

Korean Wave: Towards Regional Cultural Diffusion?

Seiko Yasumoto

The University of Sydney, Sydney, Australia

The aim of this paper is firstly to determine if the Korean television drama *Winter Sonata* and its spinoffs are contributing to contemporary cross-cultural diffusion in Japan. Secondly, if cross-cultural diffusion is occurring, is it contributing to a loss of local identity? *Winter Sonata* is a small but significant part of the Korean Wave and in the vanguard of Korean television drama content viewed in Japan. There have been macro political changes in East Asia, largely driven by Korea, resulting in an easing of restrictions on cross-border media trade. These in turn have progressively created a new dynamic in content and volume. The methodology used for the study is triangulation including document analysis, audience analysis, and commercial outcomes. The convergent validation derived from the three parameters advances the proposition that *Winter Sonata* has contributed to cultural diffusion from a Japanese perspective but not to a loss of local identity. Arguably, the process is an enriching one in East Asia reinforced by multi-lateral media trade.

Keywords: popular culture, Korean Wave, cross-cultural diffusion, cultural hybridity, triangulation

Introduction

When popular culture products such as television drama are distributed across geographical boundaries in East Asia, they take on multi-dimensional aspects and, potentially, contribute to an evolving cultural re-engagement between Japan and South Korea (hereafter Korea). The Korean Wave, which forms part of the media cultural flows in East Asia, specifically a component of the Korean Wave, the television drama *Winter Sonata*, was at the forefront of the Korean Wave in Japan and provided an opportunity to study the extent to which it was viewed by its Japanese audience and to ascertain its influence on them. The primary thematic concern of this paper and the principle question to be addressed is: Is the television drama *Winter Sonata* and its spinoffs contributing to contemporary cross-cultural diffusion in Japan from Korea? The study also explores the proposition that cultural diffusion does not necessarily lead to a loss of local identity.

Dore, in his article in honour of Josef Kreiner, noted that “Cultural diffusion works through two main mechanisms: Imitation and Conquest” (as cited in Kreiner & Olschleger, 2008, p. 19). Arguably, the mechanisms contributing to diffusion, if it occurs, are more complex. Straubhaar (2007), from the perspective of imitation or absorption, used the word hybridization and defined it as “new elements from outside a culture, whether from slow gradual contact or major threshold change, tends to be adapted to local culture over time” (p. 12). However, hybridization is rarely used to describe cultural products. Cultural hybridity (Burke, 2009) or “hybrid culture” is other concepts to describe the outcome of cultural diffusion, or mixing. Alongside cultural diffusion, we also need to consider indigenization. Appadurai (2003) recognized the process of indigenization

Seiko Yasumoto, doctor, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, The University of Sydney.

“at least as rapidly as forces from the metropolises are brought into new societies they tend to become indigenized in one way or another” (p. 30). Both Straubhaar and Appadurai refer to “hybridity” more as a tendency towards a degree of acceptance in the new culture. Yasumoto (2012) articulated the word “harmonization” in respect to the sociological impact of media popular culture products migrating across international borders.

Background

The Korean Wave is known as *Kanryuu* in Japan. In the context of this paper it comprises, from the Japanese viewpoint, media cultural flows from Korea into Japan and being, in part, television drama, K-pop music, and Korean film. It is postulated that the Korean Wave is changing the cultural relationships between Japan and Korea. The antecedent term *Hallyu* (Korean Wave) first appeared in Hong Kong in 1998 and Taiwan in 1999, and was later reported in *Asahi Shimbun*, a mainstream Japanese newspaper, in 2001 (AERA (Asahi Shimbun Extra Report and Analysis), 2004; Ogura, 2005b). The phenomenal success of *Winter Sonata*, *Fuyu no Sonata* in Japan may have contributed to a greater understanding of Korean culture and society in that country. East Asian cultural flows have been dramatically affected by political changes in the East Asian region. Although Japan and Korea are geographic neighbors and share some cultural aspects because of historical contact with China, there are a number of barriers that divide the two countries; they are separated physically by the Japan Sea, have separate written and spoken languages, and have had frequent periods of political and military hostility.

