



The Influence of Korean Pop Culture on the Narrative Structure of Indonesian Fanfiction on Wattpad

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Abstract

The Korean Wave or Hallyu phenomenon has had a significant influence on global popular culture, including in Indonesia. One form of this influence is seen in the production of fanfiction on digital platforms such as Wattpad. This study aims to analyze the influence of Korean culture on the narrative structure and intertextuality practices in Indonesian-language fanfiction with a Korean theme. The approach used is qualitative-descriptive analytical with Tzvetan Todorov's narrative theory and the concept of intertextuality as the basis for analysis. The objects of the study consisted of five popular fanfictions on Wattpad that carried the themes of K-pop and K-drama. The results of the analysis show that the narrative structure of the five fanfictions follows the classic pattern of Korean drama, which consists of the stages of equilibrium, disturbance, conflict, resolution, and achieving a new balance. Elements of intertextuality emerge through the use of character names, setting, emotional conflict, and language styles that resemble Korean drama dialogues. Indonesian fanfiction writers not only imitate, but also creatively adapt elements of Korean culture, combining them with local social and cultural contexts. From the readers' perspective, there is high enthusiasm for narratives that are full of Korean elements, indicating a horizon of hope formed from the consumption of global popular culture. In conclusion, Korean-themed fanfiction on Wattpad becomes a dialogical space between global culture and local expression, while also reflecting forms of creative literacy and cultural hybridization in the digital era.

Keywords: Digital literacy, fanfiction, hallyu, intertextuality, korean culture, narrative structure, Wattpad

1. Introduction

The phenomenon of Korean popular culture or better known as the Korean Wave (Hallyu) has experienced rapid development and become global since the early 2000s (Jin et al., 2021). Through entertainment media such as Korean dramas, K-pop music, films, and webtoons, Korean culture has influenced various levels of society globally, including in Indonesia. The popularity of this culture has not only had an impact on entertainment consumption patterns, but has also shaped the digital literacy practices of the younger generation who are increasingly creative and productive, especially in the world of digital literature writing (Kim, 2023).

One form of digital literary expression that is heavily influenced by Korean pop culture is fanfiction, which is a work of fiction written by fans based on existing figures, characters, or story worlds. Platforms such as Wattpad have become popular places for Indonesian teenagers and young adults to channel their interests in K-pop idols, Korean drama actors, and imaginative stories from the Korean entertainment industry. Wattpad provides a space for aspiring writers to create without limits, where fanfiction is one of the most popular genres, especially those with a Korean theme (Dal Yong, 2021).

Interestingly, fanfiction is not only a medium of entertainment or a space for fans to express themselves, but also an alternative literacy medium that reflects cultural values, social dynamics, and the construction of the writer's identity. The narrative structure in fanfiction often displays distinctive storytelling techniques, both in terms of plot, character development, and the conflicts raised. In the context of Indonesian fanfiction that takes inspiration from Korean culture, the question arises to what extent these foreign cultural elements shape or change the way local writers tell stories (Boonhok, 2025).

Academic studies of fanfiction in Indonesia have so far been limited. Most studies tend to focus on aspects of the fan community, the fandom phenomenon, or ethical issues such as copyright and plagiarism. Studies from the perspective of narrative structure and intertextuality, especially in relation to the influence of Korean pop culture, are still a gap that is rarely explored. Therefore, studies are needed that specifically examine how Korean culture is

internalized and adapted into fanfiction texts written by Indonesian writers on digital platforms (Pamungkas, 2023; Kang, 2022).

Korean culture in fanfiction is often present through certain narrative forms that become new conventions in storytelling. Tropes such as the typical Korean drama love triangle, the cold and rich male characters who eventually give in, and the glamorous lives of idols full of emotional pressure, have become narrative patterns that are often repeated and appreciated by readers. This repetition is not a coincidence, but rather the result of the internalization process of Korean narrative values and aesthetics in the creative imagination of local fanfiction writers (Geraghty et al., 2022).

This phenomenon cannot be separated from the context of cultural globalization, where foreign cultural values seep into local creative practices. The adaptation of narrative structures from Korean culture by Indonesian writers shows a hybridization process, namely a mixture of local narrative forms and contents with foreign narratives (Alejandro, 2021). In this process, fanfiction writers not only imitate, but also adapt and recreate narrative forms to suit their tastes and values.

An interesting thing to examine further is how this creative process shapes the aesthetic horizon of the young generation of Indonesia in writing. Fanfiction becomes a digital cultural artifact that reflects the process of identification, resistance, and negotiation of foreign values. When Korean-themed fanfiction is written by Indonesian authors, we can see the dynamics between dominant and local cultures in the practice of transcultural narrative creation.

