

## Korean Drama Influence on Communication Styles of Female Students at Nawwir Qulubana Islamic Boarding School

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Received: 03/12/2025

Revised: 07/12/2025

Accepted: 12/12/2025

### Abstract

This research investigates shifts in communication styles among female students at Pondok Pesantren Nawwir Qulubana Wonosobo, driven by Korean dramas. The rising appeal of K-Dramas in Indonesia highlights a clash between pesantren principles of modesty and politeness and the emotive Korean ways of speaking. Employing a qualitative phenomenological method, the study delves into how these students balance Korean pop culture with pesantren traditions. Findings reveal that female students incorporate Korean terms like "omo," "ne," "eonni," and "gomawo" into everyday talk via reflective "Me" and impulsive "I" aspects. Yet, they uphold pesantren standards by thoughtfully adapting culture, mentally filtering Korean elements for suitable contexts. Such expressions are used only in casual settings, not formal ones. The pesantren's shared living space accelerates the adoption of Korean language. Ultimately, Korean media doesn't supplant pesantren values but acts as a means of personal expression, safeguarding Islamic identity and pesantren customs.

### Keywords

Communication style; Korean drama; Islamic boarding school

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The advancement of the digital era has brought major changes in communication methods and the dissemination of information across various aspects (Ulwia Usman & Makbul A.H. Din, 2025). In the past decade, Korean dramas (K-Dramas) have gained increasing popularity in Indonesia. The presence of K-Dramas within the Islamic boarding school environment has influenced female students at Pondok Pesantren Nawwir Qulubana Wonosobo, as they become captivated by the attractive appearance of actors and actresses, as well as the appealing presentation of Korean culture easily accessed through digital media (Mudlofar, 2022). The Korean Wave phenomenon, known as *Hallyu*, through Korean drama content or K-dramas, has spread widely and become a popular culture trend highly favored among Indonesian youth. Korean



dramas, as part of the global pop culture movement, have been shown to influence the behavior of Indonesian teenagers in various aspects, including fashion styles and daily lifestyle patterns.

Communication is an important activity in daily life, whether directly or through other means. The way people communicate can vary, depending on the individual, culture, ethnicity, or religion they adhere to. These variations can be minor or major. Additionally, the way people communicate can also change along with environmental influences and habits they experience. An example is the Korean Wave fan community, which first became acquainted with this phenomenon through various media channels (Wahyuni et al., 2022).

Pondok Pesantren Nawwir Qulubana in Wonosobo represents a real example of the meeting of two different cultures: pesantren values that emphasize simplicity, courtesy, and discipline, meet with Korean drama communication styles that are expressive, emotional, and follow current trends. Changes in communication methods, such as word choice, tone of voice, to ways of expressing feelings, become an interesting phenomenon rarely discussed in cross-cultural communication studies. The uniqueness of this research lies in the changes in communication styles of female students at Pondok Pesantren Nawwir Qulubana by negotiating Korean popular culture with pesantren culture. Easy internet access and numerous streaming platforms have made these shows part of daily entertainment, even in religious-based educational environments. This phenomenon creates new changes, especially since pesantren are known as educational institutions that teach values of politeness and etiquette in communication according to Islamic teachings. This research shows that watching Korean dramas influences the communication styles of teenagers, evident from their actions and behaviors carried over into daily life (Ramadhan & Hadi, 2022)

Therefore, this research aims to provide understanding regarding the meeting of popular culture and pesantren culture and explain students' ability to negotiate popular culture and pesantren culture. This research is important because it illustrates how foreign culture, especially Korean popular culture, does not always have negative impacts, but can actually become a learning space for female students to adapt and adopt positive values aligned with Islamic teachings and pesantren traditions.

## **2. METHODS**

The research method used in this study is qualitative. According to Muthiara Ramadhani, Wahyu Utamidewi, and Flori Mardiani Lubis (2024), a qualitative method with a phenomenological approach is applied to understand the communication experiences of female

students at Pondok Pesantren Nawwir Qulubana Wonosobo in relation to watching Korean dramas. This approach is used to explore the subjective meanings experienced by individuals within this context. This study aims to obtain an in-depth understanding of the communication experiences of female students at Pondok Pesantren Nawwir Qulubana Wonosobo while watching Korean dramas, and to examine how these experiences influence their communication styles and social interactions (Ramadhani et al., 2023).

