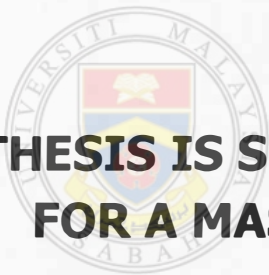


**THE RELATIONSHIPS OF CELEBRITY,
INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERISTICS AND
ATTITUDE ON INTENTION TO IMITATE KOREAN
CELEBRITY BEHAVIOUR**

WAN ROAZHA BIN WAN MAT

**THIS THESIS IS SUBMITTED IN FULFILMENT
FOR A MASTER OF BUSINESS**



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ACCOUNTANCY**

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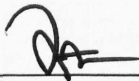
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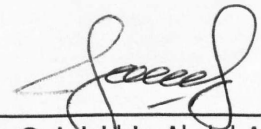
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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the thesis is based on my original work except for quotations and citations which have been duly acknowledged. I also declare that it has not been previously or currently submitted for any other degree at UMS.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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ABSTRACT

Marketers always look for opportunities to promote their type of brand and product by using celebrity endorsement to deliver their objectives. Nowadays, Korean celebrities have become very popular among Malaysian and also around the world. This is a good chance for marketers to use the Korean celebrity to appear in advertisements to endorsing their product or brand. Using the celebrity endorsement in advertisement is successful. Therefore, this situation has encourage the current study to addresses the issue of young Malaysians' intention to imitate Korean celebrity endorsement behaviour in an advertisement. Specifically, it indicates the influence of Korean celebrity endorsement in an advertisement on consumer's attitude toward imitating Korean celebrity endorsement and has an impact on their intention to imitate Korean celebrity behaviour. In this study, the researcher focuses on the impact of Korean celebrity's characteristics (attractiveness, credibility, trustworthiness and expertise) and consumer's individual characteristics (self-satisfaction and expression of power) on the Malaysian consumers' attitude towards imitating Korean celebrity endorsement and this leads to Malaysian consumer's intention to imitate Korean celebrity behaviour. The theory of para-social interaction proposed by Horton and Wohl (1956) and theory of imitation proposed by Tarde (1969) and Baldwin (1925) were used in this study to support the conceptual framework used in this study. Six hundred Malaysian university students from around the Klang Valley participated in this study. Using Smart-PLS version 3.2.7 to analyse the data and the results shown that Korean celebrity's characteristics which consist of attractiveness and trustworthiness are significant while credibility and expertise are not significant predictors on consumer attitude toward imitating Korean celebrity endorsement. However, consumer's individually characteristics which consist of both self-satisfaction and expression of power are significant predictors on consumer attitude toward imitating Korean celebrity endorsement. Besides, there was a significant effect of attitude toward imitating Korean celebrity endorsement on intention to imitate Korean celebrity behaviour. Finally, the attitude toward imitating Korean celebrity endorsement was also found to significantly mediate the relationship between self-satisfaction and expression of power and intention to imitate Korean celebrity behaviour, although, the attitude toward imitating Korean celebrity endorsement was also found to significantly mediate the relationship between (attractiveness and trustworthiness) and intention to imitate Korean celebrity behaviour. But, the attitude toward imitating Korean celebrity endorsement was found not significantly to mediate the relationship between (credibility and expertise) and intention to imitate Korean celebrity behaviour. Suggestions for future research and practitioners are also discussed.

ABSTRAK

Hubungan Antara Perwatakan Selebriti, Individu Dan Sikap Terhadap Keinginan Meniru Tingkah Laku Selebriti Korea

