

A Systematic Review on the Influence of Product Placement (PPL) in Korean Drama and its Effects towards Youth Purchase Intention on Korean Products in Malaysia

Wan Nurdayana Che Wan Mohd Khair*
Universiti Teknologi MARA, Malaysia

*Corresponding email: wannurdayana.wnd@gmail.com

Abstract

This systematic review synthesised evidence on the influence of K-drama content on purchase intentions among Malaysian youth. The Korean wave has been infiltrating the Malaysian landscape since 2010, and K-dramas, has gained in popularity, particularly from the younger generation. Watching Korean culture and products that the actors portrayed had influenced the youth to purchase Korean products, especially from the brands advertised as Product Placement (PPL). This study employs Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA), based on papers in the Google Scholar database. A search of the Google Scholar database reaped four eligible studies. This paper includes research papers from 2018 to April 2022, including keywords 'product placement in K-drama' and 'purchase intention' and 'Malaysia' and 'youth'. Findings included factors that affect youth's purchase intention towards Korean products featured in K-dramas as PPL: social value, social attachment, idolisation towards their favourite celebrities and positive perception towards K-drama content and the Korean culture. Due to methodological constraints in cross-sectional design, sampling, and measures, there are significant constraints in the findings. The interest shown by young adults towards Korean content and consumption of Korean products is often discussed. The topic should be measured more through qualitative enquiries, explored further in various age groups and variables related to the effect of PPL displayed in entertainment products.

Keywords: *Product Placement, K-drama, Purchase Intention, Youth, Malaysia*

Pengaruh Penempatan Produk dalam Genre K-drama dan Kesannya terhadap tujuan Pembelian produk Korea oleh golongan belia di Malaysia: Tinjauan Sistematik

Abstrak

Tinjauan sistematik ini dilakukan untuk membuat analisis bukti berkenaan pengaruh kandungan program dalam genre K-drama terhadap tujuan pembelian dalam kalangan belia di Malaysia. Gelombang budaya popular Korea telah menghempas lanskap hiburan di Malaysia sejak 2010 dan sejak itulah program televisyen dalam genre K-drama telah meraih populariti yang begitu pesat dalam kalangan belia awal khususnya. Kegiatan penontonan produk media Korea yang menyaksikan pelbagai elemen budaya dan produk Korea diselitkan dalam program terbitan negara itu berupaya mempengaruhi penonton untuk membelinya melalui strategi periklanan yang dikenali sebagai penempatan produk. Tinjauan sistematik ini telah menggunakan Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) dan menganalisis artikel penyelidikan daripada pangkalan data Google Scholar. Tinjauan ini berjaya menemukan empat kajian yang memenuhi spesifikasi dan ianya diterbitkan pada tahun 2018 sehingga April 2022. Kesemuanya dapat dikesan dengan menggunakan carian kata kunci seperti 'product placement in K-drama', 'purchase intention', 'Malaysia' dan 'youth'. Dapatan tinjauan sistematik ini merumuskan beberapa faktor yang mempengaruhi tujuan pembelian produk yang dipaparkan dalam genre K-drama yang merangkumi nilai sosial, keterikatan sosial, pemujaan terhadap bintang popular dan persepsi yang positif terhadap kandungan genre K-drama dan budaya Korea. Namun, kajian ini berhadapan kekangan metodologi seperti rekabentuk kajian, persampelan dan pengukuran. Apa yang pasti, minat golongan belia awal terhadap kandungan dan kepenggunaan produk media adalah yang kerap dibincangkan dalam makalah penyelidikan tersebut. Topik sebegini perlu diukur dan dinilai melalui kaedah kualitatif, diterokai dalam pelbagai kumpulan umur penonton dan pemboleh ubah yang berkaitan untuk melihat kesan penempatan produk dalam program hiburan.

Kata Kunci : *Penempatan Produk, K-drama, Tujuan Pembelian, Belia, Malaysia*

Introduction

Influence of Product Placement (PPL) in K-Drama

K-drama (Korean TV drama) has been a part of the Korean Wave apart from K-Pop, Korean entertainment programmes and Korean movies. Korean Wave or *Hallyu* refers to "a surge in the international visibility of Korean culture, beginning in East Asia in the 1990s and continuing more recently in the United States, Latin America, the Middle East, and parts of Europe," as coined by a Chinese journalist in the 1990s to describe the wave of Korean pop culture (Ing et al., 2018). Food, fashion, and sports have all been added to the definition of *Hallyu* in recent years (Gan, 2019). Due to the immense popularity of the Korean wave, many Korean products apart from the entertainment products are garnering a lot of attention.