Winter Sonata was an important part of the emergence of the Korean Wave in Japan. Its impact on Japanese viewing audiences took Japanese media by surprise, despite the fact that Ogura (2005a, p. 10) had coined the term “Look Korea” in June 2000. This enquiry said: Let us pay more attention to what is happening in Korea. *Winter Sonata*, while initially produced for a Korean audience, was traded to Japan and broadcast on Japanese television a year after it was shown in Korea. It initially captured 9% of the total viewing audience, but this figure rapidly increased with exposure. In 2003, the series was broadcast in Japan on the NHK (Nippon Hoso Kyokai) satellite cable network from April to July, at 10 p.m., and rebroadcast in December of that year. Despite the late hour, *Winter Sonata* received progressively larger audience ratings. In 2004, NHK rebroadcast *Winter Sonata*, and this led to audience ratings of 20.6% in the Kanto district and 23.8% in the Kansai district (Moori, 2004). Moori reported that at this golden time and in such a competitive market an audience rating of 10% represented a success. Subsequently, *Winter Sonata* has been broadcast on Japanese local networks. The influence of *Winter Sonata* was sustained after the initial success in 2003-2004. It continues to attract audience interest in Japan. *Winter Sonata* was remade into an animation drama voiced by Bae Yong-Joon and Choi Ji-Woo in 2009, with Japanese subtitles. The phenomenon of *Winter Sonata* was not exclusive to Japan. The regional audience provided by NHK and local television viewing rates of *Winter Sonata*, including TV drama and *anime*, had reached 20,000,000 by 2010 (K-avex, 2010). Although beyond the scope of this paper it is noted that *Winter Sonata* was also broadcast throughout the Asian region—China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam, Malaysia, and Indonesia—as well as elsewhere in the world. It has become an iconic Asian drama and was created by its manifestation of cultural history. The impact on the audience of the Korean Wave also includes that from music, for example, drama in *Winter Sonata* “My memory” sung by Ryu.

Arguably, we must consider four factors that underlie the success of *Winter Sonata* in Japan. The first factor is the development of global television markets in the latter part of the 20th century. Television programs are not dependent on a single language community for their market. Subject to government regulations, they may be imported and exported. Television dramas are designed for mass audiences, and, when successful, are major revenue earners. Modern broadcast technology, including satellite transmission, is expensive, and program makers and broadcasters seek the widest possible audience to recover production costs. In summary, the development of the global television industry has established a platform for transnational communication and communication genres, for example, television drama, that was not previously possible.

The second factor underlying the success of *Winter Sonata* in East Asia is that, it is a product of a local television industry that has evolved to meet local and regional needs through three definable phases:

(1) Phase 1: The cloning of American programs;

(2) Phase 2: The influence on Korean audiences deriving from the development of local genres by the Japanese television industry, starting in the 1990s with the idol drama genre (Komatsu, 1999). These were also popular with viewers not only in Korea but also in Hong Kong and Taiwan. However, Korea banned the import of Japanese popular culture products from 1945 until the 1990s. During this time, the emerging and protected Korean television industry was developing productions that were similar to Japanese programs, such as the idol drama genre (Iwabuchi, 2003). However, the Korean government did permit co-productions with Japanese production companies;

And (3) Phase 3: The removal by the Korean government in 2004 of all restraints on the import and export of Japanese television signaled the coming of age of the dynamic Korean television program industry, an essential prerequisite for the Korean Wave.

The third factor is the evolution of serial television dramas such as *Winter Sonata* and other popular culture programs that cross-national borders. Jacobson (1995) explained:

Then, as now, the nature of television drama is in the use of conflict, which is expressed through characters, dialogue and plots. Television drama functions for some viewers as a means for diversion or escape, and for others it is a fictional representation of realistic human relationships and social behaviour... (p. 34)

The fourth factor is cultural proximity. Cultural proximity, with the impact of global migration, is not necessarily regionally based. However, it may be appreciated that in East Asia, cultural proximity has a significant regional aspect to it. The languages in the region have some common elements from historical Chinese influences and there are manifestly other cultural similarities, for example, family values, education, art, music, cuisine, and literature.

Theoretical Framework

The research approach to outcomes arising from the impact of *Winter Sonata* in Japan utilizes triangulation. This methodology is designed to address the research question and to maximize the information gained from the quantitative and qualitative data gathered and collated. This procedure enables the disparate data to be connected in line with the objectives of the paper. It is used to achieve a convergent validation from the research to draw together the information gathered, thus enabling analysis, and for conclusions to be drawn from the findings. The method adopted was designed “to capitalize on the comparative potential of various data sets rather than establishing a hierarchy of evidence” (Barbour, 2007, p. 47). Bryman, citing Denzin (1970),

referred to this approach as methodological triangulation (Bryman, 2011; Morse, 1991). The research method is a “mixed method” (Creswell & Clark, 2011, p. 12), and the three chosen segments for data collection and analysis are complementary to the context of this paper.

In adopting the concept of methodological triangulation the three data sets illustrated in Figure 1 are: (1) document analysis; (2) audience analysis; and (3) commercial outcomes.

Document analysis is primarily focused on political changes in Korea; audience analysis falls within the ambit of socio-cultural context, and commercial outcomes are a gauge of *Winter Sonata*’s market influence in Japan. The analysis of audience utilizes grounded theory within the scope of qualitative analysis (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Flick, Kardorff and Steinke (2004) referred to “the heterogeneity of approaches that may be characterized as qualitative research” (p. 6). The study acknowledges the complexity of the research method and that “quantitative research is weak in understanding the context of the setting in which people talk, whereas qualitative research is seen as deficient because of the personal interpretations made by the researcher” (see Figure 1).

