

**EFFECTIVENESS OF PRODUCT ADVERTISEMENTS
MADE THROUGH KOREAN DRAMAS WITHIN THE
YOUNG ADULTS OF KOTA KINABALU**



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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this study entitled **Effectiveness of Product Advertisements made through Korean dramas within the Young Adults of Kota Kinabalu** is the result from my own work and effort except for some excerpts, sentences, explanations, and summaries which I have explained the sources.

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ABSTRACT

Product placements are a strategy to further promote a brand by advertising its products by being featured in movies, dramas, and even television programs such as variety shows. It is a marketing strategy where the artists use any products of a certain brand, whether they are the ambassador of the brand, or the brand is one of the sponsors for the show. The exposure of the products then will lead the viewers to be interested in them. From there, it will lead the viewers to have the intention on purchasing the products.

This study is made to further understand whether product placements or product advertisements done through Korean dramas are effective amongst young adults of Kota Kinabalu. By using cultivation theory, an analysis of advertisements in the form of product placement in Korean dramas acts as a medium to gain the interest of possible buyers within the audiences is made. The study was done by monitoring their interest in Korean dramas, brand awareness as well their purchasing intentions through an online survey.

A total of 383 young adults residing within the Kota Kinabalu area participated in the survey that consists of four sections: personal information, behavioral involvement, brand awareness, and purchase intention. The findings of the study indicated that, overall, most of the respondents realized the product placement in Korean dramas and they do have the intention to purchase because of the actor or actress using it in the dramas they have watched.

Keywords: Korean drama, product placements, advertising, brand awareness, purchasing intentions

ABSTRAK

Penempatan produk adalah satu strategi untuk mempromosikan suatu jenama dengan memasukkan iklan produk mereka dalam filem, drama, dan juga rancangan televisyen. Ia adalah strategi pemasaran di mana artis yang terlibat dalam penggambaran sebuah rancangan menggunakan mana-mana produk dari jenama-jenama tertentu, sama ada mereka adalah duta produk jenama berkenaan ataupun jenama itu sendiri adalah salah satu penaja untuk rancangan televisyen itu. Pendedahan produk berkenaan kemudiannya akan menyebabkan penonton tertarik untuk mencuba produk yang telah digunakan oleh para artis yang mereka minat. Dari situ, ia akan mendorong penonton untuk mempunyai niat membeli.

Kajian ini dibuat untuk memahami dengan lebih mendalam sama ada penempatan produk atau pengiklanan produk yang dilakukan melalui drama Korea berkesan di kalangan golongan muda Kota Kinabalu. Dengan menggunakan Cultivation theory, analisis iklan dalam bentuk penempatan produk dalam drama Korea bertindak sebagai medium untuk menarik minat pembeli dalam kalangan penonton telah dilakukan. Kajian dilakukan dengan memantau minat mereka terhadap drama Korea, kesedaran jenama serta niat membeli melalui tinjauan dalam talian (online survey).

Sebanyak 383 golongan muda yang tinggal di kawasan Kota Kinabalu telah mengambil bahagian dalam tinjauan dalam talian (online survey) yang terdiri daripada empat bahagian: maklumat peribadi, penglibatan tingkah laku, kesedaran jenama dan niat membeli. Dapatan kajian menunjukkan, secara keseluruhannya, kebanyakan responden menyedari penempatan produk dalam drama Korea dan mereka mempunyai niat untuk membeli kerana para pelakon menggunakannya dalam Korean drama yang mereka tonton.

Kata kunci: *Drama Korea, penempatan produk, pengiklanan, kesedaran jenama, niat membeli*

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

PPL – Product placement



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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The usage of technology is getting more and more important, as it has become one of the necessities of human being. Due to globalization, humans' life is revolving around with the existence of technology. With that being said, the exchanges of culturalization from other countries can easily be obtained, which is with the help of internet. These days, people can easily access media contents such as movies, dramas and others through various platforms that existed on the internet. Therefore, this eventually raises the attention of people across the globe with any products that may directly or indirectly being promoted through the media contents that they watch, for instance products that are advertised through Korean dramas.