The penetration of Korean products has significantly increased throughout the years (Lim et al., 2020). One of the reasons being that K-dramas contains a lot of Korean cultural products and paid product placement (PPL) or better known as product endorsements that influences consumers to purchase them. In addition, Mat et al. (2020) stated that many youngsters look up to celebrities as their role models and they tend to imitate the brands or products that are endorsed, making PPL the most effective way to instil favourable attitudes or having purchasing intentions in customers' desire to mimic their favourite celebrities such as actors or actresses in K-drama. It shows that young adults' idolisation or admiration towards their favourite actors has a certain degree of influence on their purchasing behaviour on Korean products.

K-Drama: Malaysian Youth Perception

According to Ing et al. (2018), the strength of the social attachment of Malaysian youth has proven to encourage their interest in purchasing a product displayed in K-dramas. K-dramas are often perceived as a form of escapism by the Malaysian youth. The influence of K-Pop and K-Drama has stimulated interest in Korean products, especially Korean beauty products which are very popular among young consumers.

However, there is the perception of *Hallyu* as a form of cultural imperialism and re-orientalism, and finally the changes of the broader ASEAN region that have displaced *Hallyu*. Nowadays, the Korean wave has been perceived as too mainstream and repetitively producing the same entertainment products (Ainslie et al., 2018). Despite not necessarily achieving an ultimately "mainstream" status, this now widespread and inclusive form of pop culture has reached a point where it seems to be regarded as part of the "status quo" and must therefore be "othered," whether consciously or otherwise. Lim et al. (2020) claims that most of the youth are into the hype of Korean entertainment products such as K-drama to simply keep up with the trend.

Youth Lifestyles

According to a study, the Korean Wave which was formed by South Korean films and TV dramas, which influenced the emergence of greater interest in Korea among Malaysians (Lim et al., 2020). Additionally, the youth are prone to follow the latest fashion trends set by popular artists. Young adults who are familiar with K-pop, they are influenced by Korean fashion and lifestyle to emulate K-pop icons, TV drama characters, or the renowned song.

The appearance of celebrities on television, whether as an endorsement or as a TV personality, is a global role model that has the potential to dramatically affect the individual behaviour of their audience and admirers, particularly youngsters who observe, copy, or reproduce the behaviour of others (Mat et al., 2020). For example, they might want to copy the makeup, hairstyle, clothing, smartphones, cars and many more. Ing et al. (2018) stated that the greater the frequency with which the youth are involved in Korean Wave entertainment, indicated the relevance of the use of Korean products in their daily lives. It occurred as a result of the prominent Korean celebrity's influence on young buyers' perceptions of Korean goods and their desire to copy and incorporate the products used by their favourites into their lifestyle.

Korean products consumed in Malaysia

Mat et al. (2020) stated that the popularity of Korean Wave has resulted in billions of dollars in revenue for the Korean government, as well as an increase in sales of Korean vehicles, cell phones, and fashion items in many other regions of the world. Malaysian youth lifestyles, ways of thinking, aesthetics, consumption habits, and consumption of Korean cultural products have all been influenced by the Korean Wave. According to a recent survey by Lim et al. (2020), Korean products such as cosmetics, meals, K-pop, K-drama entertainment, and smartphones have influenced customer perceptions of the Korean wave. The youth are a lot more inclined to consume the Korean products shown or used in K-dramas to follow the latest trends and copy their favourite celebrities.

One of the Korean products that is consumed by Malaysians includes beauty products. Beauty items grew in popularity among young and adult consumers, associating them with a more relaxed lifestyle, greater versatility, and comfort (Lim et al., 2020). Notably, as reported, *Laneige* and *Innisfree* are the top two Korean beauty product brands in Malaysia, followed by *Sulwhasoo*, *Mamonde*, and *Etude House*. Many renowned Asian brands, such as *Laneige*, *Etude House*, and *Innisfree* from Korea, have rapidly increased their popularity among younger consumers due to rising client demand.

Current Study

The present study aims to see if the consumption of K-drama has the potential to diminish viewers pride in their nation by influencing their product preferences, making them consume Korean products more than local ones, and even having them believe that their own country is inferior to South Korea. This systematic review examined the evidence for the influence of K-drama on purchasing intentions of Korean products among youth in Malaysia. The intention was to indicate further research on this topic.