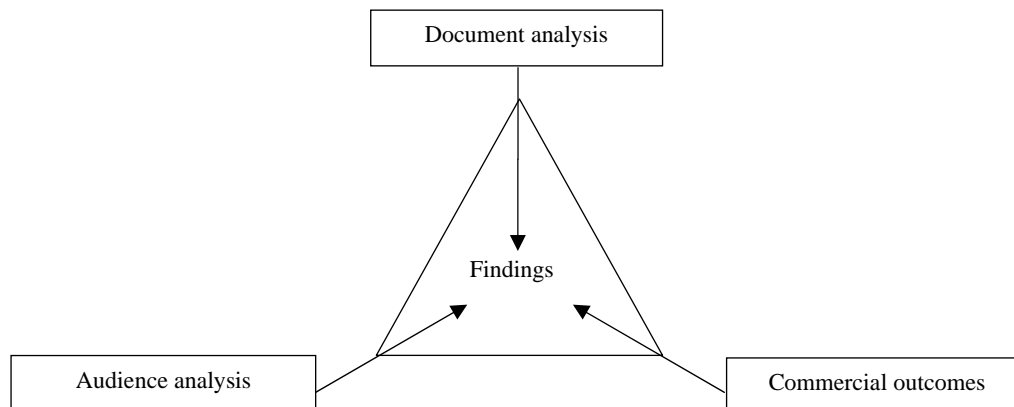


Figure 1. Triangulation.

Document analysis is applied for understanding government regulations on composite cultural trade of media content between Korea and Japan. This analysis is used to determine the political change process in Korea which has led to the Korean Wave flowing into Japan. The corollary, not within the ambit of this paper, is Japanese media and popular culture being traded and localized in Korea through the process of remaking. Audience analysis determines the reasons for the acceptance or rejection of media content. The analysis also searches for regional influences on cultural diffusion in Japan of the television drama *Winter Sonata*. Commercial outcomes are explored to gauge the extent of trade created beyond the relationship between content and the viewing audience. A convergent validation is derived from the qualitative and quantitative information gained from the respective analyses.

Document Analysis.

During the early part of the second half of the 20th century, Korea actively discouraged friendly relations between itself and Japan. Japan annexed Korea in 1910 and maintained occupation until 1945. At the end of Japanese imperial policies in 1945 and since the partitioning of Korea into two countries in 1948, residual ill-feeling between Japan and Korea has kept relations at a distance. As a result, there was little interaction during this time between Japanese and Korean media. Prior to the 1990s, Korean government legislation

restricted the import of television, music, and film production. However, from the 1990s, government legislation created the opportunity for Korean media to become regional and progressively global.

The historical antipathy changed towards the end of the 20th century, when the Korean Government implemented a far-sighted program to ease the restrictions on the exchange of Korean and Japanese popular cultural material. This change process can be traced back to 1973. At that time, during a visit to Japan, Kim Dae-Jung (hereafter Kim) was seized by the KCIA (Korean Central Intelligence Agency), taken back to Korea and imprisoned. In his publication “Jail Correspondence”, written while he was in prison, he formulated his three “*hans*”: (1) opposition to adverse feelings towards the Japanese; (2) opposition to the use of military force; and (3) to use a harmonious approach towards Japan (Maeda, 2007). Later, he became the President of Korea, from 1998-2003, and was instrumental in leading the way to improved relations between Korea and Japan. Kim was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2000, confirming international recognition of the significance of his political leadership. Kim was visionary in his view of the future relationship between Korea and Japan.

There were a number of events that contributed to the reshaping of the cultural interrelationship between Korea and Japan: (1) 1988: Seoul Olympics; (2) 1994: Visa requirements lifted for Japanese residents visiting Korea; (3) 1996: Japan-Korea World Cup soccer agreement; (4) 1997: Korea experienced an economy crisis—cultural industries; (5) 1998: Korean government policy change, progressive openness towards Japanese popular culture; (6) 2000: “Friends”—First joint Korea-Japan TV drama; (7) 2002: World Cup soccer in Korea/*Winter Sonata* in Korea; (8) 2003: *Winter Sonata* in Japan; (9) 2004-2009: *Winter Sonata* major and local TV networks; (10) 2009-2011: *Winter Sonata* animation; and (11) 2010-2012: K-drama stations and K-pop music.

