

# Reading Filipino Remakes: Glocalization of Popular Culture in Filipino Remakes of ‘Koreanovelas’

JANINE ABERIN

PATRICIA LUISA DEALCA

BENJAMIN GEORGE MEAMO III

ELLAINEMOR SAN PASCUAL

TAMARA JANE VENTANILLA

*University of the Philippines Baguio*

## ABSTRACT

Since the introduction of television in the Philippines, the broadcast industry has broadcasted both international and local programs on a regular basis. With the popularity and hype of Koreanovelas at the turn of the 21st century, the trends of the TV shows, the content of the drama series, and the storyline are changing. The rising popularity of these Korean drama series prompted local TV channels to create remakes or adaptations. Taking this into consideration, this article investigates the creation processes of Filipino remakes, the elements of Filipino culture that were integrated, the motives of the television stations to produce glocalized content, and the prevalence of glocalization through the Filipino remake content. A semiotic framework is employed to explore how the glocalization of popular culture unfolds as a result of the collaboration between the South Korean and Philippine entertainment broadcast sectors. The study reveals how an ecosystem created by these countries fosters the development of a popular culture that is no longer restricted to a specific culture in any region but rather to a global community of consumers and producers.

**Keywords:** Filipino drama, globalization, Koreanovela, remakes, telenovela

## THE BEGINNING OF *ASIANOVELAS*

The broadcast media industry is one of the most dynamic businesses and categories of mediated communication that showcases various cultures worldwide. The industry offers multimedia content distributed either via analog signals or digital transmission to receivers such as radio and television sets. Before transmission to receiving sets, broadcast stations are focused on research, programming, actual production, and sales and marketing. As integral parts of these broadcasting services, programming and production aim to target the general public through well-researched and creative content. Through this, broadcast network stations employ creative pools of people to produce content, from news and current affairs, entertainment, politics, health and fitness, to sports, among others. One of the services that broadcast stations provide to efficiently reach their target audience is the airing of canned, subtitled, or dubbed imported programs.

The Philippine broadcast media industry is characterized by a variety of distinct flavors of locally and internationally produced content. Since the 1950s, when television debuted in the Philippines, canned shows and programs from American television networks were among the earliest types of content watched by Filipinos. Some of these were *I Love Lucy*, featuring Desi Arnaz and Lucille Ball, and *Candid Camera*, which spawned local series like *Wow Mali!* and *Highway Patrol*, a police adventure show starring Broderick Crawford (Del Mundo 2003, 6-7). Without a doubt, Filipinos were so taken with the comedic plots of American television series that they adopted their format and produced their own television series.

This includes Mexican Telenovelas – or *Mexicanovelas*, as they are more commonly known – which made their breakthrough on the Philippine broadcast landscape in the 1990s. Local networks such as RPN-9 obtained the rights to broadcast *Marimar*, which features Latina actress Thalia. The drama series was dubbed into Filipino, and “the telenovela became a massive success” among the larger audience (Del Mundo 2003, 30). This can be attributed to the complex character development and dramatic drama which enthralled Filipino audiences’ hearts. Due to their popularity on local television, *Mexicanovelas* have become a staple in the majority of Filipino families around the country.

The popularity of Mexican telenovelas also demonstrates how local television stations were able to maximize viewership by exploiting the foreign programs. Janet Hope Camilo Tauro states in an article for the National Commission for Culture and the Arts:

It is important to note, however, that aside from linguistic, politico-colonial, and sociopolitical factors, the production aspects have also contributed to the success of telenovelas. Dubbed telenovelas and anime proliferate because they generate a great deal of revenue but do not cost much to produce. Translators, some of whom

are also dubbers, are not trained, and are therefore paid cheaply. TV networks prefer to spend more on promoting the telenovelas than on exerting efforts to improve the quality of the translation and dubbing of these shows (2003).

This is evident in the number of dubbed Mexican *telenovelas* that have been aired throughout the years.

Filipinos have consistently ranked imported media content as one of their major interests when it comes to what they would like to watch on their television screens at home. At the beginning of the 21st century, a new surge of broadcast media content has risen, displacing the Mexican telenovelas as the dominant force. Originated in Asian nations such as Taiwan and South Korea, the Asian *telenovelas*, also known as *Asianovelas*, quickly gained popularity among Filipino viewers, earning them the accolade of being the most viewed television programs in the country.

The Asian telenovela wave began with *Meteor Garden*, a 2001 Taiwanese coming-of-age series starring Jerry Yan and Barbie Hsu. It premiered in May 2003 on ABS-CBN Network's daily trimmed programming schedule. At its peak, the show received 63.8% of all recorded viewership (Starmometer, 2008), and its merchandise sales skyrocketed across the country as well. The popularity of the series opened the door for broadcast networks, including ABS-CBN and GMA Network, Inc., to secure further rights and licenses for the distribution and airing of international broadcast programs from other Asian television networks.

Following the phenomenal success of ABS-CBN's *Meteor Garden*, another leading broadcasting company, GMA Network Inc., secured the rights to a South Korean drama series called *Endless Love: Autumn in My Heart* in 2003, which was also a hit among Filipinos. Next, GMA broadcasted the series *Full House*, featuring Rain and actress Song Hye-kyo. Similar to its previous imported TV series, *Full House* drew a sizable audience, but with its biggest audience ever recorded, surpassed 50 percent. (Anarcon, 2020). *Full House* brought back the wave of South Korean drama series following the success of the broadcast of *Endless Love: Autumn in My Heart*, which established itself as the most popular television series ever aired and distributed.

