

The Influence of Korean Pop Culture on Purchasing Behavior of Korean Products among Consumers in Klang Valley

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Abstract

Malaysia is currently stricken with Korean fever in all local industries including fashion, food and cosmetic. K-dramas, K-music, and K-culture are building a stronghold in the country with the younger generation becoming more fascinated towards South Korea's cultural images. The main purpose of this study is to determine the influence of Korean pop culture on purchasing behavior of Korean products among consumers in Klang Valley. There were total of 200 respondents participated in this study who were selected via simple random sampling method. The data were collected through a set of self-administered questionnaires and analyzed by using the Package Statistical for Social Science (SPSS). The results demonstrated by Pearson product moment correlation analysis had indicated that there were significant relationships between perception towards Korean foods ($r = .249, p = .000$), Korean fashions ($r = .426, p = .000$) and Korean cosmetics ($r = .230, p = .001$) with purchasing behavior of Korean products. In addition, perception towards Korean fashions reported to be the most influential predictor ($\beta = .387, p \leq 0.001$) as indicated by the multiple regression analysis. Results suggest that consumers take note of products originating from Korea and they are able to critically assess products from different dimensions.

Keywords: Korean Pop Culture, Foods, Fashions, Cosmetics, Purchasing Behavior

Introduction

Malaysia is currently stricken with Korean fever in all local industries including fashion, food and cosmetic. K-dramas, K-music, and K-culture are building a stronghold in the country with the younger generation becoming more fascinated towards South Korea's cultural images (Hidayah et al., 2020). Trends related to South Korea are growing quickly in a short amount of time, dominating more consumption of Korean goods (Khalid & Wok, 2020). Ideally, this creates numerous business opportunities as entrepreneurs taken advantage of K- Wave to increase consumerism.

The rise phenomenon of South Korean popular culture is called hallyu, “The Korean Wave” (Sari, 2018). Consumers in China, Japan, Taiwan, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam vigorously consume K-pop cultural products including, TV dramas, music, film, and fashion (Zhang et al., 2020). Hallyu is an economic and cultural force; the South Korean government recognizes its cultural exports as key resources in its economy and agents of cultural diplomacy in the East Asian region (Jang & Paik, 2012).

It is evident that Hallyu (Korean Wave) is more popular and has successfully been absorbed into the life of Malaysian teenagers in particular and Asian teenagers in general (Hashimah & Zaharani, 2011). Various styles and fashions from South Korea have been followed by adolescents in Malaysia. Moreover, dramas, food, k-pop music, language, skin care products of Korea brands are progressively becoming very popular in Malaysia especially among the adolescents. Previous researchers claimed that the adoption of the Korean Wave can directly influence the purchase of Korean products (Yu, 2012). The consumer products related to Korean culture such as tourism, contents, and cosmetic products can be influenced. A positive and significant relationship between the Korean Wave and attitude toward Korean products among foreign consumers who are familiar with Korean culture are likely to have a more positive attitude toward Korean products and have more intention to purchase them (Ing *et al.*, 2018).

The aggressive growth of Hallyu in Malaysia has been extensive (Anwar & Nor, 2020). Even to this day, Korean drama continues to gain ground in Malaysia’s local television during the day time afternoon slot. Even the influence of Hallyu has infected Malaysia’s local satellite television channel, Astro, in which they have installed KBS World channel to cater their subscribers’ preference for Korean dramas. Therefore, continuous efforts must be taken to conduct further research related to the effects of Korean Popular Culture in Southeast Asia. Marketers from various industries will have to continue their effort to survive and contribute to economic growth. As part of their survival effort, products’ manufacturer must continue their research in understanding the decisions of adolescents’ consumption. Some argue that adolescents are at the forefront of globalization (Kurebwa, 202). Success in the changing global market place will require firms to fully understand their position in this regard. Given the rapid growth and market opportunities that are available in developing countries, it is important that this information is obtained for these markets. In the long run, all parties involved in various industries in the market whose adolescents are their target customers must be prepared to meet the challenges posed by a change in the preferences of these adolescents. Marketers need to study the changing needs of adolescents in the modern and more affluent Malaysian societies (Zailin, 2012).