Ahli pemasaran sentiasa mencari peluang di dalam mempromosikan setiap jenis produk dan jenama keluaran mereka menggunakan khidmat duta pengiklanan sebagai orang ketiga untuk menyampaikan maklumat seperti yang diinginkan. Pada masa kini, selebriti Korea semakin meningkat terkenal di kalangan peminat di Malaysia, malahan di seluruh dunia. Ianya menjadi satu peluang yang baik kepada ahli pemasaran untuk menggunakan khidmat daripada selebriti Korea sebagai duta pengiklanan untuk mempromosikan barangan mereka. Menggunakan duta pengiklanan dalam pemasaran dilihat lebih berjaya. Hal ini telah menggalakkan pengkaji untuk mengkaji tentang isu pemuda Malaysia yang mempunyai keinginan untuk meniru duta pengiklanan daripada selebriti Korea di dalam pengiklanan. Secara spesifiknya, menjangkau kepengaruhannya oleh duta pengiklanan daripada selebriti Korea di dalam pengiklanan terhadap sikap pengguna keatas peniruan duta pengiklanan daripada selebriti Korea itu dan seterusnya membawa kepada keinginan pengguna untuk meniru tingkah laku selebriti Korea tersebut. Di dalam kajian ini, pengkaji memberi penekanan kepada kesan daripada perwatakan selebriti (tarikan, kredibiliti, kepercayaan dan kemahiran) dan perwatakan individu (kepuasan diri dan kuasa ekpresi) kepada sikap pengguna Malaysia terhadap peniruan duta pengiklanan daripada selebriti Korea di dalam pengiklanan dan membawa kepada keinginan pengguna Malaysia untuk meniru tingkah laku selebriti Korea. Teori interaksi Para-sosial yang di bangunkan oleh Horton dan Wohl (1956) dan teori peniruan yang di bangunkan oleh Tarde (1969) dan Baldwin (1925) telah digunakan di dalam kajian ini untuk mengoperasikan konseptual rajah kerja yang di gunakan dalam kajian ini. Enam ratus pelajar universiti di Malaysia daripada sekitar kawasan Lembah Klang di gunakan dalam kajian ini. Keputusan menunjukkan bahawa perwatakan selebriti yang terdiri daripada tarikan dan kepercayaan adalah signifikansi, sementara kredibiliti dan kemahiran tidak signifikansi untuk menentukan sikap pengguna terhadap peniruan duta pengiklanan daripada selebriti Korea di dalam pengiklanan. Manakala, perwatakan individu terdiri daripada kedua-dua kepuasan diri dan kuasa ekpresi adalah signifikansi menentukan sikap pengguna terhadap peniruan duta pengiklanan daripada selebriti Korea di dalam pengiklanan. Selain itu, sikap pengguna terhadap peniruan duta pengiklanana daripada selebriti Korea di dalam iklan dalam mempengaruhi keinginan pengguna untuk meniru adalah signifikansi. Akhir sekali, sikap pengguna terhadap peniruan duta pengiklanan daripada selebriti Korea di dalam pengiklanan menjadi pengantara kepada hubungan antara (tarikan dan kepercayaan) dan keinginan untuk meniru adalah signifikansi. Tetapi, sikap pengguna terhadap peniruan duta selebriti Korea di dalam iklan menjadi pengantara kepada hubungan antara (kepuasan diri dan kuasa ekpresi) dan keinginan untuk meniru adalah tidak signifikansi. Cadangan untuk kajian untuk masa akan datang dan untuk kegunaan industri juga di bincangkan

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- PLS - Partial Least Squares
- SPSS - Statistical Package for Social Sciences



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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher will be discussing the background of the study which is to tell about the important of current issue that is related to this study which in turn inspired the researcher's attempt to study the topic. In order to allow for easier understanding of this current study, the researcher has created Figure 1.1 to show the overall illustration of this study. The problem identification will also be discussed based on previous studies along with issues that are seen as appropriate in this study which further extend the problem statement for providing a specific problem to be focused upon in this study. The objective of the study and research question will also be mentioned in this chapter. All terms of related variables used in this study will be defined. Plus, the scope of study will be discussed in this chapter for addressing the limitations of the study. The contribution of the study is also mentioned and finally followed by the organization of the all the chapters of this thesis.

1.2 Background of the Study

In this modern world where information can be transmitted or broadcasted quickly, it is seen to have a great influence among members of the society especially in Malaysia. Previously, Malaysians viewed Western countries such as the United States of America as producers of products and technology. Over the past decade, specifically in the domain of broadcasting and entertainment, it can be seen that popular American music, films, books and fashion were considered to be the best as well as becoming a frenzy especially among teenagers (Ariffin, Othman, Abdullah and Arif, 2013). Today a society can have more selection of alternatives. Unquestionably, we can see that the development of information that has spread around the world especially in Asian countries provided the opportunities and

inspirations for South Koreans to commercialize their cultures as a package commodity through Korean Wave or Hallyu (Ariffin, Othman, *et al.* 2013). In addition, Malaysia as a country has become an interest to many outsiders especially South Koreans for introducing their new cultural products given that Malaysians are easily influenced by specific new products such as cosmetics and fashion products (Ariffin, 2016). It is easier for South Korea to export its culture through the proper channels to this country as the South Korean government has its own supporting body called the Korean Creative Content Agency (KOCCA). As such, KOCCA is a government agency affiliated with the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism that is in-charge of overseeing cultural content. These government supports were designed to promote the business activities of cultural firms through the establishment of quasi-governmental organizations that cooperate with the private sector (Baek 2009). These types of supports have inspired more South Koreans to focus on their efforts on exporting and commercializing their culture through language, dramas and popular music (Jalaluddin and Ahmad, 2011).