Koreanovelas, as they are referred to in South Korea, have been infiltrating the two major television stations' primetime day-parting schedule in the Philippines for more than a year by the end of 2010. The *Korea Times* (2014) posted an article written by Jonathan Hicap in which he stated that "top Korean drama series like *Lovers in Paris*, *Full House*, *My Name is Sam Soon*, *Stairway to Heaven*, and *Coffee Prince* were imported and dubbed in Filipino, (which) instantly became (coming) hits," granting them a time slot exclusively reserved for them. The primary reason that these South Korean drama series are dubbed in Filipino language is to ensure that their fans and other viewers understand the plotline on a profound level. Furthermore, the formula of mainstream media content from South Korea is deeply

rooted around familial ties, stories of hope, encouragement, and rewards of sacrificial love, and this makes it easier for Filipinos to empathize with the narratives. As a response to the enthusiasm and value reinforcement, local broadcast companies drew inspiration to embark on a more challenging move: the adaptation and remake of top-rated Korean television drama series. The impact of this Korean television series wave has resulted in the emergence of Korean popular culture mostly on the local entertainment scene, and the influence of Korean popular culture has eventually shaped the trend of local popular culture in the Philippines.

## **GLOBAL FAME AND CONSUMPTION OF KOREAN DRAMA**

The rapid growth of the Internet and the advancement of new video-sharing technology make it no surprise that the popularity of South Korean dramas has continued to rise in recent years. Earlier, the majority of the fans of Korean popular culture, particularly Korean dramas, used to rely on their local broadcast stations to watch dubbed versions of the Korean dramas and to purchase CDs or DVDs in order to enjoy their favorites (Jin 2020). Following the advent of the Internet and Web 2.0, fan-based video-on-demand services (SVOD) such as mysoju.tv, DramaCrazy.net, and allkpop.com (Ju 2020) have garnered popularity among K-drama fans as the most reliable sources for downloading and watching their favorite Korean series. Yet, not all Korean dramas are available on these websites and some Korean series take a longer time to be uploaded, especially those with English subtitles. These days, with the advancement of digital platforms and subscription video-on-demand services like Netflix and Viu, watching any Korean drama has become rather convenient. With over 35 percent of the market share, Netflix has become the most popular streaming service widely accessible in the Philippines. It is then followed by Prime Video at 16 percent and iFlix at 15 percent (Chua 2021).

A wide range of Korean dramas from diverse genres, ranging from romantic comedy to action and horror, are now readily available on digital platforms, making it easy for K-drama fans to choose their favorites. This underlines the fact that South Korean dramas are no longer confined to be broadcasted merely in certain locations but are now broadly available digitally to audiences that subscribe to video streaming services. These digital platforms have significantly altered the process by which media content is consumed and they have “fundamentally modified the circulation of local cultural content to reach a broader audience” (Jin 2020). Korean dramas such as *The King: Eternal Monarch*, *Kingdom Season 2*, *Start Up*, *Record of Youth*, and *It’s Okay to Not Be Okay* are among the most-watched Korean drama series in 2020 (Nitura 2020). This is demonstrated by the fact that these shows have been widely and consistently discussed, particularly on social media news feeds. The growing demand for SVOD platforms and social media feeds dedicated to South Korean dramas is undoubtedly helping them in their efforts to gain popularity among Filipino fans. This is similar to how Mexican novelas became a

staple part of Filipinos' daily lives in the early 2000s. For this reason, Korean dramas have become the most favorite pastime among the majority of Filipinos today.

With this ever-growing popularity, it is clear that South Korea is one of the few countries committed to becoming the world's leading exporter of popular culture (Roll 2020). Additionally, the *Hallyu* effect has been enormous, with the Korean economy benefiting by USD 12.3 billion in 2019 (Roll 2020). More than that, Korean popular culture items are readily accessible for purchase, much in the same way as K-Pop and K-Dramas have established themselves as a reliable topic of conversation among individuals on social media from all over the world. Most local broadcast and production companies have also resorted to acquiring the rights to the most popular series and producing an adaptation or local version featuring local actors and storylines that are fitted to the local perspective, as the series' popularity continues to grow.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The popularity of Korean novels prompted the researchers to explore Korean drama and television series with Filipino-adapted content. The researchers picked four specific Korean television series that were localized by Filipino broadcast companies featuring Philippine's local cast and crew. The selected TV series used for this research include *My Girl*, *49 Days (Pure Love)*, *Full House*, and *My Name is Kim Sam Soon*.

The research aims to answer the following questions: 1.) What are the changes and enhancements made to the Filipino remakes of the aforementioned drama series? 2.) What attempts were made by local television network stations to integrate Filipino culture into the reboots without completely losing its identity? 3.) Why does the Philippine broadcast media industry remake Korean television dramas? 4.) How is popular culture globalized through Filipino spinoffs of popular Korean drama series?

These inquiries are necessary to extrapolate pieces of evidence that would help in evaluating the following objectives, namely 1.) to exemplify how Philippine broadcast companies incorporate various aspects of Filipino culture into the remakes of Korean television series; 2.) to analyze any changes made to the stories or elements in the remakes when situated within the Philippine cultural context; 3) to assess the explanation for the production of remakes within the Philippine broadcast media industry; and 4) to evaluate the globalization of popular culture through Filipino spin-offs of popular Korean television programs.

## RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

### Denotation and Connotation

Semiotics is the “study of the social production of meaning from sign systems; the analysis of anything that can stand for something else” (Griffin 2006, 327). In particular, Roland Barthes emphasizes how denotation and connotation are created based on the interpretation of an object’s visual representation and the meaning attached to it.