Korean dramas have achieved popularity literally from any places across the world (S. J. Lee, 2011). Over the past decade, Korean popular culture has spread infectiously throughout the world, which eventually created the term "Korean wave". The Korean wave exploded in the media across the world which generates a ripple effect and therefore has vastly contributed to enhancing South Korea's national image and its economy.

Due to the situation of the current COVID-19 pandemic which made people to sit in the comfort of their home, Korean dramas has attracted more and more fans throughout the world. In Malaysia, the craving for Korean drama started about a decade ago when the hit-drama 'Winter Sonata' made its debut (Ruslan et al., 2016). Marketing communication in Korean drama is also said to improve consumer awareness, store traffic and sales, online search, and even open opportunities for

cross-regional collaboration (Ing et al., 2018). Pay-tv service provider offered dedicated Korean channels, such as KBS World and ONE HD on ASTRO, as well as Channel M and RED, which aired Asian movies, including Korean movies on Hypp TV (Ruslan et al., 2016).

The export statistic of Korean cultural products indicates that Korean Wave leads to greater interest in Korean products (Ing et al., 2018). In the past, a direct advertisement of Korean products whether it is for Korean beauty products or food and beverages can actually be hard to be seen as Korea has a rather strict rule about it. Only recently, more and more tv stations such as national stations of KBS, SBS and MBC, cable tv stations such as tvN, JTBC as well as the company Netflix Korea become more open. The Korean Government established the Korea Foundation for International Cultural Exchange (KOFICE) in order to orchestrate all governmental and private endeavors in the making of Hallyu (S. Lee & Nornes, 2016).

The focus of this study is to learn the effect of products being advertised through Korean dramas within the young adults of Kota Kinabalu. Everything from Korea, such as food, fashion and make-up style, is welcomed in many regional countries and has created huge demand, replacing the dominated role of Japanese and U.S products (Dinh, 2016). Most people preferred enjoying more sophisticated and romantic kinds of dramas and movie that allow them to comfortably sit down with family or friends, which is how Korean dramas mostly managed to fulfill those sentiments. Through these media, Korean life style began to have an impact on the Vietnamese population, thus they try to do like Korean such as listening to K-pop song, eating foods with Korean brands, following Korean fashion and so on (Dinh, 2016).

In this study, the interest of youth that lives in Kota Kinabalu to buy and try Korean products that is shared through the products placement or indirect advertising shown in Korean dramas will be learn. The youths, who were also university students, also expressed their fondness for Korean dramas, which were said to have nice plots and happy endings (Ruslan et al., 2016). In line with varieties of globalized explosion of products and images, people's consumption patterns especially the youth are subject to range of influences (Ariffin et al., 2013).

1.2 Background of Study

In today's environment, when information can circulate swiftly, it appears to have a significant impact on global society's values and ways of life. This may be seen in the broadcasting and entertainment industries. In the past, American items were simply thought to be the greatest, and they quickly became the preferred option, particularly among teens. Today's culture, on

the other hand, is pickier and always looking for alternatives. The Korean Wave movement has been influenced by this effort to sell South Korean culture as a package item.

Since the late 1990s, the Korean wave, or hallyu, has swept the globe with Korean music, drama, film, and even fashion cuisine. Korean pop culture spread naturally to its neighboring countries at first. Because of the enormous potential of the Korean wave, the government has made significant efforts to preserve and reinforce Korean culture throughout the world. Idolization occurs in a variety of areas of life, including sports, entertainment, music, politics, and religion. Sporting heroes, movie actors or actresses, singers, television personalities, pop stars, and political or religious leaders are all legitimate idols. As a result, they have a desire to emulate their idol, which they might begin by using the things that their idols promote as brand ambassadors.