Arguably, the most important of these was the initiative by Kim, and the progressive implementation of the initiatives from 1998. He instigated four steps to open up the Korean door to Japan, leading to the entry of Japanese popular culture into Korea for the first time in 1998 and then in 1999, 2000, and 2004 (Ishii, 2001; Maeda, 2007). This initiative was revolutionary in changing the relationship between Japan and Korea, progressively allowing the legal importation of Japanese media and cultural products. This first step resulted in an adverse reaction from some of Korea’s mass media, intellectuals, and academia, thus highlighting, with the benefit of hindsight, their short-sightedness. There was significant resistance to change and hesitation in accepting this new open door policy. However, Kim’s actions gradually enabled cultural flows between Japan and Korea; he saw this as a way to improve the understanding of Koreans for things Japanese and, conversely, Japanese for things Korean. It was a pragmatic policy as, by 1995, 80% of Japanese television *anime* had already unofficially penetrated into Korean society.

In 1998, Japan possessed a sophisticated and dynamic media industry. The Korean government had been careful, initially, in preventing the exposure of the Korean media industry to open competition from Japan. Notwithstanding that initial reticence, some *anime* was screened without government approval before 1998, and with government approval after 2004. A greater range of content, except *anime*, was accepted and screened in Korean theatres post-1998. The Korean Cultural Tourist Bureau and Chosen Nippo (2004) instigated Kim’s visionary four steps as outlined in Table 1, and the ban on Japanese media products was lifted progressively, as illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1

Korea's Four Steps

Step I 1998
1. Film and video
Japan and Korean co-production films were allowed.
(1) Participation of Japanese actors in Korean films became legal.
(2) Only award-winning Japanese films were allowed to be shown, and these awards were restricted only to the following four film festivals: Cannes, Venice, Berlin, and Academy.
2. <i>Manga</i> (print publication) was allowed.
Step 2 1999
1. Film and video
1.1 All films allowed except <i>anime</i> film.
1.2 Seventy international film festival awards were now acceptable.
1.3 Only general viewing films were allowed.
2. No change
3. Musical performance
3.1 Performers of Japanese music were restricted to sell a maximum of 2000 seats, and only indoor performances were allowed.
3.2 Performances of Japanese music were not allowed to be broadcast or recorded (in any format including videos).
Step 3 2000
1. Film and video
1.1 Only films allowed for the 18+ age group.
1.2 <i>Anime</i> films that had won awards at international film festivals were allowed.
1.3 Videos of already screened films were allowed.
3. Musical performance
3.1 The outdoor performance of Japanese music ban was lifted.
3.2 Recording: No Japanese language lyrics, only songs with Korean translation lyrics were legal.
4. Soft games
4.1 All soft games (PC games, online games, and video games (using a video game machine)) allowed.
4.2 Soft games not to be played using television sets.
5. Broadcast: television
Japanese-related sports, documentary, and news became allowed.
6. Television
Movies on cable television, satellite broadcast allowed (however, only films which met Step II conditions were allowed to be broadcast on television).
Step 4 2004
1. Film and videos
Japanese film/video ban completely lifted and all films were allowed, no restrictions.

In 1998, for the first time, Japanese films were officially exported to Korea, and Japanese pop musicians were permitted to perform there, with audiences restricted to “2000 people” (Ishii, 2001, p. 79; Maeda, 2007, p. 47). In 2004, both the Korean and Japanese markets were opened with regard to the importation of popular culture productions. The Japanese and Korean governments legislated to support co-productions with funding support. These changes remain fertile grounds for an expansion of media trade.

The opening of media trade in the domain of popular culture has been a diplomatic success. The Korean Cultural Promotion Research Center reported findings from a survey within Japan on the question: “Do you agree to the Korean government open door policy towards Japanese popular culture?” The result was 50.3% positive, 23.7% generally positive, and 12.2% with no real view. This sample, with 86.2% not opposing the

policy, strongly supported Kim's vision and subsequent action to enable cultural threads between Japan and Korea to strengthen and cultural exchange to grow (Maeda, 2007). Around the same time, Japanese film was legally traded in Korea, and Korean dramas began to be shown in Japan. This was an unprecedented change. In the past, Japanese viewers had shown a lack of interest in these productions, and so their impact and success came as a surprise to the Korean media industry. The now well-known Korean drama *Winter Sonata*, with its strong love story elements, was broadcast by the Japan Broadcasting Corporation NHK network and led to an enormous cult following in Japan. NHK is historically known for its orthodox programs, and concentrates on broadcasting news, cultural, and educational programs. *Winter Sonata* was the forerunner of a number of Korean productions that were distributed in Japan and received acclaim from Japanese audiences.

Audience Analysis—*Winter Sonata*

The viewing audience. It is noted from the following information that the Japanese viewing audience of *Winter Sonata* is very specific and that this television drama did not have broad based appeal. Notwithstanding this fact, its success is significant as it illustrates an improvement in regional relationships and understanding. A questionnaire was put to people who logged on to the Goo social media website and who identified themselves as fans of *Winter Sonata*. It was reported that 97% of the respondents identified themselves as women. The Goo (2004) questionnaire also reported that 80% of the respondents were women in their 30s and 40s with some 7% in their 20s and 9% in their 50s. The evidence for a female fan base for *Winter Sonata* is further supported by reports in AERA (Asahi-Shimbun Extra Report and Analysis) magazine, a weekly magazine published by Asahi Shimbun publications (AERA, 2004).