Given that South Korean culture is popular, the culture itself has been known as the Korean Wave or Hallyu by most countries due to its huge influence on many people around the world (Ravina, 2009). The Korean Wave or Hallyu started garnering a huge influence of Korean culture throughout East Asia in the 1990s (Ravina, 2009). For instance, Korean Wave has successfully spread itself across China and Taiwan in the mid-1990s and before finally arriving in Japan in the early 2000s. The Korean Wave has overseen the rising popularity of the Korean entertainment and culture among Asian and western countries (Kim, 2007). As it stands, Korean Wave is the cultural phenomenon by which people in the world are willing to adopt Korean popular culture (Jung, 2006). According to Rae (2015), Korean Wave or Hallyu can be divided into four parts to export abroad. The first Hallyu is Korean Drama (K-drama), the second Hallyu is Korean Pop Music (K-pop music), the third Hallyu is Korean Culture (K-culture) and last but not least is Korean Style (K-style). Korean Wave or Hallyu started with K-drama exports in the late 1990s by which point it has quickly jumped into the fourth stage (K-style).

In addition, Bae (2007) stated that there are three theoretical analyses to explain how the Korean Wave or Hallyu has increasingly boomed. Firstly, it is

concerned with the theory of competence (hard power). The phenomenal growth of Korean Wave or Hallyu can be attributed to South Korea's amazing economic growth in industrialization which had greatly achieved excellent growth in the late 20th century (Bae, 2007). Thus, Korean Wave or Hallyu has become the symbol of Korean hard power cultural technology and has given opportunities to Korean workers as well as entrepreneurs to improve the cultural product in Korea (Rae, 2015). Secondly, the success of Korean Wave can be explained by the theory of attractiveness (soft power). The success of Korean Wave or Hallyu can be trace back to the attractiveness of South Korean Pop (K-Pop) that consists of Korean-Style Development Model which allows for excellent democracy, increased economic growth and most importantly, the creation of balanced dynamics within the Korean civil society along with traditional values of loyalty and filial piety (Bae, 2007). Thirdly, it can be justified through the theory of criticism. The phenomenal success of Korean Wave or Hallyu is not always positively received by people but according to this theory, Hallyu could only be successfully spread by specifically targeting an Asian niche market under the US-led global cultural order (Bae, 2007).

According to Bae (2007), the popularity of Korean TV dramas has made the Korean Wave or Hallyu successful and very attractive with Korean pop influencing many audiences across the Asian countries. As explained by past studies, Hanryu refers to the current fad for all aspects of South Korean popular culture such as movies, music, online games, hip-hop clothes, hairstyles and cosmetic which are sweeping across East Asia like a cultural tsunami (Dator and Seo, 2004; Endo and Matsumoto, 2004; Seo, 2005; Hanaki *et al.*, 2007). This is the reason why marketers prefer to choose celebrities endorsing their product or brand because they possess characteristic attributes of attractiveness (Erdogan, 1999). Furthermore, celebrities can also frequently influence consumers' attitude (Ranjbarian, Shekarchizade and Momeni, 2010).

Ranjbarian, Shekarchizade and Momeni (2010) have stated that celebrity endorsement will support the industries by creating effective advertising in order to generate positive impacts on consumers' attitudes towards celebrity endorsement. Based on a previous study by Khan and Lodhi (2016), using celebrity endorsement will make the target consumers become more attracted due to the belief that

celebrity endorsement is the most powerful marketing to persuade consumers. Besides, it is mentioned in the study that celebrity endorsement will bring more positive impact compared to the non-celebrity endorsement.

Also, Pengarajan and Sathya (2014) suggested that using celebrity endorsement in advertising is a powerful strategy that can positively affect target consumers. According to Nelson and Gloria (2012), celebrity endorsement based on the world dimension is a good communication strategy to promote all types of goods and services to all consumers; hence it would be more effective if the celebrity endorsement becomes the best selection. This is to ensure that celebrities and products are a fit with each other as it could bring either a positive or negative image to the target consumers. In addition, appearance of celebrities on TV screens whether as a celebrity endorsement or TV celebrity is a vicarious role model that can greatly influence their audiences and admirers (Makgosa, 2010). Studies on Malaysian drama indicated that Malaysian viewers are very much influenced in terms of fashion and music as well as other national cultures (Jalaluddin and Ahmad, 2011). Md Syed and Hamzah (2012) have stated that the Malaysian government tried to utilize popular culture as a vehicle to mobilize its "nation-building and cultural objectives". These efforts were hoped to brought about effects on teenagers, especially during their learning process and self-observing for their own identification by copying or reproducing others behaviour (Bush and Bush, 2004). However, adoption of behaviours from other people made by individuals who do not realize what they are actually doing it is called as an imitation (Matthey, 2006). Moreover, people can imitate all of their surroundings as their role model (Bush and Bush, 2004). According to Bush and Martin (2000), role models such as celebrities have higher possibilities in influencing consumers' personal behaviour.

