continue to run during this pandemic.

South Korea is also famous for its instant noodles or often called ramyeon. Furthermore, Korea also has other instant foods that are also popular both in Korea itself and abroad. Instant Topokki is one of the most popular Korean instant foods in Indonesia (Prakoso et al., 2019; Sukmawati et al., 2022).

Food experts at the Topokki Food Research Institute in Seoul are trying to make street food, namely topokki, which is popular in Korea, suitable for international tastes and it can be served abroad (Lee & Jin, 2019). They try to make fusion products by making dishes using a mixture of western and oriental sauces, and adding a few foreign ingredients.

The Korean government has also carried out a gastrodiploamacy strategy through the Global Hansik Campaign program in Indonesia since 2012. Through this program the Korean government has held several festivals that also introduce Korean food through cooking demonstrations and other matters related to Korean food and there are stands specifically for Korean food such as snacks and instant food are displayed and purchased by visitors.

The implementation of PSBB (Large-Scale Social

Restrictions and) and PPKM (cordon sanitaire policy of the Indonesian government) due to the covid-19 pandemic in Indonesia which requires all activities to be carried out from home has made many new fans of K-pop and K-drama and it used as alternative entertainment. It shows in Korean dramas like to show what Korean food is like have made Korean food also remain popular during the pandemic. Various brands of Korean instant food can be found in e-commerce. Furthermore, the brands imported from Korea but also many Indonesian MSME (Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises) brands that sell Korean instant food. Several MSME brands that produce Korean instant food are Yeobotopokki. ciputat, Eonnie Kitchen, Koreakeun, Omoni_id, and Spicywon.id. Each of these SMEs has their own superior products, but topokki is a food that is always on their product list. Snacks or snacks are foods that are consumed as a distraction in the middle of the main meal or food that can be eaten to hold hunger (Hetherington et al., 2006, p. 497). Snacks can also be said to be food that is usually consumed when the son-in-law is the staple food (Untari et al., 2017, p. 67; Hasnia et al., 2022). Snack based on the Korean dictionary is gansik (간식). This word comes from a combination of two words, namely 간 which comes from the adjective 간단하다 which means simple and 식 which comes from the word 식사 which means food. If the two words are combined it means



"snacks". Gansik means snacks and snacks (Johnson & Anderson 2010, p. 847)

Gansik is a food that is eaten easily before or after a big meal. The word gansik includes all types of street food such as 떡볶이 (tteokbokki), 어묵 (eomuk), 호떡 (hotteok), Corn dog and other street food.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

This research aims to 1) display several brands of South Korean instant products produced by local Indonesians, and 2) reveal the Role of Korean Culture in Product Promotion.

METHOD

This research used a qualitative method. Qualitative method is aim to obtain a complete picture of a matter from the point of view of the human being studied. This method is to describe, or provide an explanation of the research data as it is, without providing conclusions regarding right-wrong or good-bad to the object under researched.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In this session, there are several brands of instant South Korean products produced by local Indonesians scattered around the island of Java who are MSME business actors in Indonesia.

Yeobo Topokki Ciputat is a Korean food franchise brand that started running in February 2020. Yeobo Topokki Ciputat is located in Ciputat, South Tangerang City. This brand has the meaning of love rice cake where the word affection comes from the word yeobo (여보) and rice cake from the word tteokboki (떡볶이).

Yeobo Topoki Ciputat is a Korean food MSME that also produces instant topoki on one of its menus. This brand sells 4 ready-to-eat menus, such as odeng soup, topokki, ra-pokki and jjajangmyeon.



Figure 1. Yeobo Topokki Ciputat products
(Source: Yeobo Topokki Ciputat)



Figure 2. Eonnie Kitchen products
Source: <https://shopee.co.id/eonnie.kitchen>

As said by Widhia Arafa Nureza as the owner or owner of Eonnie Kitchen, namely:
“At that time, I was just losing money, and I actually just had fun because I liked Korea. So when I was young, I didn't get married, oppa liked that, right, liked watching dramas, liked boy bands and all kinds of stuff, making it for fun, because in the past, for example, if we wanted to eat Korean food, we had to go to a restaurant. in hundreds of thousands. It was difficult 4 years ago, it's still a bit difficult to find cheap Korean food like that.”

Omoni is an Indonesian brand that produces instant Korean food. Omoni (어머니) in Indonesian means "mother". The logo of this brand is in the form of the Latin word "Omoni" and the hangul

"어머니" in red with a combination of yellow.