The subjects of this research are female students of Pondok Pesantren Nawwir Qulubana Wonosobo who actively watch Korean dramas. The selection of participants was conducted using purposive sampling, which involves choosing informants based on specific criteria considered capable of providing relevant data. Several techniques used in this study include: in-depth interviews and observation.

### **3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **Changes in Communication Styles of Female Students at Pondok Pesantren Nawwir Qulubana Due to Watching Korean Dramas**

Pondok Pesantren Nawwir Qulubana is a non-formal educational institution that is a branch of Pondok Pesantren Tahfidzul Qur'an Al-Asy'ariyyah located in Kalibeban Village, Mojotengah District, Wonosobo Regency. Geographically, this pesantren is located in Kemiri Hamlet, Sukorejo Village, Mojotengah District, Wonosobo Regency. Pesantren now face challenges in maintaining local traditions and culture, while adapting to digital world advances. To address these challenges, several reforms have begun to be implemented, such as integration of general curriculum, use of digital technology in the learning process, development of economic independence, and increased contribution to community service. Through these efforts, pesantren have the opportunity to remain important in the global era, as long as changes are made carefully and do not neglect pesantren values and identity (Qotrunada et al., 2025). Advances in information technology due to globalization have facilitated the spread of Hallyu Wave, namely the expansion of Korean culture to various countries, including Indonesia. The existing culture includes K-Drama, K-Pop, fashion, language, and food, which mutually reinforce one another. The presence of mass media, whether electronic, print, or internet, increasingly facilitates society in accessing and enjoying Korean cultural products (Amiliya, 2022). Female students at Pondok Pesantren Nawwir Qulubana experience quite clear changes in communication style after being exposed to Korean culture through dramas, K-pop, and social media. The communication style of female

students at Pondok Pesantren Nawwir Qulubana emerges from an environment based on religious values, etiquette, and strict communication ethics. Interactions among students, ustadz, and kyai are based on etiquette, politeness, and authority structure in knowledge. This relationship not only shapes organized communication patterns, but also strengthens spiritual values and discipline (Martha et al., 2025). Communication from ustadz to students generally shows patterns of advising, directing, or giving instructions. Ustadz have more freedom in speaking due to their dominant position and higher position in the pesantren social hierarchy. Conversely, communication from students to ustadz always begins and ends with greetings as a form of respect, while ustadz respond by providing directions or assignments. Thus, social status factors are the most determining aspect of communication patterns between students and ustadz. This difference in position shapes the character of interaction that tends to be one-way, full of respect, and oriented toward coaching functions (M. Riza Azizi, 2023).

In the "*Me*" component, this is the reflective side formed from internalizing the attitudes of others (Halik, 2024). A student explained that when discussing Korean dramas, she tends to be more restrained and speak with a softer intonation. According to her, this is done to conform to politeness norms in the pesantren environment, so spontaneous expressions that usually emerge become more controlled. One student also expressed that although she likes using Korean terms in light conversation, she will immediately return to the pesantren's formal communication style when speaking with ustadzah or during formal activities. She realizes that using mixed language is not always appropriate in the pesantren context. The aspect of self formed from environmental values and rules, female students at Pondok Pesantren Nawwir Qulubana explain that previously they communicated with typical pesantren style that prioritizes politeness, gentle language, and modest attitude. However, several students said after intensely watching Korean dramas, they began incorporating Korean vocabulary and expressions into daily communication. Words like "*ani*", "*ne*", "*eonni*", "*gomawo*", "*kamsahamnida*", to "*omo*" are now often heard in their conversations. These expressions are considered interesting, easy to pronounce, and make interactions more lively. Additionally, using Korean language becomes a sign of closeness with friends who have similar interests. In the "*I*" aspect, this is the spontaneous and creative aspect of self that allows one to act outside social expectations (Halik, 2024). Namely spontaneous responses that emerge from individuals, female students at Pondok Pesantren Nawwir Qulubana describe that they often show Korean communication behaviors unconsciously. When surprised, they reflexively say "*omo*" or "*jinja*". When encouraging friends, the word "*hwaiting!*" comes out naturally. Even some students imitate funny expressions (aegyo, otokke) or follow speech

intonations they see in dramas. Several students conveyed that their communication style experienced small changes after frequently watching Korean dramas. One informant said that she sometimes unconsciously imitates funny gestures from Korean dramas, for example when refusing something she spontaneously waves slightly while saying "aniyaa~". She explained that this movement emerges reflexively because of frequently seeing similar scenes in the shows.