The relative absence of the teenager demographic from the *Winter Sonata* viewing audience is significant, because it suggests that this type of drama does not appeal to them. It can be construed from the female audience demographic that the targeting of the drama was to that audience demographic. One important finding from the AERA sample was that nearly 30% of the 326 women who responded had not felt attached to any particular celebrity before *Winter Sonata*'s Bae Yong-Joon (AERA, 2004). Of the 12 most popular celebrities who were identified by others in the sample, only seven were Japanese. The rest were international sportsmen and film stars, such as David Beckham and Brad Pitt. The Japanese audiences have engaged with and continue to engage with Bae Yong-Joon through media mix items such as photos, calendars, fan meetings, blogs, and the like (East, 2011).

Japanese viewers would observe in *Winter Sonata* the culturally proximate ways the characters portray emotion and interact, that are: (1) their etiquette and non-verbal behaviours; (2) the display of tears, and sentimental and delicate emotional expressions; (3) communication through eye contact; and (4) gentle love, which means the absence of emphasis on kissing, nudity, lovemaking, Western verbosity, overt conflict, and disagreement. The stressing of values such as kindness, love, family and respect for elders, harmony, and tranquility are also relevant.

Audience segmentation. As outlined above, the principal audiences for *Winter Sonata* were women. Hayashi (2005), drawing on surveys of the Japanese *Winter Sonata* viewing audience, described the typical viewer as female aged between 40 and 50, with an average age of 47.3. Another approach to identifying the Japanese audience for *Winter Sonata* is reception group analysis. From the above information, it is known that the core audience is women between 30 and 50 years of age. The prospective female audience has been segregated into socioeconomic types using Miura's (2005) categories: "*Oyome-kei* (Housewife type); *Mirioneze-kei* (Millionaire working type); *Kamayatsuonna-kei* (Artistic personality type); *Gyaru-kei* (Girl

type); *OL-kei* (Office Lady)” (pp. 41-67). This has been done to determine if Miura’s segmentation has any relevance to the predominantly female viewing audience of *Winter Sonata*. Miura’s definition of these socioeconomic types are as follows.

Miura’s positioning of Japanese women who are fans of *Winter Sonata* are illustrated in Figure 2.

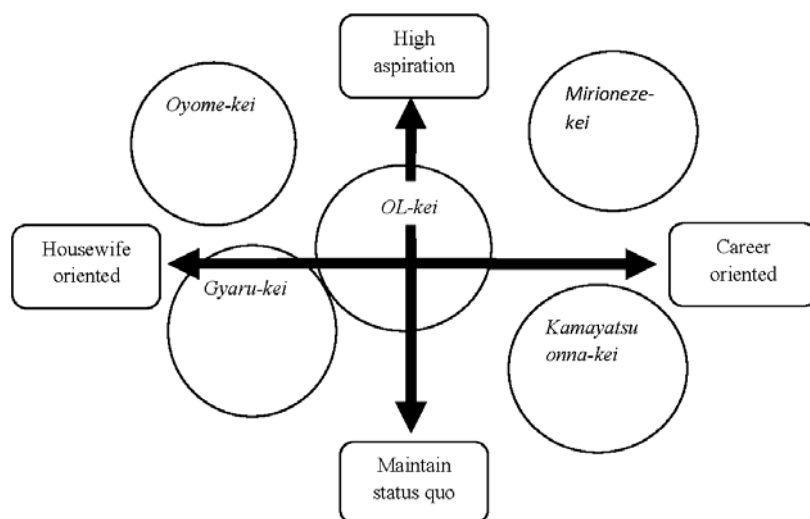


Figure 2. Miura’s societal positioning of Japanese females. Source: Adapted from Miura (2005, p. 42).

Winter Sonata’s Korean director, Yoon Suk-Ho, reported that he created a fantasy world, a reality to meet the needs of modern day people. He saw that what they were missing in their busy, changing, and everyday world was the age-old, core certainties of life: (1) respect for parents and elders, love for family and friends, as well as romantic love; (2) a pure mind; (3) trust; (4) belief in self; and (5) caring and kindness for others. Yoon sought to create a new space for the audience that rolled up all these elements in it. These values, like Polaris, the pole star, are a recurrent theme in the *Winter Sonata* series and provide a framework in which all the characters and plots interact. In other words, he deliberately designed *Winter Sonata* as a cult text to provide viewers with an idealist view of reality (Maruyama, 2004).