Method

Protocol and registration

This report follows the guidelines of the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) statement (Page et al., 2021).

Eligibility Criteria

For inclusion in this review, studies fulfilled the following eligibility criteria:

- Participants: aged 18 to 29
- Exposure: Experienced watching Korean drama
- Location: Malaysia
- Outcome: purchase intention towards Korean products

Search Strategy

The literature search was done from 2017 to April 2022 through electronic databases such as *Google Scholar*. The key words or phrases used to identify related studies were: 'product placement in K-drama' and 'purchase intention' and 'Malaysia' and 'youth'. References from the retrieved studies were also cross-checked for additional literature.

Data extraction

The PRISMA Flow diagram, shown in Figure 1, was used to select the reviewed papers. The data was retrieved from the relevant articles once they were read. Finally, the researcher extracted the data to see if they met the goal and inclusion criteria as seen in Table 1.

Table 1: Prisma Checklist Data Extraction

No	Study	Aim	Research Design	Sample Size	Sample Characteristics
Article 1	Purchase Intention of Korean Beauty Products among Undergraduate Students	To examine the factors influencing undergraduate students' intention to purchase towards Korean beauty products in Malaysia.	Quantitative method	351 respondents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age 18-26. • Undergraduate students. • Malaysian.
Article 2	Korean Wave and Malaysian Young Adults: Attitudes, Intention and Behaviour	To find out how Malaysian young adults reacted to the Korean Wave products regarding their attitudes, intention, and behaviour.	Quantitative method	126 respondents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age 18-28. • Malaysian. • Average experience of 5 years of listening to K-Pop song or watching Korean drama.
Article 3	Young Malaysian Consumers' Attitude and Intention to Imitate Korean Celebrity Endorsements	To examine the influence of Korean celebrities on consumer attitude and intention to imitate in the context of celebrity endorsement.	Quantitative method	602 respondents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age 18-29 • Malaysian • Lives in the Klang Valley. • Individual males and females who had experience watching Korean celebrity endorsements or had been attracted to Korean celebrities
Article 4	A Qualitative Study on The Soft Power of Korean Popular Culture On Consumer Behaviour in Malaysia	To explore the relationship between Korean popular culture and consumer behaviour towards Korean products and look into their perceptions towards Korean products.	Qualitative method	10 participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age 17-29 • Malaysian • Individuals who have consume on Korean products before.

Assessment of quality

The quality of eligible studies was assessed using comparison and synthesis of the studies, key information relevant to the study issue was methodically gathered and summarised. It covers the advantages and disadvantages of the study. An overall rating of 'good', 'fair' or 'poor' was given for each study. All of the studies were independently rated by the researcher.

Table 2: Quality Assessment

No	Advantage	Disadvantage	Review Results
Article 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The study has a precise aim. The study has sample characteristics justification. The study has results, findings, and conclusions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No sample size calculation. No sample size justification. 	Good
Article 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The study has a precise aim. The study has sample characteristics justification. The study has results, findings, and conclusions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No sample size calculation. No sample size justification. 	Good
Article 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The study has a precise aim. The study has sample characteristics justification. The study has results, findings, and conclusions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No sample size calculation. No sample size justification. 	Good
Article 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The study has a precise aim. The study has sample characteristics justification. The study has results, findings, and conclusions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No sample size calculation. Small sample size less than 50, high risk of bias. A lower participation rate than 50% reduces the degree of generalisability of data collected. No sample size justification. 	Poor

Data analysis

The data collected from the articles chosen were analysed using the PRISMA checklist method. Each study was described before being compared and synthesised using the PRISMA systematic literature review.

Results

From the *Google Scholar* electronic database an initial 80 studies were identified which relates to the keywords, 'product placement in K-drama' and 'purchase intention' and 'Malaysia' and 'youth' from the year 2018 to 2022 as presented in Table 3. The results increased by seven studies in the year 2019 compared to 2018. This number has increased by 32% in the year 2021 and dropped by 84% in 2022. Referring to the flowchart (Figure 1), records that were identified through the *Google Scholar* database is 80, a total of 76 records were excluded, leaving only four records being assessed for eligibility.