The communication style of female students at Pondok Pesantren Nawwir Qulubana basically remains within the corridor of pesantren norms and etiquette, especially regarding politeness, courteous speech, and respect for fellow students and ustadz. However, there are small changes in the diction aspects used by students in daily conversations. These changes emerge not in the form of etiquette violations, but in the selection of light words they adopt from shows like Korean dramas and then use in casual interactions among friends. A student conveyed that she sometimes uses Korean terms like "aniyya" or "omo" when joking with close friends. However, she emphasized that using these terms is only for entertainment, and she still ensures the main greetings used in daily pesantren life are polite greetings according to pesantren culture. The use of Korean vocabulary as a form of communication style among female students at Pondok Pesantren Nawwir Qulubana Generation Z depends on viewing characteristics of each individual; the more they have *heavy viewers* and *moderate viewers* characteristics, the interest in using Korean vocabulary as a communication style has very high interest (Redhita et al., 2023). Besides changes in language, female students at Pondok Pesantren Nawwir Qulubana also experience small changes in ways of expressing themselves, especially in daily interactions in rooms or dormitory environments. Several informants said that they sometimes follow the intonation of Korean drama characters that sounds softer or lengthens the tone at the end of sentences when joking. These changes emerge spontaneously and are mostly used to break the ice and show closeness with peers.

### **Negotiation of Korean-Style Communication Among Female Students at Pondok Pesantren Nawwir Qulubana**

In Herbert Blumer's symbolic interactionism theory, it is explained that Mind functions not only to produce responses within individuals, but also to give birth to responses that develop in their social environment. This means the thinking process of a person is sensitive and adapts to the values and dynamics of the society where they are located (Nuzulah & Listyani, 2023). At this stage, the mind is used as a filter. Female students at Pondok Pesantren Nawwir Qulubana process Korean symbols such as intonation, expressions, words, or gestures then they determine whether the symbols they use are appropriate to use in the pesantren environment, or must be withheld

because they do not conform to existing norms at the pesantren. Students have certain considerations before using Korean-style communication. This is shown by statements from several informants who said that of course the use of Korean vocabulary they understand does not come out in front of ustadzah or in formal assemblies. They use Korean vocabulary only when they are with roommates or in informal places because they still consider the values of politeness and norms that exist in the pesantren. This consideration shows that female students at Pondok Pesantren Nawwir Qulubana do not directly imitate Korean culture, but through a process of selection and adjustment. They can distinguish between aspects that are merely ways of socializing and those that have the possibility of causing misunderstandings in the pesantren environment. This attitude shows their caution in maintaining communication norms to remain aligned with Islamic principles and pesantren traditions. This is very crucial because life in pesantren cannot be separated from social interactions among its inhabitants, manifested through individual and group interactions (Fitri, 2021). This shows that students have strong reflective awareness; they are able to adapt global trends without losing the Islamic identity inherent in them as students (Rachmah et al., 2023).

In communication there is a process of transferring symbols, ideas, or thoughts involving others (Nikmatul Mauludiah et al., 2024). Negotiation is a social process that occurs when one party cannot achieve its goals without cooperating with another party. Negotiation has various goals to be achieved. Negotiation goals can be achieved with appropriate strategies (Azizah, 2022). Negotiation here means bringing together new values coming from Korean cultural influence with traditional values existing in pesantren. This means female students at Pondok Pesantren Nawwir Qulubana have the ability to absorb words from Korean culture but do not conflict with pesantren culture such as female students at Pondok Pesantren Nawwir Qulubana adopting gentle and polite speaking styles like Koreans, but still adjusted to the language and etiquette in pesantren. For example, they speak gently, do not shout, and call friends in polite ways, but still do not deviate from existing rules and norms in the pesantren. The use of Korean terms among students continues, but still complies with applicable rules and norms in the pesantren. Students also continue to maintain modesty in dress despite being influenced by Korean idol styles, and emulate positive values such as discipline and manners. They really like Korean dramas and sometimes use Korean language when talking with friends, but still choose carefully. Students acknowledge that some values from Korean shows can be adopted, such as respect for elders, mutual help, and living a disciplined life. This shows that students play an active role in understanding and adapting Korean culture, absorbing its positive aspects without neglecting Islamic identity and pesantren values.