According to the 8<sup>th</sup> edition of Griffin’s (2012) monograph titled *A First Look at Communication*, there are two core principles in understanding Barthes’ theory. The first principle says that a sign is a combination of the signifier and the signified. The signifier is defined as the visual representation of a sign, while the signified is the underlying meaning associated with the signifier. The first principle means that neither the signifier nor the signified can stand alone to become the sign. The signifier and the signified must work together in bringing about the sign. The second principle of Barthes’ theory is that a sign “does not stand on its own,” but rather, that it is part of a system (Griffin 2006). Hence, following this principle, a single sign is connected to a system of signs to which it is associated.

Roland Barthes coined the terms “Denotation” and “Connotation” to illustrate the signification system of a sign that is used to explicate the meanings behind signs that could be found in everyday life (Griffin 2012, 336–337). Denotation, also known as the denotative sign system, is a descriptive sign that bears the literal meaning which can be traced to its etymology, physical attributes, and dictionary meaning (Griffin 2012, 336). On the other hand, the connotative sign system, commonly known as connotation, is a “mythic sign that has lost its historical referent” which bears an ideology (Griffin 2006, 332). These two are further elaborated through an understanding of the relationship between the signifier and the signified. For instance, Lacey (1998) explores the relationship between media content with representation as well as Roland Barthes’ germinal contribution in unmasking the underlying meanings in signs or elements of various texts. He stated that the signifier is not a sign of the signified. Instead, they work together in an inseparable bond to form a unified sign that can bear the literal meaning and the connotative meaning attached to an ideology (Griffin 2012).

Chandler states that “every text is a system of signs organized according to codes and subcodes which reflect certain values, attitudes, beliefs, assumptions, and practices” (2002, 157). It is asserted in this claim that semiotics play a role in decoding meanings and interpretations from signs and symbols found in a wide variety of texts and contents. It demonstrates how semiotics could be used as an effective lens for deciphering the meanings hidden behind parts of media content, whether it be literature, advertisement, or a television show. As a matter of fact, a sign is closely related to other signs to construct a system that allows people to perceive the underlying meanings of certain aspects

of culture. This is supported by Barthes' study which discovered that all semiotic systems work in the same way, based on the multiple systems of symbols in diverse cultural aspects such as Japanese gift-giving and French gastronomy, among others (Griffin 2012).

The concepts of denotation and connotation were used to critically read the signs present on both the original South Korean drama and its Filipino counterpart versions. The connotative meanings were fleshed out in terms of how they relate to socio-cultural aspects of some Filipino traditions, cultural practices, values, and norms.

### **Glocalization**

Roland Robertson et al. refer to glocalization as both a global and local phenomenon. He states that this term stems from the Japanese business strategy for "global localization" (1995, 29) in order to reach a wider market. He also argues that globalization assists in conceiving "global interdependence and consciousness of the global whole in the twentieth century" (1998, 8) that occurs through glocalization. The concern sparked questions on how glocalization continues to exist when cultural diversity becomes an institutionalized feature of a globally active community. Thus, local television networks produce and air globally available foreign content in order to appeal to their local target audience. This contextualizes a new set of popular culture that is shared not just within a single country but within a global community as well.

This research is guided by both Roland Robertson and Jeconiah Dreisbach's definition of glocalization in order to systematically flesh out the important points that lead to the analysis. According to Dreisbach (2018), glocalization is "a wordplay of the terms global and local that means the accommodation of foreign cultural sensibilities by local actors." Local popular culture becomes enmeshed with that of the global community which then makes changes in how people view and consume content. A change in attitude towards foreign content, specifically Korean drama content, is also manifested by how local actors and the production teams project the series in such a manner that is relevant, familiar, and comprehensive for the local audience to appreciate. Furthermore, the intent to produce remakes as a glocalized content occurs both as a business strategy and an accommodation of a foreign culture into local settings and actors.

In order to further deeply explore how local broadcast networks manage to glocalize globally popular Korean dramas, it is necessary to refer to Wayne Gabardi's arguments that Glocalization is marked by the:

development of diverse, overlapping fields of global-local linkages... [creating] a condition of globalized panlocality... what anthropologist Arjun Appadurai calls

deterritorialized, global spatial 'scapes' (ethnoscapes, technoscapes, finanscapes, mediascapes, and ideoscapes)... This condition of glocalization... represents a shift from a more territorialized learning process bound up with the nation-state society to one more fluid and translocal. Culture has become a much more mobile, human software employed to mix elements from diverse contexts. With cultural forms and practices more separate from geographic, institutional, and ascriptive embeddedness, we are witnessing what Jan Nederveen Pieterse refers to as postmodern 'hybridization.' (2000, 33-34).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study has looked at four Korean novels and their respective remakes in the Philippines and has analyzed the details that reflected the media content's similarities and differences. Characters, elements, and objects necessary in character development and its narrative, plots and storylines, major plot twists, nonverbal communication elements, and verbal nuances are among the elements investigated.

### *My Girl*

Korean	Filipino
Seol Gong Chan	Julian Abueva
Joo Yoo Rin	Jasmine Estocapio
Kim Sae Hyun	Anika Ramirez
Seo Jung Woo	Nico Legazpi

Table 1. The main characters of *My Girl*

Korean	Filipino
orange fruit	mango fruit
small villa	big villa
Korean costume (Yoo Rin)	Chinese costume (Jasmine)
tennis player (Sae Hyun)	beauty queen (Anika)
curly hair (Yoo Rin)	straight hair (Jasmine)
necklace (Sae Hyun's Key Necklace)	engagement ring
The death of Gong Chan's Parents occurs two years prior to the actual setting of the story.	The death of Julian's parents occurs when he is approximately 7-9 years old.