On reading the complete text, only four papers were eligible while 76 papers found to be ineligible, the most common reason being the country that the research is being conducted in and the nationality of the sample. The PRISMA flowchart (Figure 1) provides further detail on the reasons for exclusion. After applying the inclusion criteria and the PRISMA guidelines the total number of studies included for the review was three (Page et al., 2021).

Table 3: Keywords General Search

Keywords	Year	Result	Platform
product placement in K-drama and purchase intention and Malaysia and youth	2018	12	Google Scholar
	2019	19	
	2020	21	
	2021	25	
	2022	3	

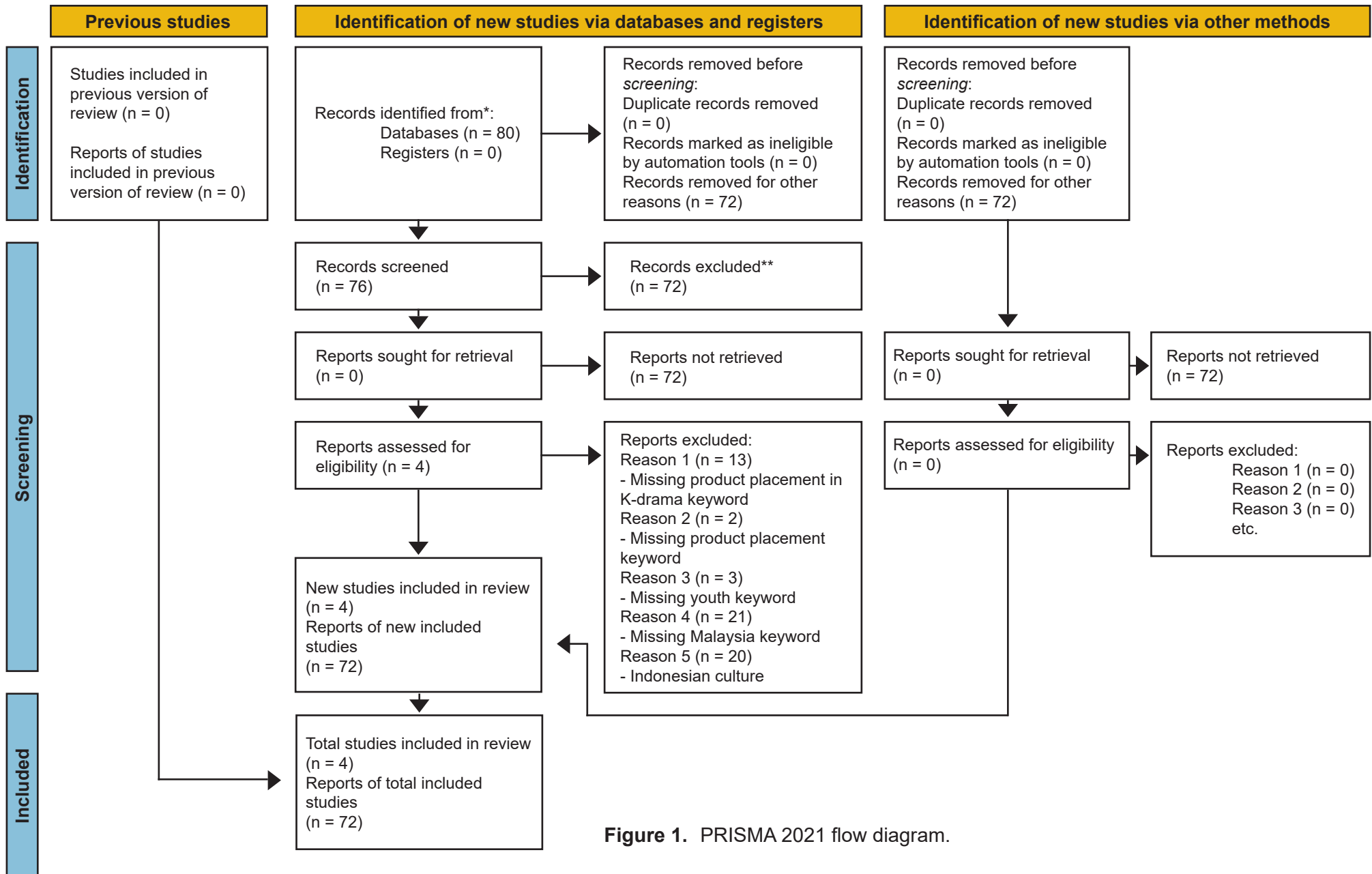


Figure 1. PRISMA 2021 flow diagram.