Thus, Korean popular culture does not replace pesantren values, but rather offers alternatives for students to express themselves better in interacting with others, remaining religious and orderly. However, because female students are the group most vulnerable to popular culture influences, they need defense building (filterization) through a culture filtering process. This filtering includes strengthening ethics, norms, traditions, and morals based on Islamic values (Mudlofar, 2022)

Culture in society is related to language, such as ways of speaking and certain characteristics usually associated with certain social groups. These groups usually follow their status (Zzahra & Hamandia, 2025). Several female students at Pondok Pesantren Nawwir Qulubana expressed that they live based on the principles of akhlakul karimah, manners, and restrictions on interactions with the opposite sex. They acknowledge that they use some Korean words in daily conversations after watching Korean dramas, but do not directly imitate them. As students and university students, they still filter the shows and only take aspects considered positive and in accordance with applicable norms in the pesantren. This selection process takes place consciously and also automatically because they are accustomed to living in an environment that values language norms. A student expressed that she does not imitate all Korean vocabulary, but only adopts gentle speaking styles to use in communicating with her friends. These behavioral changes can provide positive impacts. The positive impacts are students become more confident in speaking, easier to talk with others, and able to express feelings in ways that remain polite according to pesantren etiquette (Divya, 2024). From these results it can be understood that Korean communication is used as a social reference by some female students at Pondok Pesantren Nawwir Qulubana but does not deviate from existing rules in the pesantren. The breadth of interactionism methods lies not only in the field of sociology, but can also be applied in various aspects of life, including analyzing how someone reacts to popular culture. Symbolic interactionism provides understanding of how individuals strengthen communication both through words and in conditions where verbal communication is not possible through the process of creating meaning toward certain symbols (Bijaksana, 2025)

Islamic boarding schools are distinctive educational institutions, not only because of their very old age, but also because of the culture, methods, and networks applied by these institutions. Besides that, Islamic boarding schools are also an authentic educational system in Indonesia. Pesantren characteristics are very different from educational practices in other educational institutions, so various dynamics and problems that arise also show unique and interesting characteristics (Tarbawi & Al, n.d.). In the digital era, these characteristics intersect with the

behavior of Generation Z, who increasingly consume religious messages through digital media. Therefore, understanding how they engage with digital da'wah is essential for developing effective religious communication strategies. Integrating visual, emotional, and contextual content aligned with their digital preferences is crucial to ensure that religious messages remain relevant and meaningful in the pesantren environment (Muhammad Fikri 'Ainun Najib & Miftakhul Rohman, 2025). Although pesantren are often associated with Arabic language use, religious activities of students are not limited to Arab culture or language. Universal Islamic values allow integration with other cultures, as long as they do not conflict with Islamic teachings. At Pondok Pesantren Nawwir Qulubana, this can be seen from the attitudes of female students who are open but still selective in accepting Korean cultural influences. Female students at Pondok Pesantren Nawwir Qulubana do not reject popular culture, but select and adopt positive aspects aligned with pesantren values. They integrate values such as politeness, discipline, and work spirit from Korean culture they see in Korean Dramas, while still maintaining Islamic principles. This illustrates careful, flexible cultural negotiation that still adheres to religious values. In practice, this form of cultural negotiation is clearly visible through direct communication patterns occurring in daily routines, whether between caregivers and students, administrators and students, or among fellow students. Face-to-face communication allows values they adopt from Korean popular culture to be filtered and applied appropriately according to context. Thus, cultural negotiation occurs not only at the meaning level, but also in daily communication practices that continuously shape student character and identity (Fitri, 2021).