Based on this background, this study aims to examine the influence of Korean pop culture on narrative structures in Indonesian-language fanfiction on Wattpad. This study will focus on the narrative patterns used, character construction, storyline, and storytelling techniques used by Indonesian fanfiction authors who take inspiration from Korean culture. With a structural and intertextual approach, this study attempts to uncover the forms of narrative adaptation that occur in the text. In addition, this study also aims to understand whether the narrative structure formed in the fanfiction is imitation, adaptation, or transformation. Do the authors simply imitate the narratives of Korean dramas, or do they actually form a new narrative model that is distinctively Indonesian but has a Korean soul? These questions are important for understanding the development of storytelling styles among the younger generation who grow up in the digital and global era.

2. Literature Review

Fanfiction is a form of digital literacy that has grown along with the development of technology and popular culture. Sauro (2021) views fanfiction as a form of cultural participation that positions fans not only as consumers, but also as cultural producers. In Indonesia, fanfiction has become a place for adolescent creativity that allows them to write stories with familiar characters or worlds, such as K-pop idols or Korean dramas, and provide a personal narrative touch. Wattpad as an open literacy platform has expanded the reach of this fanfiction and enabled the emergence of a new literacy community that is transnational in nature. Fanfiction is not only a means of expression, but also a space for exploring identity, cultural values, and storytelling skills (Dal Yong, 2021).

The term Korean Wave (Hallyu) refers to the global spread of South Korean popular culture, including music, drama, film, and lifestyle. According to Jin et al. (2021), Hallyu not only shapes entertainment consumption, but also has transcultural effects that influence lifestyles, languages, and creative practices in recipient countries, including Indonesia. Korean pop culture is the main source of inspiration for writing fanfiction, both in terms of narrative style, character types, and story settings. This phenomenon reflects the form of Korean cultural soft power that effectively penetrates geographical and ideological boundaries. In Indonesian fanfiction, the influence of Hallyu is evident in the use of Korean names, the story setting in Seoul, and the adoption of typical Korean drama tropes.

Narrative structure is a framework that forms the storyline, characters, conflicts, and resolutions in works of fiction. In popular literature studies, narrative structures often follow certain patterns that are easily recognized and liked by readers, such as the formula for love triangle stories, ideal character traits, and dramatic plot twists. According to Vaara et al. (2016), narrative structures can be analyzed through the stages of balance, disruption, problem recognition, resolution, and new balance. In Korean-themed fanfiction, this pattern is often modified with typical K-drama elements such as passive antagonists, entertainment settings, and emotional trauma motifs. This adjustment shows the dynamics between conventional narrative forms and foreign cultural influences that form a new style in fanfiction writing.

The concept of intertextuality, as stated by Kristeva (1980) in the journal Bula (2022), shows that every text is always related to other texts. In the context of fanfiction, writers do not create stories from scratch, but adapt or reconstruct narratives from existing sources, such as Korean dramas or the lives of K-pop celebrities. This adaptation is not always passive, but can involve reinterpretation and negotiation of cultural values. Alejandro (2021) explains that in the process of cross-cultural adaptation, hybridization occurs that creates new narrative forms that are local but rooted in global sources. Thus, fanfiction becomes an arena for the meeting and mixing of Korean popular culture and the local imagination of Indonesian writers.

Fanfiction can not only be seen as a literary work, but also as a cultural artifact that reflects the dynamics of identity and aspirations of the young generation. Pamungkas (2023) emphasized that through fanfiction, young Indonesian writers construct representations of love, friendship, social conflict, and even life ideals, with settings and

characters from Korean culture. Fanfiction becomes an important means in the formation of cultural and aesthetic identity, as well as a space for negotiation of foreign values. In the context of digital globalization, fanfiction works reflect how the young generation interprets foreign culture, re-represents it, and combines it with their local values.

3. Methods

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive-analytical research type. This approach was chosen because it allows researchers to deeply understand the narrative construction process in Indonesian fanfiction works inspired by Korean pop culture. Descriptive-analytical research aims to describe narrative patterns, story structures, and forms of Korean cultural adaptation that appear in fanfiction texts, while analyzing how these structures are transformed or modified in local contexts. The emphasis on intertextuality and narrative aspects makes this approach relevant to uncovering the practice of cultural hybridization in digital literary works of the younger generation.