Sae Hyun's departure: She leaves Gong Chan without bidding goodbye.	Anika's departure: Julian knows that she has left.
Gong Chan's secretary notices the resemblance of Yoo Rin and his deceased aunt.	Julian notices the resemblance of Jasmine and his deceased aunt.
Gong Chan and Sae Hyun are careful when it comes to revealing their relationship; they had Yoo Rin disguised as Sae Hyun in order to confuse the reporters about Sae Hyun's whereabouts.	Anika is very vocal about her relationship with Julian; when she arrives at the Amana Resorts and Hotel, she kisses Julian in front of the reporters.
Gong Chan's aunt does not need a DNA test because she believes Gong Chan when he says that Yoo Rin is his long lost cousin.	Julian has to fake the DNA test in order for his aunt to believe and warm up to Jasmine.
Yoo Rin's birthday is celebrated every time it snows.	Jasmine's birthday is celebrated every time it rains.

**Table 2. Summary and comparison of elements, storyline highlights, and setting in *My Girl*.**

The narratives of the adaptation have been altered in a variety of ways, both minor and major. For instance, in the Filipino adaptation, the oranges plucked by Yoo Rin in the Korean version were substituted with mangoes. Given that mangoes are a widely harvested fruit in the Philippines, this is a more fitting component for *Filipinizing* the narrative.



**Figure 1. Promotional poster for *My Girl* in South Korea. Source: "My Girl." 2008.**



Figure 2. Promotional poster for *My Girl* in the Philippines. Source: "My Girl." n.d.

In the Filipino adaptation, Sae Hyun, or Anika, Julian's former girlfriend, is not a tennis player as she is characterized in the Korean series, but a beauty pageant queen. The possible explanation for this is that tennis is not as popular with Filipinos as beauty pageant contests. Filipinos place a higher value on beauty queens who compete in prominent international pageants. This is why Anika's character in the adaptation must be more appealing and relatable as an idol to a wider Filipino audience.

In the Korean version, Sae Hyun breaks up with Gong Chan abruptly, as she decides to pursue her career in professional tennis. Gong Chan's parents are also killed in a car collision, and his grandfather is terminally ill at the same time. This explains why Gong Chan behaves in such harsh ways against Sae Hyun after she returns to South Korea. Meanwhile, in the Filipino version, Julian's parents' death takes place when he was younger, and Anika bids farewell to him, as she prioritizes her passion for beauty pageant contests over her relationship with Julian.

Since Yoo Rin does not know the exact date of her birthday, together with her father, they assume that she was born during the winter, as she was said to be born when it snowed. Since snow and the winter season are both not applicable in the Philippines, it is replaced by rain, saying that Jasmine's birthday was on a rainy day.

Most of Jasmine's wardrobe is composed of clothes in red, green, yellow or orange colors (see Figure 2). The colors red and orange stand for energy, joy and happiness (Parker, n.d.). These qualities are also present in Jasmine's character. The color yellow represents happiness and joy and at the same time it

stands for food, which is something that Jasmine loves. Her qualities and characteristics are reflected in the clothes she wears throughout the Filipino remake series.

The opening billboard (OBB) of *My Girl* includes Luneta Park and a dirty ice cream cart filled with colorful *banderitas*. This gives the viewers a sense of familiarity, relation, and connection with the characters.

#### 49 Days / Pure Love

Korean	Filipino
Shin Ji Hyun	Diane Santos
Song Yi Kyung	Ysabel Espiritu / Danica Santos
Han Kang	Dave Martinez Jr.
Kang Min Ho	Raymond Dela Cruz / Ramon Esguerra
Shin In Jung	Kayla Santos
Scheduler / Song Yi Sung	Jake Espiritu

Table 3. The main characters of *49 Days* and the Filipino remake *Pure Love*.

Korean	Filipino
Title: <i>49 Days</i>	Title: <i>Pure Love</i>
Ji Hyun was given 49 days for her journey.	Diane was given 40 days for her journey.
The series started with Ji Hyun and Minho's engagement party, with her death established by the first episode.	Diane's character background was established first, opening the series with her surprise birthday party.
Yi Kyung's rose was dried and wilted.	Ysabel's rose was fresh.
The series ended with Yi Kyung dying a week after coming back to life, while her father got better and survived brain cancer.	The remake ended with Diane living after coming back to life while her father died because of his heart ailment.
Ji Hyun's bracelet is made out of metal/silver	Diane's bracelet is made out of beads
Ji Hyun's favorite food: Pasta without basil leaves and extra garlic	Diane's favorite food: Pasta without parsley
Young Yi Kyung was asked to stay in the bus station for their mother to find Ji Hyun	Ysabel was asked to stay put in the playground in order for their mother to find Diane.
Ji Hyun's version of doing magic involves mostly playing with cards, tissues, or bottle caps.	Diane's version of doing magic includes making coins or chocolate coins appear on the sides of a person's head.

Table 4. Summary of elements, storyline highlights, and settings of *49 Days* and *Pure Love*.

*49 Days* is a South Korean television drama series about Ji Hyun's quest to collect three tears of pure love from people other than her family within 49 days in order for her spirit to return to her body after being involved in a car collision. The series premiered on SBS on March 16, 2011 and ran for three weeks (asiae.co.kr 2011). *Pure Love* is the Philippine adaptation of the aforementioned series, which aired on ABS-CBN from July 7 to October 21, 2014 (Alarcon 2019).