Overall, the dynamics of cultural negotiation at Pondok Pesantren Nawwir Qulubana show that the process of accepting Korean culture does not occur unilaterally, but is a filtering practice conducted with full awareness and responsibility by students. They can make popular culture a learning tool, not a danger to pesantren values. With the ability to choose, understand, and apply foreign cultural elements in a balanced way, students successfully achieve harmony between acceptance of change and loyalty to Islamic principles. This statement shows that pesantren culture has adaptive characteristics, is dynamic, and capable of developing without neglecting its original identity. The cultural negotiation conducted not only adds to students' insights, but also strengthens their personalities as a moderate, critical generation ready to face global cultural challenges.

**Social Environment and Korean Language Adoption by Female Students at Pondok Pesantren Nawwir Qulubana**



The entry of Korean culture into the student community is greatly influenced by the popularity of K-drama, and various Korean-nuanced social media content. In this context, the development of Korean drama culture that has attempted to infiltrate the lifestyle of female teenagers, especially female students at Pondok Pesantren Nawwir Qulubana, turns out to have impacts that not only affect themselves, but also influence others and the surrounding environment (Mudlofar, 2022). Exposure to Korean culture through Korean dramas and social media also contributes to creating new ways of interacting among female students at Pondok Pesantren Nawwir Qulubana. In symbolic interaction theory, the concept of society explains that social meaning is formed in two spheres: small communities and large communities (Pribadi & Herdiana, 2023). Some people perceive communication merely as a simple conversation that everyone naturally engages in. However, in reality, communication holds a strategic role in influencing others. A person with good communication skills can direct or persuade others to act according to their intention, while someone with ineffective communication skills is often ignored or not taken seriously (Wati & Zahroh, 2025). This dynamic can be seen in the interaction patterns among students at Pondok Pesantren Nawwir Qulubana. The communication methods they practice aim to create comfort in interaction while still adhering to the established norms of politeness and ethics within the pesantren. Speaking ethics not only ensure clarity of messages but also strengthen emotional bonds among individuals by fostering more intimate and mutually respectful communication. However, the application of communication styles also goes through a negotiation process. Within small peer groups, new linguistic expressions such as Korean terms adopted from popular culture may be used to strengthen social closeness and group identity. Yet, in the broader pesantren environment bound by stricter politeness norms, these expressions are rarely used, as they may be perceived as inappropriate. Thus, the use of Korean terms undergoes meaning reconstruction through interaction in smaller social structures, while still being filtered to ensure alignment with the values and norms upheld within the wider pesantren community.

This phenomenon illustrates the trend of Korean language use among students, similar to the habits of Korean girlband fans who imitate their idols' communication methods by mixing Korean and English. In pesantren, when a number of students begin using Korean words, this habit quickly spreads due to the communal atmosphere. Initially only used by Korean drama fans, but then develops into an element of informal communication methods in casual interactions among students (Divya, 2024). The use of Korean vocabulary was initially only done by a number of students who like Korean dramas, but because of the pesantren atmosphere that is communal and intensive in interacting, this habit quickly spreads. A student explained that when several people

started saying the word "omo," other rooms imitated it because it sounded funny and its meaning was already understood. Finally, this Korean vocabulary was accepted as an element of casual communication among students, showing that the pesantren atmosphere contributes to behavioral uniformity, including in language selection when interacting. A student also conveyed that even though she only knows about and doesn't really like Korean dramas, she admits to being influenced by their way of using Korean vocabulary as language used in interacting with fellow students. Based on Gerungan's statement quoted by Susi Kurniawati and Rhesa Zuhriya Briyan Pratiwi 2021, there are three types of imitation, namely ways of speaking, ways of dressing, and ways of expressing oneself. Currently, these actions often occur among students, for example by incorporating Korean language into daily conversations (Kurniawati & Pratiwi, 2021)