The main object in this study is Indonesian-language fanfiction texts uploaded on the Wattpad platform and display elements of Korean culture explicitly in the form of characters, settings, narrative styles, and story themes. The researcher selected 5 fanfiction works with high popularity (having a significant number of readers and comments) and focusing on K-pop or Korean drama characters. The selection criteria are based on the relevance of the text to the focus of the study, namely the influence of Korean culture in the narrative structure. In addition to the main text, researchers also observed reader comments as a secondary data source to understand the reception of fanfiction storytelling styles influenced by Korean culture. The fanfiction works selected in this study can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1: 5 Fanfiction works with high popularity

No	Fanfiction Title	Wattpad Writer	Publication Year	Wattpad Link	Description Reason for Selection
1	My CEO Boyfriend's Secretary	simp_author	2022	https://www.wattpad.com/story/321689226-my-ceo-boyfriend%27s-secretary	Contains the "cold rich man" trope and classic K-drama love dynamics.
2	Behind the Stage	shine_Janie	2021	https://www.wattpad.com/story/behind-the-stage	Set in the K-pop industry, featuring emotional conflict and public pressure.
3	Shatterable	strugglebam	2020	https://www.wattpad.com/story/shatterable	A story about a typical K-drama forced marriage; a romantic narrative full of family conflict.
4	Seoul	esielway	2025	https://www.wattpad.com/story/seoul	Highlights the Korean cultural setting (Seoul), with a narrative of travel and love.
5	My Secret Love Suga BTS	Sun__y903	2022	https://www.wattpad.com/story/295049900-my-secret-love-suga-bts	Features the love contract trope and character development similar to popular K-dramas.

Data were collected through text study methods. Researchers accessed and downloaded fanfiction texts from Wattpad based on predetermined criteria. Each story was analyzed thoroughly starting from narrative structure, characters, conflicts, to resolution. In addition, systematic recording was carried out on elements of Korean culture that appeared in the narrative, such as character names, setting, interaction styles between characters, and typical K-drama story motifs. Secondary data in the form of reader comments were also collected to strengthen the researcher's interpretation regarding reader perceptions of the style and content of fanfiction.

Data analysis techniques were carried out through narrative structural and intertextual analysis. The structural analysis model used refers to Todorov's narrative stages, namely: initial balance, disruption, problem recognition, resolution, and new balance (Ikhwan et al., 2025). This structure is applied to map the fanfiction storyline and identify the extent to which Korean cultural elements influence these stages. Furthermore, intertextual analysis is used to find the relationship between fanfiction texts and their referential sources (Korean dramas, K-pop music, or the lives of Korean celebrities). The researcher examines how these texts are adapted, adapted, or reconstructed in a form that suits the local tastes and values of Indonesian writers.

To ensure the validity of the data, this study uses source and theory triangulation techniques. Source triangulation is carried out by comparing fanfiction texts, reader comments, and Korean cultural referential data as a basis for comparison. Meanwhile, theory triangulation is carried out by using concepts from popular culture studies, narrative theory, and intertextuality theory as the basis for analysis. The validity of the findings is also strengthened through cross-checks between texts and repeated readings of the selected narratives to obtain in-depth and consistent interpretations.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Structural Patterns in Korean-Themed Indonesian Fanfiction

Based on the results of narrative analysis of five selected fanfiction works on Wattpad, it was found that most of them follow Todorov's classic narrative structure, namely: equilibrium (initial equilibrium), disruption (disruption), recognition (problem recognition), resolution (resolution), and new equilibrium (new equilibrium). This structure is not only used consistently, but is also combined with typical elements of Korean dramas that strengthen emotional conflict and character development.

For example, in the fanfiction entitled *My CEO Boyfriend's Secretary*, the narrative opens with a depiction of the female protagonist's simple and stable life (equilibrium), then shaken because she has to work as a secretary to a cold CEO (disruption). Conflict arises when professional relationships begin to blur into personal ones (recognition), until finally they overcome social and emotional obstacles (resolution), and form a new, equal relationship (new equilibrium). This structure is similar to narrative patterns in K-dramas such as *What's Wrong with Secretary Kim*.

The pattern is also found in Shatterable's work which uses the trope of "forced marriage" and the dynamics of family conflict, similar to dramas such as *The Heirs*. This structure strengthens the assumption that Indonesian writers consciously or unconsciously adopt narrative patterns that have been formed and proven popular in Korean culture, then adapt them to local perspectives.

4.2. Cultural Intertextuality and Narrative Adaptation

Through intertextuality analysis, it was found that Korean cultural references are not only apparent in the use of character names such as "Min Yoongi" (Suga BTS), "Jungkook", or "Han Seo-jin", but also in the pattern of relationships between characters, depictions of the lives of idols or CEOs, and conversational styles similar to K-drama subtitles.

In *My Secret Love || Suga BTS*, the narrative reflects the characteristics of Korean romantic-comedy dramas, with tropes such as love contracts, "cold man-soft inside", and inner conflict due to celebrity status. Although the Korean cultural background is very dominant, Indonesian writers insert local values such as the importance of family and sacrifice for parents, indicating a process of cultural adaptation.