In the current era, researchers further found that the borderless information phenomena have further transformed today’s young generation. Arnett (2002) proposes that many adolescents in today’s world of globalization have developed a “local identity” based on their indigenous tradition, as well as a “global identity” based on their exposure to a global culture conveyed through the media. Therefore, Korean popular culture is claimed to have aspects that are able to transcend across racial, ethnic and geographical boundaries. Even though youth do not behave or think in exactly the same way, many similarities suggest that the vast majority of adolescents fit somewhere within the mainstream of Korean youth popular culture.

Literature Review

Consumer choices are generally produced primarily by predicting buying behavior, and when a favorable attitude towards the product is created, greater buying intention is created and the chance of taking action is reduced (Hartmann & Apaolaza-Ibanez, 2012). In other words, customers assess the business through business data and use knowledge and form opinions about the business. This kind of faith has a favorable or negative attitude, and the customer attitude thus created impacts the desire to buy and purchase behavior. Zeugner-Roth et al (2015) argue that consumers are more likely to purchase products from a particular country if they show a favorable attitude such as like, pleasant, advantageous, and friendly. The influence of Korea's entertainment has become the subject of concern and criticism throughout the world especially Asia. Most of suppliers catch the trend and make their products hit right to customers desire in order to expend profit.

1. *Perception toward Korean Food and Purchasing Behaviour*

The growth of international trade, globalization, migration, and tourism has increased awareness and the willingness to try ethnic cuisine globally (Zarling, 2018; Verbeke & Lopez, 2005). In recent years, Korean foods have gained popularity worldwide, which has been facilitated by the increasing interest in Korean pop culture (Lim & An, 2021; Farah Hidayah et al., 2020). Besides conventional overseas markets for Korean food, such as the United States, Europe and the Far East, there is also growing interest in Korean food in South East Asia, particularly in Malaysia. Malaysia is an emerging market for Korean food due to rapidly growing bilateral economic exchanges between the two countries (Cho, 2010). The rising number of urban residents has increased the demand for home meal replacement (HMR) products among Malaysian consumers as they need more convenient and time-saving products (Osman et al., 2014). This has led to new opportunities in the Korean food industry to develop traditional food into more consumer-oriented HMR products for the Malaysian market.

Ali *et al* (2010) have argued that consumers' purchasing behavior for food and grocery products has always been affected by a number of economic, cultural (Lichev et al., 2017), psychological and lifestyle factors (Ariffin et al., 2021; Vijayeta, 2015). Previous research on consumers' preference for Korean food affirmed that Malaysian prefers Korean food over other ethnic food choices in Malaysia (Chee & Yazdanifard, 2021). This growing interest is rooted in customer perception and preferences (Rahayu et al., 2018).

2. *Perception toward Korean Fashion and Purchasing Behaviour*

Fashion is also regarded as one of the types of popular culture (Zailin, 2012). Bao and Shao (2002) argue that teens want to be "cool" and "sweet", that is, they want to be exclusive and cutting edge in terms of fashion. Thus, it appears that advertising, peers and celebrities/role models have the potential to contribute to brand choices among young people. A recent study by Loke and Bahiyah (2020) found that Malaysian consumers have a positive attitude towards Korean grooming products, in which they are willing to try new Korean grooming products that they have not tried before. The influence of Korean fashion products come from various sources such as influenced by idols or artists especially through music videos, magazines, dramas and social media. Based on global survey report, almost half of the Malaysian respondents (48.3%) preferred Korean-design products and their main reason was due to the popularity of the Korean fashion (Jobst, 2021). The development of

high fashion brand and the word-of-mouth marketing through fashion dual leader were also needed in order to make inroads into China market. Usually, consumers attempt to coordinate their buying attitudes with their perceptions of their reference group's value. Celebrities or Korean stars are regarded as examples opinion leaders and can direct consumer preferences towards a particular item or brand in the form of a reference group (Kim *et al.*, 2018).

3. *Perception toward Korean Cosmetic and Purchasing Behaviour*

Cosmetics industry is one of the most developed sectors in Korea's economy, which gained its popularity because of natural ingredients, professional processing, neat designs and various segments suitable for many ranges of customers. Korean cosmetics brands are now famous not only in Asia but all around the world, such as AMOREPACIFIC (Etude House, Innisfree, LANEIGE), or LG (OHUI, The Face Shop). The strength point that make Korea cosmetic to be more successful is new ingredient that help to treatment in ingredient, light and thick textures of products that specific for needs of each customer and the price that very careful for customer to afford to purchase (Shadbolt, 2015).