While *Winter Sonata* was a very important part of the Korean Wave into Japan, the story of its introduction to Japan shows it was not accepted passively. Some viewers became dedicated fans, but it proved to be particularly attractive to, and captured the hearts of, an audience in the *Oyome-kei* category. The audience figures for *Winter Sonata* indicate that it is not just another television drama; there is much more to it than that. Many viewers have become fans, and the program has achieved cult status, with lead actor, the Korean, Bae Yong-Joon, attaining celebrity status in Japan virtually overnight. There were 50 websites devoted to Bae, and he is popularly called “Yon sama”.¹ In terms of the media cult model described by Hills (2002), *Winter Sonata* is a cult text and the Japanese fans are an extra-textual manifestation of this text.

Commercial Outcomes

The value of *Winter Sonata* has been increased by the introduction of multiple revenue streams. The DVD of the series was released in Japan at the end of 2003, and the initial run of 10,000 copies sold out in four hours. In 2005, *Winter Sonata* had created an economic effect in Japan for NHK (excluding the Korean revenues) worth three billion yen (US\$27 million). Other merchandised products amplified the financial returns,

¹ Sama is an honorific suffix, used for higher ranking such as assigned to Japanese royalty.

including: (1) themed fashion clothing; (2) calendars; (3) spectacle frames as worn by Bae Yong-Joon's character, Kang Joon-Sang and Lee Min-Hyung; (4) pendants as worn by the heroine, Jung Yu-Jin; (5) automobiles as driven by the hero, Lee Min-Hyung; and (6) magazines and books. 50,000 copies of a book of photographs of the main characters sold out on the first day. A strong fan industry followed. Attendance at a fan club meeting cost 35,000 yen (US\$320). A tour industry was set up to cater for Japanese who wished to visit the drama's locations in Korea. This is consistent with Hills's (2002) theory of "cult geography": "Cult geographies are... spaces associated with cult icons, which cult fans take as the basis for material touristic practices" (p. 144).

Major book stores established a "Korean corner", while the Kanji Proficiency Society reported that the kanji character *Kan* (as in *kankoku*, the Japanese word for Korea) ranked sixth in its annual popularity ranking scale (Hayashi, 2005). In 2004, Japan was the source of half of Korea's overseas visitors. In 2005, significant reaction to the Korean Wave was represented on shelves of bookstores in publications for and against the Korean Wave, and *manga* portraying explicit anti-Korean sentiment. In 2005, Korean Air announced special film flights from Japan so that Japanese tourists could visit the *Winter Sonata* location sites. In 2005, NHK television media publishers announced an increase in annual sales of its Korean language textbook to 20,000 copies.

The Korean Wave fever continues in Japan with television drama. From 2002 to 2006 at least 27 Korean drama series, including *Rondo*, a joint Korea-Japan production, were broadcast in Japan. Of these the three most successful were *Winter Sonata* in 2003-2004, with an audience share growing from 9% to 22%, and, ultimately, 24%; *Jewel in the Palace*, in 2005, with an audience share of 16%; and *Rondo*, in 2006, with an audience share of 15% (Video Research, 2009). There is also an evolving market for DVD sales of the *anime* version of *Winter Sonata* released in 2010. and a supplementary memory album of the *anime Winter Sonata* released in 2012 (Avex, 2012).

An examination of print media articles from 2004 to 2006, and later, in 2010 to 2012 on the release of the animated version of *Winter Sonata* was carried out to ascertain trends in Korean and Japanese issues. Table 2 illustrates some article titles from 30 or so articles studied from each year, illustrating the flavour of the Korean Wave. The selected titles of articles were chosen for their significance and are illustrative of media reporting during the selected period (see Table 2).

A change is evident in print media between 2004 and 2006. In 2004, the media supported the Korean Wave and the success in Japan of *Winter Sonata*. However, in Korea, political issues masked pro-Japanese sentiment. This became even more evident in 2006. However, in 2006 the Korean government undertook to maintain and broaden the positive aspects of the Korean Wave. Currently, there is a further evolution, with the Korean Wave progressing into Japanese academia, manifesting in the continued Japanese-Korean co-productions of drama, and is evident in the promotion of the image of Korea in East Asia and internationally, extending even to Australia. When the author visited Japan in 2008, there was an advertisement for chocolate in the arrivals hall at Narita International Airport. This advertisement, made for the well-known Japanese department store chain "Lotte", portrayed Korean actors. This reflects, in part, the powerful trends in communication that cut across national borders and political, cultural, demographic, and media domains. The Korean Wave is broadening its content. Together with the pioneering *Winter Sonata* there is growth in the music industry since 2011, as Shoyo-Jidai, a Korean girl pop group, and Psy, a rap singer with parody elements attest.