Malaysians have always been predominantly exposed to Western media because of the colonial past, but a new phenomenon appears to have arisen in recent years as Korean dramas on Malaysian television networks such as TV2, TV3, NTV7, Channel 8 and Astro (channels 391 and 393) have become increasingly popular (Hanis & Razak, 2020). Korean dramas can also be watched through the internet from various platforms such as Viu.com, KissAsian.com, iflix.com as well as the well-established company, Netflix.

Products placement made by actors and actresses garners high interest especially among the female young adults. Whether the products are a beauty supplements or skincare products, interest to try the products will always be fixated as a way for the Korean drama lovers relating themselves with their idols. For instance, in the drama Doctors, which was released in 2016, actress Lee SunKyung who was a Laneige ambassador at that time has shown the said product throughout the drama. The product that was being focused on that time was a lipstick of two-tone colors. Immediate effect within consumers who watched the drama was seen as the product raised to be one of the best seller products at that time. This shows that the actor or actresses that promotes a brand that they involved with are highly effective in garnering interest from Korean drama fans. This will ultimately lead them to be the consumer for the brand that their favorite artists are using.

1.3 Problem Statement

Korea has suffered for many years from Japanese invasion and the civil conflict that has divided the country since 1950. As a poor and backward country in the past, Korea tried to resolve its conflict with the North while also rebuilding its economy. However, with the financial crisis of 1997, the country's weak economy was unable to compete with its two neighboring giants, Japan, which has a long history of technological progress, and China, which has always used its vast home market to avoid outside competition. Korea needs to discover a safe way to boost its economy while also establishing its unique personality in order to draw attention. As a result, the government has chosen to focus more on exporting Korean pop culture. Thus, cultural industry was one of a few choices left.

Malaysia is a country where it can develop more in the future, whether it is in a sense of economic or socioeconomic. As South Korea has established a sturdy development with the help of Hallyu, Malaysia can also learn a thing or two. For instance in Vietnam, thanks to the motivation of media exchange developed by the Innovation process of the Vietnamese government since the early 2000s, the Korean Wave has successfully accessed Vietnam through movies, dramas and music, making this country rank 4th among countries that favor Korean Wave the most in Asia (Dinh, 2016). Through the various medias exposed, Korean lifestyle began to have an impact on the Vietnamese population, thus they try to do like Korean such as listening to K-pop song, eating foods with Korean brands, following Korean fashion and so on.

In a sense, Malaysia can learn to promote its cultural industry. This can help lead this country to become favorable amongst people from various countries and increase the knowledge that they can gain by learning the vast cultural heritage. Malaysia's real income per capita increased to 26 percent of the U.S. level in 2010 from 20 percent in 1970 (Cherif & Hasanov, 2015). Despite relatively strong growth and a substantial improvement in export sophistication, Malaysia's total factor productivity lagged behind that of Korea and Taiwan Province of China (Cherif & Hasanov, 2015). Thus, with this research, this can create a bigger understanding on products placements or indirect advertising to be more creatively done within Malaysian entertainment industry. For instance, through product placement in the Korean Drama Descendants of the Sun, Laneige as a prestigious cosmetics company in Korea managed to attract customers' attention and increase sales of its products (Perwitasari & Paramita, 2020).

1.4 Research Questions

The purpose of this study is due to the questions below:

- (i) What are the attitudes of young adults in Kota Kinabalu on product placement used in Korean dramas?
- (ii) What are the factors influencing young adults in buying the products advertised in Korean dramas?

1.5 Research Objectives

This study examines the aspects of product placements promoted in Korean dramas influence the young adults of Kota Kinabalu to purchase the products that were advertised. The following are the targeted objectives of the study:

- (i) To identify the interest of Korean dramas amongst young adults in Kota Kinabalu.
- (ii) To identify the impacts of product placements in Korean dramas on consumer behavior of young adults in Kota Kinabalu.