Desai (2014) has studied consumer buying behavior of cosmetic products in Kolhapurs and he found that the major part of cosmetic market is covered by females. According to his research, quality is the most important factor influencing the consumer buying decision. Television and reference groups are other important factors to influence consumer buying decision. While, in Malaysian context, Lim *et al* (2020) found that the purchase intention of Korean beauty products among young consumers were influenced by a few factors including social values, which referred to perceived and acquired in alternative association to one or several social groups (Sheth *et al.*, 1991). This is obviously the case in the idols from Korean as the K-wave players such as beauty of actresses that emits fair and flawless face (Lim *et al.*, 2020). This finding was found to be consistent with previous studies such as Rahnama's (2017); Awuni and Du's (2016); Zhao's (2014); Candan *et al* (2013) which also found that social value does play an important role in the people's behavioral intention as well as acceptance towards Korean beauty products.

As for the theoretical underpinning the study's context, a few theories were referred to. One of it is Cultural Imperialism Model in which it imposes the behavioral norms, lifestyle, knowledge, and belief, value of other countries has the potential to influence other people in other countries as well (Salwen, 1991). A cultural imperialism is described as the phenomenon of media imperialism will provide more impact on global cultures than others in such a way that it will lead to the forming and reforming certain cultural values, identities, and perception (Crane *et al.*, 2002). Another related theory is Cross Culture Consumer Behavior which sees consumer behavior in integrated view of the individual, culture and society. Along this vein, American Marketing Association has postulated consumer behavior as the proses comprising the dynamic interaction of affect and cognition, behavior and the environment by which human beings conduct exchange aspects of their lives (Mooij, 2004).

By referring to the theory/model and the previous findings as discussed above, this study hypothesized the following:

- H1: There is a significant relationship between the perception towards Korean food and purchasing behavior of Korean products.

H2: There is a significant relationship between the perception towards Korean fashion and purchasing behavior of Korean products.

H3: There is a significant relationship between the perception towards Korean cosmetic and purchasing behavior of Korean products.

Finally, in order to determine the most dominant perception of K-pop element towards the purchasing behavior of Korean products, below hypothesis is developed:

H4: Perception towards Korean foods, fashion or cosmetic is significantly the most dominant factor influencing the purchasing behavior of Korean products

Methodology

The present study applied a quantitative research method via correlational research design to investigate the relationship between the variables and the change of one variable related to the other variables, correlation research design was used in this study. As for the location of study, Klang Valley was chosen as it can represents consumers in Malaysia due to the large mixture of demographic and socioeconomic backgrounds. Klang Valley is an area in Malaysia which is centered in Kuala Lumpur, and includes it is adjoining cities and towns in the state of Selangor (Akmar et al., 2011). There were also consumers with diverse nationality and states with different cultures and background in Klang Valley.

This research was carried out on the consumers in Klang Valley who are ranged from 18 and above to further study on their purchasing behavior of Korean products in terms of Korean food, Korean fashion, and Korean cosmetic. Furthermore, there is a need for this research to identify the level of perceptions towards these three elements (Korean food, Korean fashion, and Korean cosmetic) with consumers as it is important to understand the observation of these consumers have a tendency to follow the lifestyle and intention as presented by the popular culture of K-Pop. A total of 200 were involved as the study's respondents and they were chosen by simple random sampling method. According to Gorsuch (2003), sample size lower than 50 is considered as small sample size, on the other hand, sample size of 200 is considered as large. This statement is supported by Guiford (1954) who said that a minimum sample size of 200 is considered as proper for a research. The data were collected by intercepting consumers as they emerged from a few selected Korean restaurants and shops selling Korean products in a few selected shopping malls/complexes whereby the questionnaires were distributed consecutively from respondent to respondent, by intercepting the next shopper as he or she exited the store (Freund, 2018).

As the main instrument to collect the needed data, a self-administered questionnaire was used. It was divided into five sections, i.e., to measure the respondents' socio demographic characteristics and their pattern of purchasing Korean products, and the other remaining sections in the questionnaire assessed the three independent variables (with 6 Likert-scale items each) and one dependent variable (containing 5 Likert-scale items). The measurement of each variable was adopted and adapted from the combination of few established measurement from the previous research based on compatibleness with current study. The scale for measuring purchasing behavior of Korean products were newly developed, while the scale items adopted Jung and Jeon (2011) were used in measuring perception towards

Korean food, Park and Xie (2012) for perception towards Korean fashion, and Boonmee (2015) for perception towards Korean cosmetics. All the measurements were achieved good validity which was tested by using content validity (by referring to the experts in the field) and also were found to be reliable with the Cronbach's alpha for perception towards Korean food was 0.710, Cronbach's alpha for perception towards Korean fashion was 0.828, Cronbach's alpha for perception towards Korean cosmetic was 0.852, and the Cronbach's alpha for purchasing behavior of Korean products was 0.827.