Table 2

Selected Titles of Japanese Media Articles on Korea 2004-2012 (Asahi Digital News)

2004	2005	2006
Yon-Sama boom in Japan	Korean celebrity, 30,000 Japanese fandom	Takeshima/Dokdo and the roots of Japan-Korea conflict
Korean Air to operate special flights for <i>Winter Sonata</i> Japanese fans	Japanese visits to Korea increase despite diplomatic differences	Channel J (Japan) reported in April that the theme park Korean Wave would be opened
Economic effects of <i>Winter Sonata</i> worth US\$2.3 billion	Bae Yong-Joon goods: DVD, calendars, Joon-Bear, etc.	Comics stoke Japan-Korea tension
Knowing Korea through <i>Winter Sonata</i> star Bae Yong-Joon	Korean boom in cultural exchange	Korean government invested 200 million won for “ <i>Hangul</i> ” promotion
<i>Winter Sonata</i> improves Japanese views of Korea	Korean Wave contributes to Korea's exports	Exported Korean television dramas improving nation's image in Asia
2010	2011	2012
Takeshima/Dokdo and the roots of Japan-Korea conflict	K-pop Shoyo-jidai, girls Pop-music group	Takeshima/Dokdo and the roots of Japan-Korea conflict
K-drama and K-pop music boom continue in Japan	Psy, Konan Style (Gangnam Style), YouTube top viewers rates	Psy, Konan Style (Gangnam Style) reached top two for three consecutive weeks on US Billboard
K-drama BS premium	Bae Yong-Joon goods: DVD, calendars, Joon-Bear, etc.	Psy, 2012 Europe music video award
Knowing Korea through <i>Winter Sonata</i> star Bae Yong-Joon and DVD	Korean boom: K-pop music in cultural exchange	K-pop Shoyo-jidai, girls pop-music group
<i>Winter Sonata</i> improves Japanese views of Korea	New Tohoshinki contributes to Korea's exports	Exported Korean television dramas improving nation's image in Asia.

Conclusions

Winter Sonata was the vanguard of the Korean Wave into Japan and made a significant contribution to contemporary cross-cultural diffusion. This diffusion occurred as an enriching process with little evidence to demonstrate a loss of personal or national identity in Japan. Arguably, increasing cross-border trade can reinforce cultural diffusion without diminishing national identity, as is confirmed by the discrete Japanese audience enjoyment of *Winter Sonata*. The Korean Wave has proven to be sustainable in Japan, and it has maintained a progressively broader base of appeal to the present day. This paper has outlined four factors that provided the trade environment for enabling media popular culture products to be distributed across geographical boundaries.

The move by the Korean Government, initiated by the visionary Kim, in opening up Korean media to external competition has proved to be the basis for the creation of a media industry in Korea to be able to prosper in the local, regional, and international markets, even displacing, to a degree, US hegemony. The audience analysis, though only encompassing the Japanese audience for *Winter Sonata*, confirms by its acceptance of the television drama that the sharing of values and cultural flows are multi-directional. Television, the new technologies deriving from telecommunications, and the internet are powerful communicative mediums that are bringing about greater cross-cultural awareness and interest, evident in the trade of television dramas, in whatever mode of transmission, across geographical borders to engage cross-cultural fandom. The success of *Winter Sonata* in Japan was due in part to the attempt by the Korean producers to appeal to common factors in the target market. They were without doubt very familiar with, and influenced by, the content and format of Japanese television dramas.

The methodology of triangulation from the corner-stones of document, audience, and commercial outcome analyses has enabled a convergent validation to ascertain if cultural diffusion has occurred in Japan as a result of a specific cross-cultural trade in media popular culture. The positive response of Japanese women in the 40-50 years old demographic for *Winter Sonata* was of prime importance in establishing the popularity of the television drama, with these women comprising its major audience. This targeting provides an iconic example of the fertile ground for content directed to other audience segments where a flow on effect of cultural diffusion may be amplified.

The commercial success of *Winter Sonata* and the concurrent emergence of ancillary product sales and tourism proved to be significant for commercial outcomes, and they have reinforced the value chain of the production. This provides multi-stream revenues, encouraging and enabling a succession of television drama production and other media, for example, music. The Korean Wave was initiated by, and has prospered because of a significant change in regional political thinking and perceptive Korean producers. Korea has also broadened the Korean Wave into academia. Cross-border cultural stimulus derived from media content, even imitation, absorption, or copying of originating textual materials is shown to be a factor in both Korea and Japan. The Korean Wave, at the micro level in this context, *Winter Sonata*, illustrates the propensity for of cultural diffusion to be derived from regional trade in popular culture content. *Winter Sonata* appealed to a specific audience and an unquantified degree of cross-cultural diffusion occurred, importantly without physical conquest. The multi-dimensional aspect of trade in media popular culture products is important. Governments from time to time, primarily for internal political reasons, will fuel historical cross-cultural antipathy. The continued press coverage of the Takeshima/Dokdo and the roots of Japan-Korea conflict are an example of this.

Media popular culture can negate this and be cross-culturally beneficial to both nations, comprehensively confirmed by the vision of Kim and the ensuing Korean Wave, exemplified by *Winter Sonata*.