Korean dramas often convey good values such as friendship, family, loyalty, hard work, and ways to face various challenges in life. This allows female students to not only imitate vocabulary used, but also understand positive messages contained therein. Social issues such as bullying, academic pressure, and gender equality presented in dramas provide new understanding for students, which subsequently strengthens the reasons why greetings or expressions in Korean among them feel warmer, more familiar, and meaningful (Ramadhani et al., 2023). The use of Korean terms functions as a kind of code initially only used and understood by certain friendship groups, but over time those who do not understand or like Korean dramas can actually keep up, even making it a funny language thus creating a sense of togetherness and deeper emotional bonds. In the scope of small society, such as roommate groups, friend groups, or friends with similar interests, Korean terms are used as signs of closeness. In these groups, expressions like omo and aigoo are not only considered entertaining, but also become expressions understood together due to shared experiences in enjoying Korean culture. Close relationships in this micro context make Korean terms have new meanings as symbols of closeness and humor among students (Pribadi & Herdiana, 2023). The rationale or assumption of symbolic interactionism theory is that interaction occurs among various ideas and meanings that shape community identity. In interaction, individuals (self) and society as actors on both sides cannot be separated, mutually influencing and mutually determining one another. Individual actions are results of stimuli originating from within oneself and the external environment, as well as social interactions between self and society (Dr. Bresca Merina S. IP. & Dr Muhaimin, 2024)

Consuming popular culture excessively and without critical attitude can cause adverse impacts. Thus, what is needed is not isolation or excessive protection, but accompaniment,

dialogue, and increasing critical literacy (Kencana, 2023). The phenomenon of Korean vocabulary usage at Pondok Pesantren Nawwir Qulubana demonstrates that students today are able to balance their identity as santri with their identity as teenagers exposed to global culture. In this process, those involved use intrapersonal communication to reconstruct their ideal self-image based on the cultural context they consume. This self-image is then tested and strengthened through interpersonal communication within their peer communities in the pesantren, as well as through public communication via digital media as a form of social validation (Ardiansyah et al., 2025). The communal nature of the pesantren environment accelerates the dissemination and construction of symbolic meanings through intensive interaction among students. This indicates that the santri possess the ability to filter and determine which values are acceptable and which are incompatible with pesantren norms. Therefore, what they need is not complete restriction, but rather guidance, space for dialogue, and trust-based support from the community so that this cultural adaptation process remains aligned with pesantren values. Students believe that foreign language skills provide many opportunities, including improved global understanding, expanded knowledge, and opportunities to work abroad. They also believe that mastering foreign languages can help students obtain scholarships, both domestically and abroad (Zainollah & Ali, 2021). This shows that identity and culture are always shaped through continuous interactions and influenced by various existing social contexts.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

This research shows that female students at Pondok Pesantren Nawwir Qulubana experience changes in their communication styles after watching Korean dramas. This can be seen from the use of Korean vocabulary such as "omo", "ne", "eonni", and "gomawo" in daily interactions. These changes occur in two dimensions: the "Me" dimension that is reflective, where students still restrain themselves and adjust Korean language use to formal pesantren contexts, and the "I" dimension that is spontaneous, where students quickly use Korean expressions in informal situations. Although there are shifts in word choices and speaking tones, students' communication methods still follow pesantren norms and etiquette, especially in aspects of politeness and respect toward ustadz and fellow students.

The cultural negotiation process conducted by female students shows their skills in selecting and adapting Korean popular culture without sacrificing pesantren values. Students use their minds as filters to choose Korean symbols appropriate for use based on certain contexts, such as only using Korean vocabulary in informal situations with peers and avoiding it when interacting

with ustadzah or in formal activities. This negotiation shows that students do not arbitrarily imitate Korean culture, but select positive values such as politeness, discipline, and gentle speaking styles, then combine them with Islamic principles and pesantren traditions. This shows that Korean popular culture does not eliminate pesantren values, but becomes a learning tool for better self-expression.

The pesantren social environment with communal and intensive characteristics contributes significantly to the spread of Korean language use among female students. Korean vocabulary initially only used by Korean drama fans quickly spreads due to the pesantren atmosphere that encourages behavioral uniformity and close interactions among students. In small community environments such as roommate groups, Korean terms serve as signs of intimacy and symbols of unity that strengthen emotional relationships. However, in larger and more formal social environments in the pesantren, students still regulate the use of these words to conform to existing politeness norms and ethics. This phenomenon shows that students have critical reading and understanding abilities in choosing good global cultural values and those that are inappropriate, so what is needed is support and trust from the pesantren community, not isolation or excessive protection.

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