



The Cultural Effect of Popular Korean Drama: Squid Game

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Abstract

Nowadays, the phenomenon of squid game is exploding at an alarming rate. It does not take long for the audience to spread the drama virally, as it is so true to life. People of all ages from all over the world are extremely enthusiastic about the outcome of the drama, which is referred to as euphoria. The descriptive qualitative method was used in this study, and the author discovered that the three most famous trends inspired by the drama are red and green light, dalgona candy, and costume play. Children are more likely to not consume in order for the rating to be 18+, but the trends can't be denied at all, even when it comes to children. It also has an impact on their mental and behavioral health.

Keywords: Cultural Effect, Squid Game, Korean Drama, Children Psychology.

Introduction

The fame of k-drama series *Squid Game* is extremely booming nowadays. The unpredictable popularity is evidenced by international screening over the world. Popular drama like "Squid Game" are promoted more aggressively on social media. People will eventually start watching the drama, due of its tremendous popularity (the most-watched show on Netflix in most nation). Due to the relatively little alteration of social information, the impacts of social information are likely to be much greater in real life. South Korea's media culture has been legitimized over the

past few decades thanks in large part to its nationalist-based approach to globalization and a discourse crafted by major players (K Lee, 2008).

According to Lee (2018), "Netflix and Hulu, two major American television streaming services, have increased Western viewers' access to Korean television by adding it to their genre offerings, resulting in a cult following in the United States among 'primarily non-Koreans and even non-Asians.'" Today, *Squid Game* is no longer merely a drama series; it has developed into a global legend. Korean television dramas were mostly contained within the country's borders until the late 1990s. Television shows from Korea are now being aired in Asia, Middle East, Eastern Europe, and Russia as a result of the government's backing for the film sector (Lin and Huang, 2006).

The K-Pop phenomenon has recently witnessed significant expansion, reaching a wide range of audiences in countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom, Turkey, Egypt, Asia, and Southeast Asia (Choi et al., 2014). Recently, the cultural effect of post-watching the series also producing many popular trends both in social media platform such as Instagram and Tiktok, and society daily life. According to Greertz (in Gesler & Kearns, 2002:12), culture is defined as a flow of significant symbols via a ceremony, with the presence of signs manifested in the form of objects and actions being particularly relevant.

According to data, the effect of post-dramatic viewing has a significant effect on people of all ages today. Even though the rating is 18+, there is no denying that children are in the same situation. Children obtain trend information via social media platforms that they can access freely, which has a detrimental effect on their psychological well-being. Hence, the author focuses her research into these questions below:

1. What are the trends as the cultural effect of the drama?
2. What is the effect of drama towards children?

Method

The methodology of this study is a descriptive qualitative method. Descriptive methods are procedures which utilizes to describes or evaluate the research data but are not used to make broader conclusions. According to Creswell (2014: 232), "Qualitative research method is qualitative approaches rely on text and picture data, include unique processes in data analysis, and draw on varied designs". Qualitative research method is a descriptive research approach that uses analysis, refers to data, leverages existing ideas as supporting material.

In addition, according to Hancock (1998), qualitative research also refers to study that aims to explain social phenomena. The research process entails developing research questions and procedures, collecting data from the social media platform and elaborate them, and the researcher making interpretations about the meaning of the data. The final written report's structure is adaptable. Those who engage in this mode of inquiry advocate for an approach to research that values an inductive approach, a focus on individual meaning, and the

importance of rendering a situation's complexity.

Results

Red Light, Green Light

The "red light, green light" game from the first episode of the show serves as the inspiration for many of the memes that have appeared on TikTok. In the children's game "Red light, green light," A giant girl doll calls out commands for players to run and stop, and if it catches them moving, the doll immediately triggers a gun to shoot them, killing the player. Based on the reports, the scene was enough to pique the interest of the audience.

On TikTok, many people created parodies of the scene, complete with the signature "*Mugunghwa Kkoci Pieot Seumnida*" (무궁화꽃이피었습니다) background and other effects. Green light, red light memes and parody videos became the new trend on TikTok, garnering more than 11 billion hashtags in the process #squidgame. Parodies are everywhere, and people can't get enough of these comedic acts, which we find delightful. The popular South Korean survival series "Red Light, Green Light" is known for its giant doll dressed in orange and yellow, which is one of the series' main features.

Dalgona Candy

The non-lethal version of the second game from the show is being attempted on TikTok by people attempting to cut shapes out of dalgona candy (also known as honeycomb toffee), which is a popular South Korean street food also known as *ppopgi* (뽑기). There has been a significant increase in the number of "Squid Game" viewers and influencers who have shared content of their attempts at the dalgona challenge and other related memes and games on social media channels, helping to turn the candy into a worldwide phenomenon. Dalgona challenge participants must cut out the carved symbols on the candy in various shapes—circle, triangle, star, or perhaps an umbrella—without breaking the delicate dessert, as they did in "Squid Game" participants' attempts

Squid Game Costume Play

According to the Wall Street Journal, 456 actors were involved in the production of Squid Game. Participants or guardians of the game arena are a common role for most people involved in the game. It was the participants' white slip-ons from their green tracksuits that drew the attention of social media users. Even the two high-end fashion items saw a significant increase in sales. The 2021 Halloween costume of choice is the green uniform. It appears that interest in Squid

Game costumes is at its highest point on Google. Squid Game fever gripped the world this year, and a number of celebrities dressed up as characters from the show (as well as the iconic robot doll).