1.6 Theory

Communication theories are a collection of ideas used to explain, predict, or understand the pattern, nature or outcome of communication process or activity (Nwabueze & Okonkwo, 2018). The communication process and activities are related to the society, individuals, institutions, government, and other aspects of society in mass communication theories. Cultivation theory and agenda-setting theory are two of the theories that befalls under the media impacts theories.

Cultivation theory represents the idea that people's perceptions of the real world are unconsciously influenced by their consumption of media (Obert-Hong, 2019). The basic concept of this theory is the more people watch television, the more likely they are to perceive the real world to be similar to what they have seen on television (Kwon, 2012). The development of New Media has offered audiences with a variety of routes for receiving and assimilation of information. This invariably has a variety of effects on the audience. In terms of product placement, consumer attitudes and purchase intentions, current study proposes

that heavy viewers are more likely to experience more product placement in TV shows (Kwon, 2012).

Thus, in this case, as products are advertised indirectly through Korean drama, young adults who watches and got interested with the products shown in the drama fall under the category of cultivation theory. This happens when ones garnered interest with the products shown and ended up buying and trying the products themselves.

1.7 Scope of Study

The scope of this study is about how products placement through Korean dramas such as Doctors (2016), Memories of the Alhambra (2018), Encounter (2018) and other Korean dramas are affecting the young adults. This study will be focusing on young adults between the ages of 20 years old until 30 years old. There are factors that may or may not causes the young adults to be interested in the products used by the Korean dramas' stars. This research analysis will be made in a broad aspect, which is, within the young adults of male and female that lives in Kota Kinabalu. The respondents will be given a survey using a quantitative technique. The supervisor for this research must ensure that the research techniques used are accurate and reliable.

1.8 Significance of Study

This study's findings will contribute to society's benefit, considering the drastic changes for the environment of study throughout the later time. The greater the effort to understand the perceptions and views of Korean drama fans amongst the young adults from a part of Malaysia, the greater the chances are in increasing the exchanges of products marketing between Malaysia and other countries. A simple daily life preference of watching Korean dramas that lead to people become interested with any products shown in the shows will majorly be a catalyst of enhancing further movement in advertising. This study is important especially for those who are majorly involve in advertising as well as marketing. A deeper understanding of the communication created between the show and the fans will help creating an environment that can help developing a vast aspect of media studies to relate with marketing studies. Whilst for the researcher, this study can be continued throughout in the future as technologies and environment will be continue evolving. Other than that, this study can be an indicator that more studies regarding the relationship of any type of media with

societies are to be indulge, especially in Malaysia. This research is done with the reference from various studied made by researchers from Malaysia as well as other countries.

1.9 Conclusion

This chapter contains introduction and background of the study, problem statement, research objectives and research questions of the study, cultivation theory, scope of study and the significance of study. Next chapter will be based on the review of literature which would be Chapter 2.



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CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

A theory is an attempt to further explain about a belief to provide further in depth understanding about it. Thus, there are many theories created based on detailed research and continued to be research by people these days. This is to ensure the definite theories are still relevant. Cultivation theory is one of the theories that befalls under communication theory.

Cultivation theory was developed based on George Gerbner thoughts on the importance to move past simply examining the short-term effects that media has on a person's beliefs. Cultivation theory was first introduced as a contrast to what Gerbner had considered the dominant form of mass media studies at the time, micro focused studies usually using experiments to figure out whether or not differences between features of media messages would explain immediate responses in attitudes, behaviors, and knowledge (Obert-Hong, 2019). Rather than focusing on particular message elements, Gerbner wanted to focus on the widespread meanings across the entire media landscape. This is because, he was concerned with the influence that broader messages gradually forced on the general public as they were exposed to media messages. Thus, Gerbner focused on three components which are, institutional, message, and effects.