Religion and belief played a part in the adaptation series between the South Korean original and the Philippine adaptation. According to the Korean Statistical Information Service (KOSIS), in 2015, Buddhism was one of the most widely observed religions in the country, with over seven million adherents. Buddhists in South Korea believed that the transitional phase between death and rebirth lasted 49 days (Holmes, 1997), which later inspired the title of the Korean television series, *49 Days*. Meanwhile, in the Philippines where the majority of the population is catholic, people believe that it takes 40 days for the souls of the deceased to ascend to heaven. Hence, in the Philippines version, the character Diane has 40 days for her quest.

Interestingly, the Philippine remake did not follow the pattern of the previous remakes of using the title of the original show. The remakes of *My Girl*, *My Name Is Kim Sam Soon*, and *Full House* in the Philippines all retained the original title. This particular series was titled *Pure Love*, which was adapted from the lead character's mission to collect three tears of pure love. This appealed more to the audience, leading the show to gain a nationwide average rating of 23.6% (ABS-CBN News, 2014).

Another difference between the original and the remake of the TV series is the establishment of the storyline in the pilot episode. In the South Korean version, the story is introduced in a linear manner by starting with the present, the engagement party of Ji Hyun, followed by her untimely 'death'. In the Filipino version, however, the setting is Diane's surprise birthday party where Raymond proposes to her, with scenes of Diane and her family getting along well. A plausible reason for this change can be that engagement parties are not a usual tradition for soon-to-be-married couples in the Philippines. Rather, the tradition of *pamamanhikan*, i.e. the formal invitation of the groom and his family to ask the bride's family for her hand in marriage, is the norm in the country (Leaño 2017).



Figure 3. A promotional material for the Korean original version of *49 Days*.

Source: Hotshotlover30. 2011.



Figure 4. A promotional material for *Pure Love*. Source: Villanueva 2014.

It is no surprise that Filipinos favor happy endings, as seen by the plots that most production companies present and utilize in their productions. And this could be proven by the plot most media companies portray and use in their shows. This might also be the cause of the significant plot change in the Filipino adaptation of *49 Days*. In the South Korean version, Ji Hyun dies a week after earning the three tears

of pure love she needed to live, and her father's condition improved after the brain surgery. Meanwhile, in the Filipino remake, Diane is able to live after forty days but her father dies of a heart condition. This is reflected by Dalisay (2002) who stated, "most popular love stories have happy endings, which sell well because they offer hope on fairy wings, even and especially for muddy-footed gnomes like us." This demonstrates that people perceive TV shows like this as forms of escapism from grim realities.

Next in line among the most prominent differences between the two series are the lead characters' roses. In the original version, Yi Kyung's rose is dry and withered, in contrast to Ysabel's rose, which is fresh and new. Song Yi Soo/Scheduler is said to have given the rose to Yi Kyung before he died. Because they are both orphans, Yi Kyung and Yi Soo see each other as family, something they have both been missed. Yi Kyung feels herself sinking when Yi Soo dies, because she has relied on him for emotional stability. The rose, it may be argued, is a metaphor for her, as it is alive but gradually fading away as the years pass. It can also be seen as foreshadowing Yi Kyung's death at the end of the series. This is in contrast with the remake, in which Diane's rose remains fresh, signifying that she is still alive at the end of the series.

These are just a few of the most obvious differences between the original and the remake version of the series *49 Days* and *Pure Love*. Some of the other differences between these two series are small in comparison and do not offer any substantial cultural change.

### **Full House**

<b>Korean</b>	<b>Filipino</b>
Lee Young Jae	Justin Lazatin
Han Ji Eun	Maria Jesusa 'Jessie' Asuncion
Kang Hye Won	Ellaine Villavicencio
Yoo Min Hyuk	Luigi Mondragon

**Table 5. The main characters of *Full House***

<b>Korean</b>	<b>Filipino</b>
Do Han: Ji Eun's best friend	Donald: Jessie's brother
Ji Eun: Trip to China	Jessie: Trip to Prague
Young Jae's family is only shown for quite some time in three of its episodes.	Justin has a close relationship with his grandmother
Young Jae and Ji Eun get married in a hotel.	Justin and Jessie are married in a Catholic church, the same place where Justin's grandparents and parents were married



Ji Eun: more on non-verbal communication (facial expressions, gestures)	Jessie: more on verbal communication
Ji Eun gets a divorce with Young Jae, then dates Min Hyuk.  Min Hyuk proposes to Ji Eun but she refuses.  Young Jae proposes to her as well but she merely says that she would consider it.	Jessie and Luigi are already engaged. Justin makes a speech at the awards ceremony about his love for Jessie; Jessie then ends her engagement with Luigi. Ellaine picks a fight with Jessie, pulls out a gun and shoots Justin. Justin is hospitalized and reconciles with Jessie.
Last Episode: Young Jae tells Ji Eun that he loves her and they kiss; a flashback of their story from the beginning is played.  The series ends with Young Jae and Ji Eun hugging each other outside the full house.	Last episode: Justin and Jessie get married and travel to Prague for their honeymoon.

**Table 6. Summary of the elements, storyline highlights, and setting in *Full House***

The remake of *Full House* incorporates much of the subject of family, because Filipinos value close family ties. In the Korean version, Do Han (Donald) is Ji Eun's only best friend, but in the adaptation, Donald portrays Jessie's younger brother to make it more believable that she entrusts her house to him when she leaves for Prague. In South Korea, even though family is highly valued, it is still important for Koreans to establish independence, especially when they become adults. It is also common for the oldest child to support the family (Sorenson, n.d.). The concept of close family ties is also shown in Justin's relationship with his grandmother who he calls *Mamita*.

Since the majority of the population in the Philippines are Catholic, most remakes incorporate Catholic beliefs into the plot (Miller, n.d.). In the Filipino version of *Full House*, Jessie and Justin are married at a Catholic church, while in the Korean drama they are married at a hotel.