Table 3: Keywords General Search

Article No	Title	Study objective	Method Used	Results	Discussion	Recommendation
1	Purchase Intention of Korean Beauty Products among Undergraduate Students	To examine the factors influencing undergraduate students' intention to purchase towards Korean beauty products in Malaysia.	Quantitative method	Undergraduate students are more likely to buy Korean beauty products if the products provide consistent quality and a reasonable price. Furthermore, social value explains that if the students' perceived advisers are essential to them and the brand can communicate social approval, the likelihood of them buying Korean beauty products is higher. According to the findings, social values account for over 60% of the variance in purchase intention.	As a result, marketers must focus their efforts on improving purchase intention performance to increase the performance of social value, which has the highest significance but poor performance, while functional and epistemic are the second and third priority.	First, the study's sample consists of Malaysian students aged 18 to 26; hence, the conclusions of this study cannot be applied to other populations. Second, this study only employed three characteristics that were significant in predicting the purchase intention of this specific sample group for Korean beauty items which are social values, epistemic values, and functional values. However, research might give more generalizability with other samples.
2	Korean Wave and Malaysian Young Adults: Attitudes, Intention and Behaviour	To find out how Malaysian young adults reacted to the Korean Wave products in terms of their attitudes, intention and behaviour.	Quantitative method	In this study, Malaysian young adults had good sentiments about the Korean Wave. Positive intent to utilise, acquire, distribute information, and even go to South Korea was also discovered. Overt behaviours inferred by hours spent on Korean Wave items, info-sharing behaviour, and medium preference were also discovered. Korean drama is the most popular of the three Korean Wave items which are K-Drama, K-Pop and Korean beauty products, especially among women.	Despite the limited penetration of Korean beauty goods, customer devotion to Korean dramas and K-pop groups may encourage consumers to purchase Korean beauty products.	In the future, Malaysian young adults will become faithful buyers of Korean items and, eventually, the 'spokesperson' for Korean Wave among Muslim countries, which will be critical to the expansion of Korean Wave. However, challenges and issues, such as the relative sexual perception variations among audiences in various cultural situations, should be closely monitored by the Korean government and industry practitioners.

3	Young Malaysian Consumers' Attitude and Intention to Imitate Korean Celebrity Endorsements	To examine the influence of Korean celebrities on consumer attitude and intention to imitate in the context of celebrity endorsement.	Quantitative method	The findings indicated that celebrity traits such as attractiveness and trustworthiness were directly and indirectly important determinants of consumer attitudes about mimicking celebrity endorsements, whereas credibility and competence were not. Individual qualities such as self-satisfaction and power expression were also found to be direct and indirect determinants of consumer attitudes toward mimicking celebrity endorsements. There was also a substantial effect on intention to mimic celebrity endorsements on attitude toward mimicking celebrity endorsements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Customers become more grateful and continue to patronise the recommended product or service when they have a high level of confidence in the celebrity, resulting in increased advertising efficacy. > Marketers would benefit greatly from the appeal of an endorsing celebrities in retaining and enhancing customer connection to all sorts of items or brands in commercials. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Future study in this area is advised to use a different indication or all of the indicators given by previous research to examine the effectiveness of celebrity endorsement, while also focusing on predicting attitude, intention, and behaviour, whether directly or indirectly influencing the hypothesis. > Researchers is advised to undertake a fresh study using a qualitative strategy, as the current researcher's quantitative method revealed a flaw in the data collection procedure, probably due to respondents not accurately answering questionnaire items.
4	A Qualitative Study on The Soft Power of Korean Popular Culture On Consumer Behaviour in Malaysia	To explore the relationship between Korean popular culture and consumer behaviour towards Korean products and look into their perceptions towards Korean products.	Qualitative method	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > The findings show that Korean Wave is a successful promotional tool in attracting consumers to have a positive attitude toward Korean products because of the appealing appearance, advertisements, and other factors. > Majority of the participants choose to consume Korean products because of their high quality rather than idolism. 	A number of participants in this study claimed to be lovers of K-pop idol groups, and it stands to reason that as die-hard K-pop fans, their purchasing behaviour should be more extreme, such that they would buy things that their idols recommended regardless of the conditions. However, they profess to purchase things with reasonable thinking, which might imply that they are still unsure if they are sensible consumers or die-hard Korean Wave followers.	Further research into the sales of Korean and local items in Malaysia, in order to obtain reliable statistics and value on consumer behaviour by determining which product they prefer.