2.2 Background of Theory

Cultivation theory initiates the danger of television lies in its ability to create not a particular viewpoint about one specific issue but the ability to shape people's moral values and general beliefs about the world. Gerbner believed that the mass-produced messages that form culture would influence the public over the long-term by reinforcement as well as change, and that the dynamic of continuity, rather than only that of change needed to be considered when examining mass-produced message systems and their symbolic functions (Obert-Hong, 2019). The theory stands on a number of concepts: the symbolic environment, storytelling, the symbolic function of television, the television traits, the cultural model, the cultivation of value system, the multidirectional process, and the cultural indicators (Mosharafa, 2015).

2.3 Literature Review

The attitudes and behaviors of society are largely determined by messages communicated through mass media channels (Kiara Haripersad, 2018). In Korean dramas, there can be brands promoted in the act of the actors and actresses. This is mostly being done based on whether the actors and actresses are ambassadors for certain the products, it is called as product placements. These days, Korean dramas are being more active in doing so and thus can create brand awareness within their viewer. Product placement is not only the placement of products but also exposure of brands, and/or company names (Berglund & Spets, 2003).

According to Lovisa Ingels (2020), Korean Wave has over the past decade had an immense rise in popularity with its origins in the popularity Korean movies and TV-dramas had in China during the 90s' (Park, 2014; 2016) which then cascade further in popularity and China also gave name to the phenomena in the form of "Hallyu" (Park, 2014). Park (2014) goes on to explain that the Korean Wave has from the 90's when it was heavily dependent on the demand of movies and TV-dramas changed to give way to other aspects of the Korean culture. Starting in 90's, the high demand of Korean wave especially in the form of movies and TV-dramas have change the way people perceive other aspects of Korean culture, even until this day.

According to Zailin et al. (2013), the Korean Wave is popular in Malaysia and had been successfully absorbed into the life of Malaysians (Kit Yeng, 2018). Korean entertainment industries play a huge role of promoting the Korean wave, such as Korean idol group, K-Pop music programs shown in local satellite television channels, K-Pop songs being played in radio

channels, as well as Korean products being imported in Malaysia. One of the most Korean products that gain their name in Malaysia are beauty products as Korean are known to have beautiful and healthy skin. Beauty products such as skincare and cosmetic products are made of natural products from the nature, and this is one of the reasons why people anticipate trying Korean beauty products.

Other than that, according to Zailin et al. (2016), Malaysian youth will tend to express their idolization of Korean celebrities by adoring and imitating their idols by using and having similar fashion included clothes, hair styles and make-up. Various styles and fashions from South Korea have been followed by adolescents in Malaysia (Zainal Ariffin et al., 2013). This happens due to the booming of Korean dramas, K-Pop music, beauty care products of Korea brands as well as the Korean language itself are progressively becoming very popular in Malaysia especially among the adolescents. Therefore, as the Korean culture are being indirectly promoted through media technology, high interest of people wanting to visit South Korea have risen throughout the past years.

Meanwhile, the impact of Korean wave in Indonesia, shows that scenario and characters of Korean dramas have successfully touched Indonesians' emotions, such as, sympathy and empathy, and this emotional touch has resulted in the positive image of Korea (Son & Kijboonchoo, 2018). From there, audiences are easily influenced by Korean drama product placements, especially when it comes to food and beauty products (Advincula et al., 2021). Subway, Laneige, Jin Soju, Shin Ramyun, and Samsung are some of the very familiar brands amongst those who watch Korean dramas. Even though the brands products are already well-known in South Korea, the actors who are endorsing the products also become a significant role of the purchasing behaviors within the audiences.

Product placements that are displayed in movies as well as on television shows grab the attention of the viewers and helps in creating an acceptance for the brand (Kumar, 2017). Consumers gradually start to remember the brand while they are shopping and selecting their next buy. Additionally, they learn about the additional factors that are linked to product placement and determine their purchasing intentions, such as references, emotions, and celebrity endorsements.

Product placement prominence has a positive effect on brand memory, especially when placements are used in audio-visual media (Alexandre et al., 2011). Product placement may have implicit impacts since branding can influence attitudes and behaviour without the consumer being aware of the placement. Viewers generally tolerate product placement but