Spectacle and exaggerated plot twists are also apparent in most Filipino drama series and the remake of *Full House* is not an exception to this. The brawl scenes with Ellaine, Justin, and Jessie demonstrate the lengths to which one may go for someone they love. In the case of Ellaine, she shoots Justin, which causes his injury and hospitalization.



Figure 5. Promotional poster for the original series, *Full House*. Source: Liu 2019.



Figure 6. A promotional poster material for the Filipino remake of *Full House*.  
Source: "The title card for Full House." 2018.



***My Name is Kim Sam Soon***

In the first episode of the original Korean version, Sam Soon is sobbing after a breakup. Meanwhile, in the Filipino remake version, Samsoon is sobbing because she is unemployed and has been turned down for a job at her dream restaurant. Adding to Samsoon's sufferings is the burning down of their bakery and the pawning of their house. The character of Sam Soon in the Filipino version has a more devastating scenario with that of her financial challenges and shunned goals. Samsoon's background appeals to Filipinos because his character is hopeful, resilient, and industrious.

<b>Korean</b>	<b>Filipino</b>
Kim Sam Soon	Kim Samsoon Buot
Hyun Jin Heon	Cyrus Ruiz
Yoo Hee Jin	Hannah Villanueva
Henry Kim	Harvey De Guzman

**Table 7. The main characters in the Korean drama series *My Name is Kim Sam Soon* and its Filipino remake, *Ako si Kim Samsoon*.**

<b>Korean</b>	<b>Filipino</b>
When Sam Soon goes to the men's restroom, she is crying over the break up.	When Samsoon goes to the men's restroom, she is crying because she did not get the job at the restaurant.
Sam Soon studied in Paris, France.	Samsoon attended a pastry workshop in Baguio City, Philippines.
The two cultures have the same and rather western-centric standard of beauty. Sam Soon is often compared to her sister who is perceived as more successful and more lively in character since she passes the Korean standard of beauty and is married.	

**Table 8. Summary of the elements, storyline highlights, and setting *My Name is Kim Sam Soon* and *Ako si Kim Samsoon*.**

In the original Korean version, Sam Soon is insecure and labels herself by those surrounding her. Perhaps, it is because Koreans usually associate their personality collectively. "People are not themselves," stated Zhang (1998). Zhang asserted in his *Korean Ideas and Values* that "they [people] must live with the community and have excellent connections with others. Everyone should learn to respect their fathers, rulers, and elders, as well as how to genuinely engage their friends." This is proven in one particular example, when Sam Soon from the Korean series finally realizes that she needs a partner or husband to somehow be socially accepted by society.

The filming of the set location has changed in the Korean version, with Sam Soon attending a pastry school in Paris, France (see Figure 8), while in the Filipino adaptation, Samsoon attends a pastry

workshop in Baguio City. Baguio City and Paris offer vibrant cultural spots and thriving art scenes. Korean students study in countries such as the United States or France, but Filipino students consider Baguio to be a place of leisure, escape from the hustle and bustle, and discovery of the arts and cultures of the Philippines. This is demonstrated by the city's number of art-related institutions, including notably Tam-awan Village and BenCab Museum. Moreover, UNESCO declared Baguio City a Creative City (Agoot 2017).

As established in the drama series, Sam Soon is not conventionally attractive in comparison to her sister, who is physically opposite and is shown to be more successful. According to Holliday and Elfving-Hwang (2012) in *Gender, Globalization and Aesthetic Surgery in South Korea*, Koreans view the Western physical traits as attractive: "The Korean is one of the world's tallest races. The Korean's posture is straight and tall due to better development of the physique and muscular structure ... the Korean resembles the well-proportioned stature of Europeans and Americans ..." Because physical fitness is equated with attractiveness, it is challenging for Sam Soon to find a companion and adapt to the social system and hierarchy.



Figure 7. Promotional poster material for *My Name is Kim Sam Soon*.

Source: "My Lovely Sam Soon." n.d.



Figure 8. Promotional poster material for the Filipino remake, *Ako si Kim Samsoon*. Source: Dimaculangan 2008.

Both the Filipino and South Korean conceptions and standards of beauty are heavily affected by Western colonialism. There is a social hierarchy that values people with lighter skin and sharper features (Rondilla 2012). In the Filipino version, Samson's sister is portrayed as the more favorable one.

### Motives for Recreating *Koreanovelas*

The fact that Koreanovelas have established themselves as a significant part of the country's popular culture prompts the question: Why are they replicated in the first place? What drives local producers and broadcast companies to recreate a local version from the popular Korean drama series? An interview with Ceres Barrios (2021), the chief writer for the Philippine version of the South Korean drama *Encounter*, disclosed that one of the reasons is to make the local audience feel closer to the drama's overall storyline. The popularity of Koreanovelas in South Korea and the Philippines is a determining factor when they are televised nationwide. According to Barrios, when choosing a Koreanovela for recreation, it is important to consider how relatable the storyline is because the adaptation process must also take into account the accuracy of the original story in the context of Filipino cultures, traditions, and history. Most adaptation series from South Korea use drama as the main genre, such as romantic and family dramas, but the historical genre is challenging to adapt because it includes a historical setting different from that of the Philippines.

The process of recreating a Korean drama into a local adaptation could be tricky. It is deemed as uncomplicated because the premise and plot are clearly ready and available but it can also be challenging because the premise and storyline must be translated into the local culture and tradition.

According to Barrios (2021), even if there are huge variations of cultural context, most Korean dramas and local TV series revolve around a master plot or “basic plots that are repeated based on the type of storyline being told” (White 2018).