This shows that fanfiction is not just a form of imitation, but rather an arena for cultural negotiation where foreign elements are reworked to suit the values, experiences, and expectations of local readers. The resulting narrative becomes a kind of "hybrid text" that combines Korean aesthetics and Indonesian narrative aspirations.

4.3. Aesthetic Horizon and Reader Reception

From the observation of the reader comment column on the five fanfiction works analyzed, it was found that most readers showed a positive response to the narrative structure and storytelling style that adapted the aesthetics of Korean dramas. Responses such as "feels like watching a real K-drama", "the characters make you feel emotional like Korean oppas", and "the story is like *Secret Garden* or *Goblin*" reflect the harmony between the aesthetic expectations of readers and the narrative patterns used by the author.

This shows that readers have formed an aesthetic horizon of expectation for fanfiction works with a Korean theme. This horizon is formed from the habit of watching Korean dramas, listening to K-pop, and consuming other Korean cultural products, which are then transferred into expectations for digital literacy texts such as fanfiction. Wattpad readers seem to be looking not only for entertainment, but also for emotional experiences that are familiar with Korean drama patterns, such as cold but caring male main characters, love triangle dynamics, and celebrity life and corporate work settings.

However, there are also comments that show a subtle form of resistance to aspects of the narrative that are considered too cliché or excessive, such as "why is the conflict like a soap opera?" or "the ending is boring." This shows that even though readers appreciate the Korean style, there is still room for criticism and demands for originality of the narrative. Thus, fanfiction becomes a discursive space where there is a meeting between appreciation of foreign culture and negotiation with local values. In other words, fanfiction not only functions as a medium for the author's expression, but also as an arena for cultural interaction and evaluation between the author and his readers. The reading process becomes an active process that helps shape the dynamics of aesthetics and narratives in the digital literacy practices of Indonesian teenagers.

4.4. Fanfiction as a Space for Narrative Hybridization

The results of the analysis show that Indonesian fanfiction writers on Wattpad do not only copy the story structure of K-dramas, but also transform them through modifying conflicts, inserting local values, and using a more contextual style of language. In the work *Seoul*, for example, although the entire setting is South Korea and the love story is like a teenage romance drama, the main female character shows values of independence and courage that are close to the discourse of young Indonesian women today.

This proves that fanfiction can function as an experimental space for the younger generation in creating narratives that reflect dual identities, local and global. In other words, these works are not mere imitations, but part of the ongoing process of cultural hybridization and aesthetic transformation in the Indonesian digital literary landscape.

4.5. Strengthening Factors of the Study

The strength of this study lies in the triangulation approach of data and theory that strengthens the validity of the analysis. The use of diverse fanfiction texts, reader comments, and theories from Todorov (narrative structure), Kristeva (intertextuality), and recent Hallyu studies provide a strong basis for concluding the existence of a narrative hybridization pattern. In addition, the selection of objects that have high popularity ensures that the works analyzed have real resonance with the Wattpad reader community, making the results of this study relevant and representative.

With an in-depth qualitative approach, this study enriches the treasury of digital literature and popular culture studies in Indonesia. It opens a new discourse that fanfiction is not just "fan writing", but a cultural artifact that reflects the dynamics of identity and aesthetics of Indonesian youth in the global era.

5. Conclusion

This study reveals that Indonesian-language fanfiction on the Wattpad platform with a Korean culture theme reflects the strong influence of the Korean Wave not only on the surface of the text such as character names and settings, but also penetrates into the narrative structure, character dynamics, and storytelling style. Referring to Tzvetan Todorov's narrative structural theory and the concept of intertextuality, it was found that the five fanfictions analyzed followed a narrative pattern similar to Korean dramas, including stages of equilibrium, conflict, resolution, and an emotionally charged climax.

Indonesian fanfiction writers do not simply imitate, but actively adapt and recontextualize elements of Korean culture to suit local tastes and experiences. The intertextuality in these texts shows a dialogical relationship with Korean dramas, K-pop, and even the social reality of Indonesian teenagers. Meanwhile, readers' acceptance of fanfiction texts shows the formation of a horizon of aesthetic expectations influenced by intensive consumption of Korean culture. Readers are not only passive consumers, but also cultural actors who actively assess, respond, and even influence the direction of narrative development in the realm of digital literacy.

Thus, Korean-themed fanfiction on Wattpad becomes an arena for the meeting between cultural globalization and local expression, where the young generation of Indonesia shows its capacity to create, negotiate, and build cultural identity amidst the flow of global popular culture. Fanfiction in this context can be seen as a form of creative literacy that reflects the process of cultural hybridization and rich intertextual dynamics, and has great potential in the development of digital literacy and literary appreciation among teenagers.

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