In Indonesia, the same pattern is observed. One of the recent CPNS tests held in East Java drew the attention of a large number of people because the supervisors were dressed in costumes inspired by the popular 'Squid Game' television series, which was broadcast in Indonesia. Since the participants of Session II were in the courtyard of the University Building on the 12th day of the series, on August 17, 1945, in Surabaya, the atmosphere of the Squid Game series has permeated the air. A siren sounds to set the tone for the scene. Five pink soldiers emerged from the confines of the establishment. When the pink soldier approaches the participants, he is accompanied by an enthralling voice. The five pink soldiers on duty are also armed with weapons with long barrels, as is the case with the rest of the army. Instead of being frightened, the examinees were astonished and responded with enthusiastic applause

Discussion

According to its classification, Squid Game is a drama intended for adults who are at least 17 years old because it contains scenes of sadistic violence and naughty sex. However, in reality, more than 111 million accounts tuned in to watch this series during its first month of broadcasting on the network. There is a widespread belief among those who have joined in the euphoria over Squid Game that the series is being watched by a large number of children under the age of 17. Squid Game has also spawned a slew of viral challenges on social media platforms such as TikTok and Instagram that are based on scenes from the show, which is yet another indication of how many children and teenagers are watching it.

In 2009, the Indonesian Ministry of Health classified children as follows: 0-5 years old, 5-11 years old, 12-16 years old, 17-25 years old, and 26-35 years old. According to Listya Paramita, a clinical child and adolescent psychologist, the age of 17 has entered the stage of formal operations. Mentally think logically about abstract ideas. Compared to their peers, they can comprehend the film's content logically and precisely.

Dalgona candy has piqued the interest of many people because it was featured in the popular South Korean television series Squid Game. In addition, several netizen took on the challenge of creating dalgona sweets similar to that seen in the film. Videos of people melting sugar and then pouring it into molds with a specific design spread on the social media platform Tiktok. The task is to carve off the current patterns without shattering the dalgona candy, which is quite difficult. As a result, the author discovers several negative consequences for children.

Doctors have stated that dalgona candy trend appears to be dangerous because it has the potential to increase the incidence of burns. At the very least, three children have been treated for burns while working in the liquid sugar processing industry at The Children's Hospital at Westmead in Australia. In severe cases, a

skin transplant may be required to repair the damage. In an interview, Helena, one of the children's parents, admitted that she was taken aback because she had not anticipated the possibility of injuries to their children. The fact that a seemingly innocuous act, such as making candy, can have such serious consequences is surprising, says Helena.

Dr. Erik La Hei from the hospital's burns department explained that sugar requires a higher temperature to melt than boiling water, and that this temperature is higher than boiling water. Not to mention that the liquid sugar is sticky, allowing it to adhere to the skin for a longer period of time. 'If the liquid is spilled while it is still hot, the higher the temperature and the longer it remains stuck to the skin, the greater the chance of deeper and more serious burns,' Dr. Erik explained.

In other hand, schools in the United States, Canada, and Ireland have prohibited students from wearing costumes from the popular television show *Squid Game*. According to *USA Today*, in order to avoid reenacting the show's potentially lethal premise, a few New York City public schools have banned students from wearing the game's costumes. Dr. Craig Tice, superintendent of the Fayetteville-Manlius School District, told *USA Today* just before Halloween that it would be "inappropriate for any student to wear a Halloween costume from this show to school due to the potential violent messages associated with the costume," and that school district staff had observed students "imitating" some of the violent games depicted in the series.

"Some of our younger students are discussing and imitating aspects of the show/game at school," Tice wrote, adding that the prohibition extended to items that "can be interpreted as weapons should be brought to school, such as toy swords or guns, and that costumes should not be too gory or frightening in order to avoid frightening our younger students." School officials urged parents to discuss their children's behavior with them.

The Fayetteville-Manlius School District is not the only school district to prohibit costumes this year: the Boisé elementary school in Montreal, Quebec informed parents that students would not be permitted to wear them, drawing the wrath of Quebec Premier Francois Legault, who called the decision "unacceptable" and stated that it violated the holiday's spirit. In Dalkey, Ireland, the Castle Park School contacted parents after observing students reenacting the games during recess and informing them that the costumes were inappropriate.

School districts are confronted with a contentious issue: how to strike a balance between safety and a student's ability to express themselves. The issue highlights a perennial concern for parents and educators: when to expose children to age-appropriate content and when to explain the difference between entertainment and the real world. With Halloween concluded in 2021, other shows

and costumes will undoubtedly bring the same issues to a head in 2022 and beyond.

Conclusion

In the conclusion of the research, the author points out that Squid Game has evolved into something more than just a Korean drama series; it has become a worldwide phenomenon. It is unavoidable that the allure of Korean culture, whether in the form of drama, kpop music, or other forms, has spread throughout the universe. Another example of an Academy Award-winning success is the Korean comedy-thriller Parasite (2020), which has made a significant impact on audiences all over the world and continues to do so.

Based on the various trends that have emerged as a result of the cultural impact, it can be concluded that the public's euphoria is extremely high and that they are very creative in their appreciation of the work, beginning with the trend of red light and green light games, dalgona candy, and costume play. Although all of these trends have positive effects on children, there are also negative consequences, such as burns from Dalgona candy and imitating dangerous scenes from the drama.

Hence, in the end of the research, the author suggest to respond intelligently to the drama and avoid becoming complacent in terms of creating and following trends in that the messages and morals conveyed by the drama are repeated to the audience. As a result of this drama, it is hoped that parental guidance and supervision on the psychology and behavior of children will be increased. Because there are certain reasons why children should not watch dramas that are not appropriate for their age group, the 18+ rating was created to accomplish this goal.

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