By using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) to analyze the data, descriptive analysis was used to describe the respondents' profile and their purchasing patterns of Korean products. Meanwhile Pearson correlation and multiple regression were performed to examine the relationship between the variables and to determine the most dominant perception of K-pop element, respectively.

Findings and Discussion

Respondent's Background

The background variables included age, gender, ethnic, religion, marital status, level of education, occupational sector, and personal income. From the total of 200 young adults aged between 18 to 28 years old who were participated in this research, it was found that most of the respondents were in the age of 21 years old (25.5%) and the mean age for the respondents was 21.73 years old. There were more female respondents (86.5%) than male respondents (13.5%) involved in this study. While in terms of ethnics, the highest numbers of respondents were Malay (84.5%), followed by Chinese respondents, which were 14.5%, while there were only 1.0% respondent in this study which Indian. Other than that, the respondents also were consisting of variety religion such as Islam, Buddha, Hindu and other which is Atheist. As shown in the table as well, the majority of respondents Muslim which were 85.0%, while the lowest goes to Hinduism which were 0.5%. This is due to most respondents that involved in this research were consist of Malay respondents.

In terms of marital status, majority of the respondent (99.5%) were still single while only 0.5% is married respondents. This is because most of respondents that had been chosen to answer the questionnaire is mostly single and still study which have a lot interest in Korean Pop Culture. Furthermore, the level of education of respondents can be divided into three groups which are secondary, undergraduate and postgraduate. Undergraduate respondents obtained the most dominant percentage which were 90.5% compared to postgraduate and secondary levels which had the lowest percentages which were 3.0% and 6.5%, respectively. Regarding occupational sector, the respondents is majority among student which were 91.5% and followed by the minority from private and government servant which were 7.5% and 1.0%. The most dominant personal monthly income of the respondents was less than RM 2000 with a percentage of 94.5% out from total of respondents. This personal monthly income was based on their sources such as PTPTN, JPA, part time work and others.

Respondent's Patterns of Purchasing Korean Products (Food, Fashion, and Cosmetic)

A total of five questions being asked and the findings were demonstrated in Table 1 below. Slightly more than half of the respondent (55.0%) think that high quality and beauty were the main purpose of Korean products purchased while others such as low price and increasing confidence are the lesser respondents which were 15.0% and 14.5%,

respectively. Beauty and high quality are being chosen by most of the respondents because of Korean products are worth to purchase since they have a good quality. Other than that, the major influencer of Korean products purchases are from their friends which were 57.5% of the respondents and followed by the second highest which was from itself (53.5%). These two types of the influencer become most essential for respondents to purchase Korean products because influencers take on a strong role in forming other consumers' opinions on products and services. This is important for brand marketers looking to keep conversations online positive to persuade other consumers to try their products.

Next was about the main source where the respondents receive the information about Korean products to be purchased. The result found that there are top three main source for most of the respondents which were from social media (e.g., Facebook, Instagram) (81.5%), people around which was 58.0% and followed by advertisement (TV, radio) (51.5%). However, there are some people preferred to rely on publications (e.g., magazines, journals) (16.5%) and Website which were 40.0%.

From the result, 34.0% of the respondents in Klang Valley claimed that the frequency of Korean products they purchase was once in three months whereas 21.0% of them purchased Korean products once in a month. The findings from Table 1 also showed that more than half of total respondents (59.5%) had RM 100 and below to purchase Korean products. This showed that the respondents might still know how to handle their desire and be thrifty with regard to the purchases of Korean products.