A master plot typically revolves around a basic premise with a storyline and narrative such as the upside-down plots of the protagonist versus antagonist, a love-triangle story, and a transformation of a protagonist, for instance, from a poor to a wealthy person. Nonetheless, adopting foreign content into a local version could be challenging because there are parts of the storyline that are specific to certain cultures and norms. The production team, specifically the writers, should be able to tweak the storyline so that it best matches the plot of the original series while retaining the basic premise and the essence of the story.

Barrios (2021) reported that Filipino producers stayed in contact with the original producers of the South Korean drama titled *Encounter* throughout the process of writing the local adaptation. In another interview, Paolo Valconcha (2021), one of the panel writers of the adapted drama, revealed that they were required to pitch any major plot changes to the producer of the original Korean drama prior to the start of filming and that filming can only begin once they have received full approval. On the other hand, any small tweak is permitted as long as it does not affect the overall plot. Numerous discussions and pitching sessions were held between the Filipino and the South Korean production teams to ensure that all critical aspects of the adaptation process, such as the settings, characters, conflicts, and other details, were deliberated accordingly. This process has ensured that the audience’s interest is upheld while preserving the originality of the drama’s storyline, especially to the Filipino audience.

Given the fact that the Filipino audience grows an emotional attachment to Korean dramas, the production team appears to believe that there are certain elements and parts of the adaptation version that do not appeal to the younger audience. One way to deal with this concern is by inserting various colors from high and low moments in the storyline that could help captivate and sustain the younger Filipino audiences’ interest. Valconcha (2021) asserts that selecting and deselecting scenes from both the original drama and the adapted versions – while articulating the primary premise – is critical. The storyline is infused with Filipino culture, sensibilities, and values to make it more relatable to the audience only after the overall plot has been established.

Much like the Filipino drama series, Korean drama remakes could be a matter of hit and miss. There is also an audience for the original South Korean version that is familiar with the nuances of the plot and is prepared to compare it critically to the new version of the drama. If there are many changes in a storyline, it could alienate viewers who anticipated a plot with a slight difference. These remakes are creative in their own ways. In order for the adaptation series to be appealing to audiences from various cultural backgrounds, the production crew must put up the extra effort, skills, and creativity. Stories

must be researched, including different socio-cultural aspects, characterizations, and location settings, to ensure that they do not disappoint the supporters of the original drama while also impressing new audience members.

### Glocalization of Popular Korean Dramas

The fact that there is such a large market for Korean drama due to its widespread popularity has prompted local television corporations to compete in producing Korean drama adaptations. A number of popular Korean dramas such as *My Girl*, *Descendants of the Sun*, *Endless Love*, *Encounter*, *Stairway to Heaven*, *My Name is Kim Sam Soon*, and *Pure Love* are among the localized content for the Filipino audiences. However, some features of South Korean cultural background cannot be adapted directly into a local setting, regardless of the fact that both South Korea and the Philippines share Asian cultural values and backgrounds. Nonetheless, these findings contribute to a better understanding of how Korean dramas are being localized while retaining the essential element of the original plot.

In a discussion on the cinema of the Philippines, Patrick Campos wrote that

the economies of particular developing nations in Asia have experienced tremendous growth through industrialization, trade and financial liberalization, and the continuous flow and exchange of private capital and docile labor across more porous national borders. These worldwide political and economic transformations have been facilitated by the lowering cost and widening reach of cross-border travel and the intricate networking of trans-social spaces through new media and communication channels (2016, 11).

It is a fusion of global popular culture with local value systems that keeps Southeast Asian countries connected both inside and outside the region. According to Robertson et al. (1995), this phenomenon could be viewed as a manifestation of glocalization, while Gabardi claimed that the formation of "multiple, overlapping domains of global-linkages [...] creates a condition of globalized panlocality" (2000, 33-34). Given the current scenario, this is perhaps more apparent than ever in the foreign adaptation content which has entailed the glocalization of the contents of Korean dramas without compromising the local custom, tradition, and belief. For instance, with the adaptation of the *Encounter* drama series, Valconcha and Barrios (2021) attempted to retain at least 50 percent of the original content, with the remaining 50 percent being adjusted to accommodate Filipino culture.

Local production and broadcast station companies strive to meet the demands of both the South Korean content producer and the local Filipino audience. Factors such as familiarity, relatability, a

gripping storyline, and well-known local casts are taken into consideration throughout the process of adapting a foreign drama. Glocalization happens as nothing more than a business strategy that coincides with a creative outline of adaptation of global content to a local context. With creative pools and a marketing team on board, the local production has continued and is conforming to the strategy in order to capitalize on the long-term potential of this sort of content production. Barrios (2021) further concludes that this is purely commercial: "It's business kasi. So if merong sikat or if there's a market for it, especially if it's Kdrama 'di ba, so producers will jump in on that." [It is business. If it is popular or if there is a market for it, especially if it is Kdrama, producers will definitely jump in on that.] It is almost certain that producers will join a project if the South Korean drama series is popular among the locals or if there is a great demand. Moreover, the growing trend of featuring K-Pop celebrities as central characters – especially those celebrities with a huge fan base – has helped Korean dramas to garner wider audiences (Capistrano, as cited by ABS-CBN News, 2020). As a consequence, the drama series can reach a far wider audience than would be possible if it were merely watched by common audiences.

The reboot version of the South Korean series is not the only manifestation of glocalization. This has also resulted from the confluence of marketing decisions by the executive management of the broadcast companies as part of their business strategy and from the ambition to keep up with the demands of the station, its broadcast network producers, and the demand from the targeted local audiences.