Conclusion and Recommendation

In conclusion, this study on Product Placement (PPL) in K-dramas plays a significant role in advertising products. Many Korean brands have taken advantage of the popularity of K-dramas and actors as well as actresses in order to promote their brand and products effectively, globally. The youth in particular are attracted to K-dramas due to interesting plots and attractive celebrities in the dramas. Those who engage more with Korean dramas and idolise celebrities are more influenced and likely to make a purchase from PPLs in order to show their support and imitate their favourites. Furthermore, few of the factors influencing the youth's purchase intention towards Korean products featured in K-dramas as PPL includes social value, social attachment, idolisation towards their favourite celebrities and positive perception towards K-drama content and the Korean culture. This has both helped the Korean culture and Korean brands to be recognised by global fans including Malaysians and encourage them to consume imported Korean products such as Korean food, clothing, beauty products, smartphones, cars and even travel to Korea. However, this issue only benefits the Korean economy instead of the Malaysian economy.

In addition, Malaysian young adults will become ambassadors of Korean Wave in Muslim countries, which will be critical to the expansion of Korean Wave. This in turn will rise issues such as the relative sexual perception difference among audiences in various cultural situations as Korean entertainment includes sexual connotations that may not be accepted by other countries, especially Muslim countries. Negative effects of the Korean Wave should be closely monitored by the Korean government, local Malaysian government, and industry practitioners. PPL in K-Dramas may benefit businesses as well as the Korean economy.

Past research suggested that future research focus more on how successful celebrity endorsement is, as well as how to anticipate attitude, intention, and behaviour, whether directly or indirectly effecting the youth's tendency to imitate their favourite celebrity and support them by purchasing the products endorsed. Since majority of the research papers mainly focus on quantitative method, future research using qualitative method is important in order to gather more detailed information and insights that could not be recorded through quantitative. Besides that, researchers suggest a study to be conducted on a comparison between Korean and Malaysia regarding the effectiveness of PPL in dramas towards consumer's purchasing intention on respective country's products. The study could help Malaysian brands understand better on the influence of PPL and strategise to communicate better with their potential consumers in the future. Furthermore, further research into the sales of Korean and local items in Malaysia is also suggested to obtain reliable statistics and

value on consumer behaviour by determining which product they would prefer. In addition, future study should use a different indication to examine the effectiveness of celebrity endorsement, while also focusing on predicting attitude, intention, and behaviour, whether directly or indirectly affecting the young consumers. Lastly, future research on various age groups besides young adults is recommended to widen the scope of findings.

References

- Gan, X. N. (2019). A Qualitative Study on the Soft Power of Korean Culture on Consumer Behaviour in Malaysia. *UTAR*. http://eprints.utar.edu.my/3479/1/fyp_JR_2019_GXN.pdf
- Ing, G. P., Abdul Adis, A. @. A., & Osman, Z. (2018). Korean wave and Malaysian young adults: Attitudes, intention and behaviour. *Malaysian Journal of Business and Economics*, 5, 77–94. <https://jurcon.ums.edu.my/ojums/index.php/mjbe/article/download/1603/1037>
- Lim, C. S., Loo, J. L., Wong, S. C., & Hong, K. T. (2020). Purchase intention of Korean beauty products among undergraduate students. *Journal of Management Research*, 12(3), 19–40. <https://doi.org/10.5296/jmr.v12i3.17149>
- Mat, W. R. W., Kim, H. J., Manaf, A. A. A., Ing, G. P., & Adis, A. A. A. (2020). Young Malaysian consumers' attitude and intention to imitate Korean celebrity endorsements. *Asian Journal of Business Research*, 9(3). <https://doi.org/10.14707/ajbr.190065>
- Page, M. J., McKenzie, J. E., Bossuyt, P. M., Boutron, I., Hoffmann, T. C., Mulrow, C. D., Shamseer, L., Tetzlaff, J. M., Akl, E. A., Brennan, S. E., Chou, R., Glanville, J., Grimshaw, J. M., Hróbjartsson, A., Lalu, M. M., Li, T., Loder, E. W., Mayo-Wilson, E., McDonald, S., . . . Moher, D. (2021). The PRISMA 2020 statement: An updated guideline for reporting systematic reviews. *Journal of Clinical Epidemiology*, 134, 178–189. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclinepi.2021.03.001>