Table 1

Respondents' Patterns of Purchasing Korean Products (N=200)

Items	Yes		No	
	n	%	n	%
1. The main purpose of Korean products purchases				
High quality	110	55.0	90	45.0
Increasing confidence	29	14.5	171	85.5
Trend	90	45.0	110	55.0
Low price	30	15.0	170	85.0
Beauty	110	55.0	90	45.0
Good packaging	65	32.5	135	67.5
2. Influencer to Korean products purchases				
Self	107	53.5	93	46.5
Product ambassador	84	42.0	116	58.0
Family members	29	14.5	171	85.5
Friends	115	57.5	85	42.5
Cosmetic seller				
3. The main source where receive the information about Korean products to be purchased				
Advertisement (TV, radio)	103	51.5	97	48.5
Publications (e.g.: magazines, journals)	33	16.5	167	83.5
People around you	116	58.0	84	42.0
Website	80	40.0	120	60.0
Social media (e.g.: Facebook, Instagram)	163	81.5	37	18.5
Blogging websites	17	8.5	183	91.5
4. The frequency of Korean products purchases				
Once a month	42	21.0		
2-3 times a month	35	17.5		
More than 3 times a month	12	6.0		
Once in three months	68	34.0		
Once in a year	43	21.5		
5. The average amount of money that normally spent on Korean products				
≤ RM 100	119	59.5		
RM 101 - RM 200	56	28.0		
RM 201 – RM 300	16	8.0		
> RM 301	9	4.5		

Descriptive Analysis for the Variables Understudy

The following is the descriptive table for each of the variables understudy. It was found that most of the respondents (72.0%) like to shop Korean products because Korean lifestyle can attract them and this was supported by 66.0% of respondents who said that they buy Korean products because they enjoy Korean music, dramas, food, fashion, cosmetic and culture. In

addition, 55.5% of the respondents in this study showed that they like to purchase Korean products because it is endorsed by their favorite Korean star. However, there were 40.5% of them who were willing to pay more for Korean product because of its celebrity. In contrast, it is also showed that only 3.0% of the respondents do not think they like to shop Korean products because Korean lifestyle can attract them, which was the lowest percentage recorded among all the five categories. Therefore, it was indicated that the respondents in this study have acquired purchasing behavior of Korean products as the percentage of them in agreeing to every of the statements are higher.

Table 2

Descriptive Analysis for Variables Understudy

No.	Statement For me, . . .	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)
Purchasing Behavior of Korean Products						
1.	I like to purchase Korean products because it is endorsed by my favorite Korean star.	6.0	15.0	23.5	34.0	21.5
2.	I buy Korean products because I enjoy Korean music, dramas, food, fashion, cosmetic and culture.	5.5	11.0	17.5	35.5	30.5
3.	I like to shop Korean products because Korean lifestyle can attract me.	3.0	7.5	17.5	47.0	25.0
4.	I am willing to pay more for Korean product because of its celebrity.	11.0	18.5	30.0	23.5	17.0
5.	I like to buy Korean products because of family, friends, and important people around me.	6.5	13.5	28.0	41.0	11.0
Perception towards Korean Food						
6.	Korean foods have a beautiful color.	1.0	3.0	26.0	49.0	21.0
7.	Korean foods are healthy.	0.5	8.0	31.0	39.0	21.5
8.	Korean foods are salty and spicy.	0.5	6.5	24.5	44.0	24.5
9.	Korean foods are nutritious.	0.0	5.0	34.0	43.0	18.0
10.	Korean foods smell good.	0.5	8.5	32.5	39.5	19.0
Perception towards Korean Fashion						
11.	Korean fashion look perfect and always make me feel confident in life.	0.5	11.0	25.5	41.0	22.0
12.	colourful and beautiful Korean outfits create wonder.	0.0	4.5	23.0	48.0	24.5
13.	the Korean fashion trends are very focused on street wear.	0.5	6.0	20.0	49.0	24.5

14.	Korean fashion scene is much younger than other cities, giving it a more youthful perspective.	0.0	3.5	14.5	53.5	28.5
15.	Korean fashions are simple and sweet, easy to dress up and comfortable.	0.0	6.0	13.5	48.0	32.5
16.	brand is the source of information about the durability and reliability of Korean clothes.	0.0	6.5	36.0	43.0	14.5
Perception towards Korean Cosmetic						
17.	Korean cosmetics are reliable.	0.0	5.0	25.0	51.5	18.5
18.	Korea has suitable resources their ingredients in cosmetic productions.	0.0	2.0	26.0	52.5	19.5
19.	Korean cosmetics, design and colours meet my requirements.	0.5	4.5	21.0	51.5	22.5
20.	Korean cosmetics are quality as good as advertised.	0.0	3.0	25.0	44.5	27.5
21.	Korean cosmetics are nice and trendy in packaging.	0.5	0.5	11.5	51.0	36.5
22.	Korean cosmetics are made from high quality of production.	0.0	1.5	20.0	51.0	27.5

In terms of perception towards Korean food, the descriptive analysis found that most of the respondents (70.0%) stated that have perception of Korean foods has a beautiful color. This was followed by 68.5% respondents who have perception of Korean foods is salty and spicy. There about 61.0% respondents for the perception of Korean foods is nutritious. Hence, about half of the respondents which were a total of 60.5% responded that have perception of Korean foods are healthy and smells good (58.5%). To conclude, the findings showed that perception of Korean foods has a beautiful color have the higher percentage because for example like bibimbap (rice mixed with vegetables and beef) have many colors inside one serving.