## **CONCLUSION**

Local broadcast media networks need to integrate bits and pieces of the culture familiar and relevant to their audience to make remakes successful. This demonstrates the influence of the audience on producers and production companies when they create any adaptation series or remake from other countries. Glocalization happens when any content from a foreign series or shows is not just dubbed and subtitled into the local language but is manifested more visibly in the intention and execution of a local version of the show. Cultural fusion and the shift to that creativity are creating waves in the Philippines and throughout Southeast Asia. Familiarity and relevance are indicators of the glocalized content's efficacy with their local target audience. Nevertheless, this also raises concerns about how linear plots, which are prevalent in the Philippine broadcast industry, are used to spoon-feed the audience with subtleties and scenarios that they consider more appealing.

The process of glocalizing Filipino remakes of Korean novels involves the acquisition of an idea-content strategy and the translation of well-researched, and highly visualized material inspired by the culture of the intended audience. The shift of the Philippine broadcast media industry towards risks in the

content distribution business is not only a creative reinvention but also a business strategy for traversing the complexities of a heavily commercialized media and broadcast industry landscape. Exploiting content that incorporates elements of typical Filipino values and cultural symbols is a superficial representation of what local networks truly desire. This is the implicit intention to continue gaining financial advantage and capital accumulation from the audience's engagement, as well as the reinforcement of their role in the local market as a refuge for locally produced world-class content. The remake of a drama or series continues to be a challenge of creativity since the production is time-consuming. The idea of a projected *Filipinization* of the content, on the other hand, is nothing more than a deviated version of the content aimed at maintaining a continuous connection with the primary consumers.

Public opinion plays an important role in directing the next steps of the broadcast industry. While public opinion shapes the future of the television and broadcast industry, most television broadcast companies and production are still juggling between commercial and profit-making interests, especially with creative and aesthetic value. This demonstrates how they operate within the broadcast industry's ecosystem. Given this point, the public's involvement can also help to shape future series' structure, schedule, and creative conception. The goal then becomes that of a more open Philippine broadcast industry, which results in an open broadcast sector that is nibbling away at the possibilities of production both within and outside of the region. Indeed, the confluence of global and local elements creates popular culture. The unified cultures breed on a broad mix of traditions, practices, and identities, which shifts the original content to a different cultural background. The transformation and emergence of popular culture latched on both the original South Korean version and the Filipino remakes of the drama series justify that glocalization continues to be a strong wave that engulfs the landscape of the broadcast industry in the Philippines and across Southeast Asia.

Future research should examine an adaptation series of a popular foreign drama from the television and broadcast companies' commercial and business motives. It is also helpful to analyze the latest popular Korean dramas as samples since the industry is always growing due to technological advances and the changing behavior among the audiences. It has evolved ever since, but the pattern of different television shows in the Philippines has been using the same formula for quite a long time. It is high time that Korean drama remakes be more than mere remakes. The broadcast industry is a profit-oriented business and a platform to cultivate creative works and to address social concerns. Therefore, the local producers and broadcasters should seek novel ways to integrate more Filipino culture into the adaptation of foreign drama series.

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**ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

**JANINE ABERIN** graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Communication from the University of the Philippines Baguio, with a major in Journalism and a minor in Broadcast Communication. Her thesis focused on power as portrayed in the performance of female strippers in Baguio City. In 2017, she served as head of the Publications and Publicity committee of the university-based cultural organization KEEP UP, which introduces Korean culture to the UP Baguio community. At present, she is a marketing officer in a renewable energy company, focusing on online media marketing.

**PATRICIA LUISA DEALCA** graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Communication from the University of the Philippines Baguio. She majored in Journalism and took a minor in Broadcast Communication. For her co-written undergraduate thesis, she did a study on the reportages of national dailies about the 2016 presidentiables and vice presidentiables. Dealca was a production designer for the university-based multimedia organization UPB Obra. Her interests include advertising and marketing. Currently, she is practicing digital marketing for Cebu Pacific Air with the main focus on media planning and buying for major digital platforms.

**BENJAMIN GEORGE MEAMO III** is an instructor in Communication at the Department of Communication, College of Arts and Communication, University of the Philippines Baguio. He graduated cum laude with a Bachelor of Arts in Communication, with a major in Speech Communication and a minor in Broadcast Communication. He is currently an MA Media Studies (Broadcast) student at the University of the Philippines Diliman. He has published a media review in the Asian Politics & Policy journal and literary pieces in *Kimata: Journal of Contemporary Literary and Visual Art*.

**ELLAINEMOR SAN PASCUAL** graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Communication from the University of the Philippines Baguio. She majored in Journalism and minored in Broadcast Communication. During her undergraduate studies she wrote for the University's official student publication named *Outcrop* and became Associate Editor in her junior year. In 2016 she interned with the Philippine Star and CNN Philippines. She is currently performing her duties as a Legislative Staff Officer in the Senate of the Philippines.

**TAMARA JANE VENTANILLA** graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Communication from the University of the Philippines Baguio. She majored in Speech Communication and minored in Broadcast Communication. Her undergraduate thesis engages with the portrayal of women in digital illustrations. After teaching ESL at 51Talk Philippines, she has been working as a college instructor at WCC Aeronautical and Technological College in Pangasinan, teaching Communication English. She is now pursuing her MA in Education. Her main research interests are gender studies and cultural studies.

✉: janineaberin199609@gmail.com

✉: patriciadealca@gmail.com

✉: bpmeamo@up.edu.ph

✉: eqsanpascual@up.edu.ph

✉: tbventanilla@up.edu.ph