Omoni has been established since 2018 and their initial product was an Indonesian dish, namely stuffed cilok, which then switched to producing Korean instant food. Currently, the Omoni brand has 14 variants of instant food products, namely Tteokbokki, odeng, Rabokki, jajangmyeon, smooth tteokbokki, kimchi, buldak noodle, corndog (kotokebi) and there are several snacks which are innovations from tteokbokki which they call "The Next level of tteokbokki" namely kiyoki with Korean flavor variants such as melted gochujang, melted jajangmyeon, kimchi spicy and cheese spicy. This brand manufactures its products in the city of Klaten, Central Java.



Figure 3. Omoni Products

Source: <https://shopee.co.id/omoni.officialstore>

As said by Risqi Awaludin from the Omoni:

"We saw that at that time, um, for frozen tteokbokki food, there weren't any that were produced domestically, then they were halal certified, so we saw this opportunity and um, did the market already have a lot of them, right? At that time K-pop was already there, there were also a lot of kpopers and what had happened, so we saw there was an opportunity there to provide halal-certified frozen tteokbokki

Based on the opinion of the owners and parties of the three brands above, their background in producing Korean instant food is Korean culture, namely Hallyu, both from dramas and music. Based on George R. Terry's theory of 5 basic decision-making intuitions and facts (Tarigan, 2019)

As said by the owners of Yeobo Topokki and Eonnie Kitchen that they decided to produce Korean food because of their liking for Korean culture and this decision making is included in intuitive decision making, namely where decision making is based on subjective feelings (intuition), (Ferista,2023)



It's different from the Omoni brand where they really take advantage of the phenomenon where Hallyu is currently booming in Indonesia. They made this phenomenon an opportunity to produce Korean food. The decision to produce Korean food was included in the decision based on the fact that hallyu in Indonesia is very popular.

1. Taste Adjustment

As said by Hana Eka as the owner or owner of Yeobo Tokpokki Ciputat namely:

"Eh, we have a trial name, so we sell it. At first, we tried the original, very, very Korean taste, which was really spicy, just spicy, so we tried it now, it's spicy, savory, like the gochujang."

As said by Widhia Arafa Nureza as the owner or owner of Eonnie Kitchen:

"So there are people who really want to feel authentic to the Korean themselves, right? It's just that the authentic taste actually has an average dominance of gochujang and sugar, so there's no other taste, right? It's like jjajangmyeon, it just tastes bland like authentic Korean stuff, right?"

As said by Risqi Awaludin from the Omoni, namely:

"So I've also tried imported ones, like ee kimchi then what's with the tteokbokki sauce, but the taste is too strong for the Indonesian tongue. So you can't enjoy it later."

Korean food is distinctive in taste. Tteokbokki sauce is made from a material called gochujang (고추장) where gochujang has a thick, distinctive taste. The hallmark of gochujang is the blend of sweetness from rice, savory from soybean paste and spicy from Korean red chilies. Gochujang is the same as kimchi which is representative of the many Korean fermented foods and is an important seasoning in various Korean snacks and foods. Gochujang is a typical Korean red chili paste made from fermented rice or a type of wheat (barley) mixed with fermented soybean powder, salt and Korean red chili powder.

It seems that not all Indonesian people like the taste of this Korean gochujang. Indonesian food has more artistic character with a savory taste and strong spices in the food. Meanwhile, Korean food has taste characteristics that tend to be sweet, sour and spicy.

This is based on the cross-cultural theory stated by Kuserdyana: 1.30 in his module explaining that cross-cultural is a term often used to describe a situation where one culture is confronted with another culture and both have positive and negative influences and impacts on each other. Furthermore, Indonesian producers adjust the taste for their products, that Indonesian people prefer tastes that are not too authentic but that does not mean that the distinctive taste of Korean food itself is lost. It does produce Korean food, but because it sell it in Indonesia, adjusting the taste to the Indonesian tongue



is important.

2. Produced Instant Products

After conducting interviews and observing through Instagram to e-commerce to three Indonesian manufacturers' brands that produce instant Korean food, the researcher found that each brand has several types of the same food on each menu variant. That food is tteokbokki. It can be seen on every Instagram and Shopee belonging to Yeobo Topokki Ciputat, Eonnie Kitchen and Omoni. Tteobokki is a type of snack or snack which in Korean is called gansik (간식). As in the Korean dictionary, gansik is a snack or snack and this gansik is usually sold at Korean street food.

3. Product Halal

As said by Hana Eka as the owner or owner of Yeobo Tokpokki Ciputat namely:

"Oiya, what distinguishes Gochujang Yeobo Topoki from other brands is that we are halal, we make it ourselves."

The owner of Yeobo Tokpokki Ciputat also added that producing halal products is important.

As said by Widhia Arafa Nureza as the owner or owner of Eonnie Kitchen, namely:

"the challenge is because we produce Korean products, so people are still unsure if there is no halal MUI because there are a lot of Korean products that are authentic Korean, like the gochujang example. alcohol like that.."