Table 2 then showed that the highest percentage of respondents (82.0%) thought that Korean fashion scene is much younger than other cities, giving it a more youthful perspective. This was proved by 80.5% respondents said that Korean fashion are simple and sweet, easy to dress up and comfortable. There was a total of 73.5% of respondents agreed that the Korean fashion trends are very focused on street wear. In addition to this, 72.5% stated that the colorful and beautiful Korean outfits create wonder. From the findings illustrated in Table 2, there were 63.0% of respondents agreed that Korean fashion look perfect and always make them feel confident in life. In general, the respondents have the

same opinion in saying that perception towards Korean fashion will influence their purchasing behavior of Korean products.

The findings also showed that most of respondents (87.5%) thought that Korean cosmetics are nice and trendy in packaging. This was followed by 78.5% respondents who said that Korean cosmetics are made from high quality of production. A total of 74% of the respondents stated that Korean cosmetics, design and colors meet their requirements. About 72% of respondents feel that Korea has suitable resources their ingredients in cosmetic productions and Korean cosmetics are quality as good as advertised. As an overall, respondents' buying behavior will be affected by their perception towards Korean cosmetics.

Pearson Correlation Analysis

In order to measure the relationships between purchasing behavior of Korean products, perception towards Korean food, Korean fashion, and Korean cosmetic in this research, Pearson correlation was performed. The results of the test were shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3

Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis for Purchasing Behavior of Korean Products, Perception towards Korean Food, Korean Fashion, and Korean Cosmetic

Variable	Purchasing Behavior of Korean Products	
	r	p
Perception towards, . . .		
Korean Food	.249***	.000
Korean Fashion	.426***	.000
Korean Cosmetic	.230***	.001

Note:***Correlation is significant at the 0.001 level (2-tailed)

The output indicated that all the K-pop elements (Korean food: $r = .249$; $p \leq .001$; Korean fashion: $r = .426$; $p \leq .001$; and Korean cosmetic: $r = .230$; $p \leq .001$) have significant and positive relationships with the dependent variable, purchasing behavior of Korean products. This means the more the perception towards the K-pop elements, the higher the purchasing behavior of Korean products. Therefore, all the H1, H2 and H3 were successfully to be rejected. However, in terms of the strength which based on coefficient correlations, the relationship between them were low for Korean cosmetic and food, while for fashion, moderate relationship was found. It shows that perception towards Korean fashion was more influential to the respondents' purchasing behavior compared to the rest of the perceptions, i.e., towards Korean food and cosmetic.

The results regarding the significant relationships were found to be consistent with the studies done by previous researchers. For instance, in terms of Korean food, research done by Jeon (2019) stated that studied on Chinese living in China and extracted three common factors which were service, product, and specialty factor. All three factors were found to be significantly influenced on the degree of preference of Chinese consumers for Korean food. With regard to significant relationship between perception towards Korean fashion and purchasing behavior of Korean products, there were past researcher who found out the Korean fashion brand purchasing behavior of Chinese woman college students who would be the one of major customers in Chinese market along with their preferences of Korean

wave and fashion leadership. Also, consumers usually try to coordinate their purchase behavior with their perceptions of the value of their reference group. Celebrities or Korean stars are considered as example of intellectual and opinion leaders, and in the form of a reference group is able to direct preferences of consumers toward a specific product or brand (Kim et al., 2018).

For the perception towards Korean cosmetic, the results from this study supporting the survey findings showing that perceptions towards Korean cosmetics was influencing the consumers purchasing behavior (Rahnama, 2017). Korean cosmetics can also enjoy the popularity in Vietnam thanks to the advertisement strategies through dramas and beautiful actresses playing important role in promoting those products. This was proved by a survey asking about opinions of young female customers aged 20-29 about cosmetics from US, Europe, Japan and Korea (Q&ME, 2015).

