

Peer Review

Review of: "Comparative Analysis of Melodic, Rhythmic, and Emotional Codes in Regional Arirang: Musicological Structuring of Korean Traditional Music Han and Its Potential for Hallyu Expansion"

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This article has great potential and is publishable with additional work. If it's going to be a hypothesis-testing study that correlates musical features and emotional intensity, then you need to actually do that study (with experts or other participants responding to your data/stimuli). I would suggest instead that you do more of a musicological study and provide data (audio and transcription) of passages and speculate on the emotional valence. You are basically proposing a form of topic theory for Korean Traditional Music--that certain parts of Arirang particularly convey 'han'. This is a very interesting and valuable pursuit but one that may be too complex and subjective to impose the scientific method at this stage. Musical topics carry specific cultural meanings and are recognizable to listeners of the time. You could also propose how these musical means in traditional music could be used in popular music--which your title suggests, but is not actually accomplished. The quasi-scientific structure of the paper is not successful because the methods and rigor for hypothesis-testing are not there.

Here are specific concerns:

Title:

This article is in English, and therefore mixing non-English words in the title must be done strategically. In the West, we know Hallyu (The Korean Wave) as K-Pop, so keep in mind what audience you are writing for (Hallyu would be known to Chinese readers, if I am understanding correctly). However, this may not

matter, but the article does not really address Hallyu/K-Pop or the potential of evoking the ‘Han’ emotion in K-pop, so I do not think that should be in the title. It could be a mention for further work in the conclusion.

Thus, a more accurate and comprehensible title would be:

Emotional Intensity in Korean Traditional Music: A Study of the “Han” Emotion in Arirang Songs

Opening Sentence

Arirang is a folk song that represents traditional Korean music, and despite hundreds of regional variations, it shares a common emotion called ‘han.’

The opening sentence is important and seems to largely summarize the study. However, this statement suggests to me that Arirang is interchangeable with “traditional Korean music,” but I think the author means that it is a genre of traditional Korean music, is this correct? Also, “it shares a common emotion called ‘han.’” Does the music have the emotion, or does it elicit/evoke the emotion in the listener? I think the argument of the study is that the musical features evoke this emotion.

Arirang is a folk song genre within traditional Korean music, and despite hundreds of regional variations, it shares a common feature of evoking an emotion called ‘han.’

Data/Sources:

It appears the author did not make the transcriptions, and there are no citations in the sections where the sources are listed, other than the National Gugak Archives, who did the transcriptions that you found there? We need a lot more information on the data.

Methods/Sources: There is a lot of music theory and computational/music information retrieval sources on methodology relevant to this work. The very short reference list does not include any.

“Ethnographic transcription” is a contradictory phrase because ethnography is not the same thing as musical transcription, and many ethnographic studies of music discourage descriptive musical transcriptions.

What are authentic musical scores? That’s up for debate. Are they descriptive? Prescriptive? What is the methodology? Is it consistent? Can Western notation, as you have in your appendix, effectively represent

Korean traditional music? Can we, as readers, hear some of this music? Have some links?

Analytical Framework/Table 2: Here again, there are relevant music analysis sources that are not cited. More importantly, the measurable features should be separated from the theorized emotion. Does Table 2 suggest that you already know how to evaluate the level of emotional affect? I thought that was the goal of the study. You are conflating music analysis and psychology. You should try to correlate the observable features with ratings/responses to the music. How do you know that dynamic range, melismas, and certain words are more emotionally affective? Other studies? Expert or non-expert participation in the study/evaluation of the music? Or is it simply your own rating of the music based on your own analysis? If so, that's okay, but there is no need to present the study in this quasi-scientific mode.

Reference List:

This is a very short and narrowly focused list. Nothing but Arirang references. Nothing on data sources, ethnomusicological methods, music and emotion/music psychology, music theory and analysis of melody, harmony, etc., or any of the other topics that are touched upon: intangible cultural heritage, popular music and “The Korean Wave” (Hallyu), cultural diplomacy.

Lesser concerns:

There are many instances of words with missing spaces:

Hallyu musicology

Arirang were

Declarations

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.