References

- AERA. (2004). Kanryuu. *AERA (Asahi Shimbun Extra Report and Analysis)*. Tokyo: Asahi Shimbun.
- Appadurai, A. (2003). Disjuncture and difference in the global cultural economy. In J. E. Braziel & A. Mannur (Eds.), *Theorizing diaspora* (pp. 25-48). Oxford: Blackwell.
- Avex. (2012). Anime Winter Sonata (Anime Fuyu no Sonata). Retrieved from <http://mv.avex.jp/fuyusona-anime/introduction.html>
- Barbour, R. (2007). Research design. In U. Flick (Ed.), *Doing focus groups* (Vol. 4, p. 47). London, New Delhi, and Singapore: SAGE Publications.
- Bryman, A. (2011). Triangulation. Retrieved from <http://referenceworld.com/sage/socialscience/triangulation.pdf>
- Burke, P. (2009). *Cultural hybridity*. Cambridge: Cambridge Polity Press.
- Creswell, J. W., & Clark, V. L. P. (2011). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research* (2nd ed.). London, New Delhi, Singapore, and Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications.
- East, K. (2011). Wine and people. Retrieved from http://www.keyeast.co.kr/jap/press/press_list.asp
- Flick, U., Kardorff, E. V., & Steinke, I. (2004). What is qualitative research? An introduction to the field. In U. Flick, E. V. Kardorff, & I. Steinke (Eds.), *A companion to qualitative research* (p. 6). Los Angeles, London, New Delhi, Singapore, and Washington D.C.: SAGE Publications.
- Hayashi, K. (2005). *Adoring audience of Winter Sonata (Fuyu Sona ni Hamatta Watashitachi)*. Tokyo: Bungeishunju.
- Hills, M. (2002). *Fan cultures*. New York: Routledge.
- Ishii, K. (2001). *Popular culture in East Asia (Higashi Ajia no Taishuu Bunka)*. Tokyo: Sososha.
- Iwabuchi, K. (2003). Asian media flows as global prism (Groobaruka no Purizumu to shiten no Ajia Media Kotsuu). In K. Iwabuchi (Ed.), *Global prism: Asian dream of Japanese television (Groobaru Purizumu: Ajan Doriimu to Shiten no Niho no Terebi Dorama)* (pp. 11-18). Tokyo: Heibonsha.

- Jacobson, R. L. (1995). *Television research: A directory of conceptual categories, topics, suggestions and selected sources*. London: McFarland.
- K-avex. (2010). Anime: Winter Sonata (Anime: Fuyu no Sonata). Retrieved from <http://mv.avex.jp/fuyusona-anime/index.html>
- Komatsu, K. (1999). *That's TV drama 90s (That's Terebi Dorama 90's)*. Tokyo: Daiamondosha.
- Kreiner, J., & Olschleger, H. D. (2008). Theories and methods in Japanese studies: Current state and future developments (p. 19). H. D. Olschleger (Ed.). (Papers in honor of Josef Kreiner). Bonn: V&R Unipress GmbH..
- Maeda, Y. (2007). *The historical meaning of R.O.K. president Kim Dae-Jung's policy for Japanese popular culture (Kindaichu Daitoryo no Tainichi Taishu Bunka KaihoSeisaku no Rekishiteki Imi)* (Vol. 37, pp. 45-57). Tokyo: Otsuma Joshi University Higher Education.
- Maruyama, S. (2004). *Yoon Suk-Ho's world (Yoon Suk-Ho no Sekai)*. Tokyo: Mook 21 Kyodo Press.
- Miura, A. (2005). *Korean Wave society (Karyuu Shakai)*. Tokyo: Kobunsha Shinsho.
- Moori, Y. (2004). Passive audience culture of *Winter Sonata* (Fuyu no Sonata to Nodoteki Fan no Bunka Jissen). In Y. Moori (Ed.), *Japanese-Korean Wave (Nisshiki Kanryuu)* (pp. 14-50). Tokyo: Serika Shobo.
- Morse, J. (1991). Approaches to qualitative-quantitative methodological triangulation. *Nursing Research*, 40(2), 120-123.
- Ogura, K. (2005a). *Impact of Korean Wave (Kanryu Impakuto)*. Tokyo: Kodansha.
- Ogura, K. (2005b). *Knowing Korea through heart (Kokoro de Shiru Kankoku)*. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten.
- Straubhaar, J. (2007). *World television: From global to local*. London: SAGE Publications.
- Strauss, A. L., & Corbin, J. M. (1998). *Basics of qualitative research*. London, New Delhi, Thousand Oaks, and Singapore: SAGE Publications.
- Video Research. (2009). Viewer's ratings. Retrieved from <http://www.videor.co.jp/data/ratedata/program/02asa.htm>
- Yasumoto, S. (2012). *Remade in Asia: Transformation across in Asain markets and popular culture* (Unpublished Ph.D., Queensland University of Techology Brisbane).