Multiple Regression Analysis

Multiple regression analysis was performed in this study in order to determine the most dominant perception of K-pop element towards the purchasing behavior of Korean products. The results of the analysis were demonstrated in Table 4.

From the table, the F-value (14.805) obtained for the model being examine in multiple regression analysis was significant at once illustrated that there were at least one factor influencing purchasing behavior of Korean products. As for the adjusted R^2 the result shows that total variance in purchasing behavior of Korean products can only be explained by all the selected factors (Korean food, Korean fashion, and Korean cosmetic) by 17.2% which considered as low due the reason there are many other products that create the Korean wave that will influence purchasing behavior of Korean products (in this case, the remaining is 82.8%). Some of the examples are Korean digital games (Jin & Yoon, 2017), K-pop idols (Lee & Zhang, 2020), animations, music, drama, music etc (Ganghariya & Kanozia, 2020).

Table 4

Multiple Regression Analysis for Purchasing Behavior of Korean Products (N=200)

Variable	Purchasing Behavior of Korean Products			
	B	SE.B	Beta, β	Sig, t
Korean Food	.053	.113	.036	.639
Korean Fashion	.455	.091	.387***	.000
Korean Cosmetic	.060	.093	.048	.515
Adjusted R^2		.172		
F		14.805***		

Note: ***Level of significant is at $p \leq 0.001$

In addition, unstandardized coefficient B for the perception towards Korean food variable was 0.053 which indicated that perception towards Korean food was positively correlated with the purchasing behavior of Korean products. Changes in perception towards Korean food would cause marginal changes of 0.053 towards the respondents' purchasing behavior of Korean products while other variables were hold as constant. However, the p-value of

0.639 ($p > 0.05$) showed that perception towards Korean food was not significant to the purchasing behavior of Korean products and this was supported by the findings in Pearson product moment correlation which showed that there was lower relationship between this variable with the dependent variable. The β -value for this variable was 0.036.

Besides, the perception towards Korean fashion variable with the highest value of unstandardized coefficient B that was 0.455 and with p-value of 0.000 ($p \leq 0.001$) appeared to be the strongest predictor for purchasing behavior of Korean products. The unstandardized coefficient B value of 0.455 means the level of purchasing behavior of Korean products increases by 0.455 units when perception towards Korean fashion increase by 1 unit. This proved that respondents have higher tendency to purchase impulsively with the influenced of perception towards Korean fashion.

For the perception towards Korean cosmetic, the unstandardized coefficient B was 0.060 and this proved that there was a positive relationship between perception towards Korean cosmetic and purchasing behavior of Korean products. The β -value for perception towards Korean cosmetic was 0.048 and the p-value was 0.515 ($p > 0.05$). This result showed that there was no significant relationship between perception towards Korean cosmetic and purchasing behavior of Korean products among the respondents in this study. This finding was consistent with the result from Pearson product moment correlation in Table 2 whereby perception towards Korean cosmetic have the lowest in term of its relationship with the purchasing behavior of Korean products. In addition, based on the B-value of 0.455 it shows that on Korean fashion are significant and the most dominant element of Korean Pop Culture influencing purchasing behavior of Korean products. It is also the only variable to be found as having a significant. Meanwhile, the reason for the insignificant result was due to the reason related to the different nature of analysis for both Pearson correlation and multiple regression. According to Dechasa (2019), when the results fit simple linear regression among one dependent and one independent, insignificant coefficient may be obtained. This is not show that there is no correlation between the two variables, but the relationship among the two variables may be quadratic one (non-linear relationship).

Conclusion and Implications

The study sheds light on Klang Valley consumers' perception to products originating from Korea. Results suggest that Klang Valley consumers take note of products originating from Korea and they are able to critically assess products from different dimensions. As for the product information sources, results indicate that, in general, information through commercials in social media and people around are the most preferred information source of consumers in Klang Valley. Advertisements in newspaper/ magazines and opinion of friends follow in that order of preference. In general, Klang Valley consumers did not make any substantial distinctions among the information source when separated between gender and ethnicity.

On evaluation of product dimension, the study reveals that products made in Korea have been preferred for its style. It is clear that products originating from Korea derive their competitive advantage through innovation in product development. However, marketing managers from this region should take note of the fact that the customers have seen the support services in poor light. Efforts must therefore be made to improve such services.