As said by Risqi Awaludin from the Omoni:

"So, um, what do I make, in terms of giving erm a sense of security for the customer that the products they eat are halal, omoni is halal. So, he won't worry anymore, is this halal or not? Or what's in it?"

Based on the analysis, it shows that every brand says that producing halal products is an important thing. Indonesia is a country where the majority of the population is Muslim. So do not be surprised if the brands above feel it is important to produce halal food products.

This is consistent with the cross-cultural theory stated by Kuserdyana (2020: 1.30) in his module explained that cross-cultural is a term that is often used to describe situations where one culture is confronted with another culture and both have positive and negative influences and impacts. Since the Indonesian people, who are predominantly Muslim, also have an influence on their food culture, such as the ingredients in it. So it is necessary to adjust the culture of Korean food itself to culture in Indonesia. The positive impact of this adjustment to halal is that it can make Indonesian people know what Korean food or snacks are like, which they usually see in drama shows or events where their idols appear at an event while eating Korean food. However, due to adjustments, of course the taste of the food will be different, where the taste will not be as authentic as the original Korean taste.

4. The Role of Korean Culture in Product Promotion



The popularity of Korean food and snacks in Indonesia not only come from the Global Hansik Campaign which is carried out by the South Korean government through festivals but also because in K-dramas, K-pop and other Hallyu products, Korean food and snacks are also well known by Indonesian people. Although this popularity started with K-drama lovers and K-poppers, then it began to spread to the general public, making K-food popular not only among Korean drama lovers or K-pop lovers.

As said by Hana Eka as the owner or owner of Yeobo Tokpokki Ciputat namely:

"There are a few, there are a few, but because of the appearance, what I said first is that we are still aware of giving this a Korean taste like this, what is tteobolki, so for the most part, we still sell the content of food products, even though we really think about including other Korean culture. for example songs, movies, others."

As said by Widhia Arafa Nureza as the owner or owner of Eonnie Kitchen:

"Well, for content that really doesn't look like culture, but in the beginning, like developing content on Tiktok, I made foods that idols like. For example, I'll let you know what food Jin BTS likes? Let's do that. So the intention is to build engagement with Korean fans."

As said by Risqi Awaludin from the Omoni:

"We don't have much, means by using our marketing channels it doesn't only have to be Korean culture? since what we call it, we sell culinary products, so yes, occasionally there is content that smells of Korean culture. Maybe there's an introduction from the country, right? Then the habits of the people there, like kimchi, are people's eating habits in Korea, right? So if you eat it, you have to have kimchi in it."

As said by the three brands, they only occasionally use Korean culture to promote their products. Korean culture that is usually included by these three brands is K-drama and K-pop which are part of Hallyu products. These three brands emphasize their products which are Korean food products so that in their promotions they use more of what Korean food is like to introduce Korean food itself which not all Indonesians know what Korean food is like.

Like the theory said by Kuserdyana (2020: 1.30) described what Korean food culture is like, not all Indonesian people are familiar with Korean food. describes what the Korean food they produce is like, what ingredients are contained in it, to what taste is produced from the food.

K-drama and K-pop fans may be more familiar with what Korean food is like, from appearances and such because they like to see it from dramas or variety shows where their idols appear. So, with Hallyu



content in the promotion of a product it will be more attractive to K-drama and K-pop lovers. Meanwhile, the content of Korean food culture such as food introduction, ingredients, and the taste of Korean food can attract other Indonesians who don't know or don't know Korean culture at all.

CONCLUSION

The large number of Korean food products, especially Korean instant food products in Indonesia, cannot be separated from the popularity of Hallyu in Indonesia. Furthermore, the popularity of Hallyu in Indonesia is used as the basis for Indonesian producers to produce Korean food. Several Indonesian producers really like Hallyu and make their fondness for Hallyu as their basis in producing Korean food. Meanwhile, one Indonesian producer said that the popularity of Hallyu in Indonesia was used as a business opportunity.

Then, the occurrence of the Covid-19 pandemic made Indonesian producers finally think about producing Korean instant food so that their businesses could continue due to changes in people's lifestyles. This pandemic has made people prefer to store instant food or ready-to-eat food so that it is easy to process. Limitations in activities have made K-drama even more popular and made more and more Indonesian people know what Korean food is like and then look for that food.

Korean culture has a role in the product promotion of the three brands. The cultural content displayed in promotions on social media is more about Korean food or K-food itself as well as the products produced by these three producers. K-drama and K-pop content is used only occasionally such as drama clippings, drama soundtracks and songs by K-pop artists. Drama soundtracks and songs by K-pop artists are used as back sounds and drama cuts are used to introduce Korean food as well as promote their products.

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