This research provides practical and useful information which may benefit some of the relevant parties. Based on the findings of this research, the retailers will be able to determine at what point the factors such as Korean food, Korean fashion, and Korean cosmetic factor will actually affect the consumers' buying intention and also trigger them to buy impulsively. From the findings of this study, it is found that perception towards Korean fashion was the major factor that stimulates the purchasing behavior of Korean products. Hence, retailers can apply this information to invest their inadequate asset in improving their Korean fashion aspect instead of wasting their asset in other aspects which are less effective. This enables the retailers to have competitive advantage in competing with other emerging retail shops and to survive in the competitive market. To summarize, this study conveyed statistics that assist retailers in implementing their marketing strategies successfully in order to attract more customer especially those in the age group of young adults, trigger their purchasing behavior of Korean products and thereby improve the sales and profit of the store.

Moreover, the research also found that perception towards Korean food, Korean fashion, and Korean cosmetic were significantly correlated with consumers' purchasing behavior of Korean products. Thus, the finding of this study can be applied for the use in the education aspect in which government can help in designing various campaign and awareness programs in order to educate the consumers to protect them from easily manipulated by all the marketing strategies carried out by the retailers only for the purpose of gaining profits.

There is an interesting implication that Korean food experience influences customers' intention to visit Korea, which can be comparable to film-induced tourism, which refers that a destination of movie shot attracts many tourists. On the other hand, food-induced tourism has in common with gastronomy tourism as food works as a push factor that makes tourists to visit a destination. However, main motivation of food-induced tourism is not always trying ethnic food. It can be others such as learning history, customs or leisure other than food experience but intention to travel occurs due to ethnic food experience. In other words, ethnic food restaurants in a foreign country play an important role as a gate way for experiencing its culture and traveling to the food's origin. This implicates that Korean government or tourism organization need to collaborate with Korean restaurants in Klang Valley to increase tourists from Malaysia or support individuals to run Korean food business. In addition, it seems that Korean food experience at Korean restaurants leads customers to cooking or shopping Korean food, which can explain why demand for Korean food products in Malaysia has increased. Furthermore, it is essential to satisfy customers' expectation on food and service of employees since they have a significant relation to bring positive effects for restaurant business and increasing curiosity about Korea in general.

The image of the Korean fashion industry conveyed through media communications will likely affect the evaluation of Korean fashion industry products. Moreover, the advent of the quota-free era in the 21st century, the Korean fashion industry is no longer price-competitive, especially when compared to other Asian countries, such as China, which still has a low wage structure. Although the Korean fashion industry is meeting the challenge by adding creative fashion design, branding, and high quality, consumer-oriented retail service, it is still not clearly distinguished from low-wage Asian producers. Without increased awareness of the leading Korean fashion brands and a global appreciation of Korean designers, Malaysian consumers cannot rely on the image of the Korean fashion industry as

a positive halo effect to capture the uniqueness of Korean fashion products. Making sure that a continuous coverage of Korean fiber and fabrics companies is being kept up in the mass media will also contribute to the positive evaluation of the Korean fashion industry. All fashion industry sectors need to vigorously and strategically promote their new products, events, and practitioners to grab more attention in major foreign markets and to dispel the traditional stereotype of Korea as merely a low-wage supplier. The positive image of these fashion product categories may create a synergistic effect on the Korean textile and apparel fashion industries.

Contribution of this research is mainly applicable to a number of key stakeholders in the business. Especially, manufacturers and marketers of Korea cosmetic industry and all none Korea cosmetic company that compete in the cosmetic industry. This study uncover customer insight about their purchase criteria and implication when they come to buy Korean cosmetic products which allow marketers to be able to optimally allocate their marketing budget to the right marketing mix effectively and efficiently. At the same time, this study can also give deeper understanding into what is on Malaysian customer mind which can allow cosmetic to grow and develop new product in these categories. Korean cosmetics are unique from the others cosmetic because Korean cosmetic is look natural style make up and add skin care to the cosmetic. Therefore, this is the most female need which is having natural look and have brightening perfect and smooth skin. Customer not only want to get beauty from the cosmetic but they want cosmetic can help to improve or take care of their skin. Besides, online shopping is also one of the choice from Malaysian customer nowadays to buy product and also give benefit to the market. Customer perceive the information from Internet or social network such as; YouTube, blog, Facebook and Instagram. That affects the marketing strategy to advertise on Internet or social network channel. Moreover, presenter, blogger and reviewer are the person that can affect customer more to purchase.

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