Sirgy (1982) noted that people often use images proposed by celebrities in order to define their own concepts, which makes celebrities as powerful influencers. In addition, Sirgy (1998) also mentioned that for celebrities who are seen as inspirations, their advice may be appropriate for individuals who require motivation for their self-esteem; this encourages them to enhance themselves by following the advice of those celebrities. Additionally, according to WordPress.com site, the

analysis of user behaviour, specifically on celebrity impact, it is suggested that a celebrity can strengthen things, extend the impact of influence when he or she appear in the crowd and people imitate the phenomenon of celebrity psychology. Celebrity effects such as celebrity-sponsored advertising have a profound impact on our lives to stimulate the behaviour of imitating or role-modelling. A good personal characteristic of celebrity endorsement will be the positive factor of imitation behaviour (Awasthi and Choraria, 2015). According to Chan and Zhang (2007), in their study of comparison and materialism, it has been mentioned that individuals always compare themselves to celebrities as the latter are seen as more attractive compared to normal people. Chan and Zhang (2007) stated that celebrities appear on television with make-up, photo-editing, glamorous clothing, flattering lighting and surgery all the while possessing luxurious cars, houses, jewellery and other expensive items; these are the reasons given as to why people imitate the celebrities. This is because celebrity worshiping by admirers has been an inspiration to them in terms of attitude and behaviour (Schultze, Anker, Bratt, Romanowksi, Worst and Zuidervaart, 1991). According to Rizzolatti, Fogassi and Gallese (2001), consumer intention is considered a complex process influenced by various internal and external factors such as individual personality and the popular images created by a person. Users are looking for a variety of characters in their lives that impact their intention to make decisions either directly or indirectly. In that regard, the perfect role model is the individual who has the qualities or behaviours that people admire and imitate.

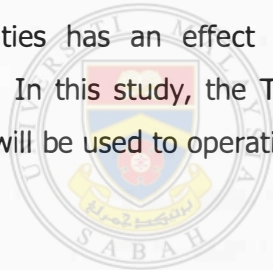
According to Mitchell (2014), a number of studies have shown that humans learn through making others their role model; this can be explained by the perception that the experience of most teens decides the things that are socially acceptable and unacceptable behaviours in which case they also learn strategies for achieving their goals. In fact, role model becomes instrumental in developing career aspirations, educational goals, and consumer behaviour. Additionally, according to observations from Hoffman and Tan (2013), relationship between these attitudes and desires has a significant impact on every individual. The social relationship built by celebrities through social media or television has become the main channel for them to stand out among their audience. These audience view the celebrities as idols where the former will attempt to form "para-social" interactions with the latter

thus causing the audience to imitate the appearances of those celebrities. It is mentioned by Hoffman and Tan (2013) that users want to follow in their favourite celebrity trail and as such many of them will disregard their personal information and imitate the choices of their celebrities. According to Bello (2013), advices from celebrities may have a greater impact on one's behaviour when it corresponds to self-conceptions, which include thoughts and attitudes people have themselves, which they want for their ideal self and for those who are used to present themselves.

In discussing the flow to which Korean celebrities have influenced their fans where marketers have brilliantly jumped in to take a benefit of it, it is also important for the researcher to discuss about the significance of attitude that can lead to the consumer's intention to perform the behaviour. First thing first, the definition of attitude must be understood. According to Ajzen (1991), attitude is an individual's overall judgment of his or her behaviour. This means that attitude towards behavioural intention can be reflected by the evaluation of behaviour together with its expected outcome. In the contexts of intention to imitate, attitude can be understood as the evaluation of individuals' perception towards their object of interest or even towards themselves. The important thing is to noted is the types of objective that become their topic of interest. In this study, for instance, since Korean celebrities have chosen to become celebrity endorsers in advertisements, it has been a successful strategy to attract the consumers. However, this begs the question of "What kinds of characteristics have made Korean celebrities to become effective as endorsers?" Therefore, in this case, attitude plays an important role to create a clear understanding that without a part of attitude towards Korean celebrity, consumers could not perform anything because that is nothing to push them to have the intention to imitate those Korean celebrities.

Last but not least, studying behavioural intention should be supported by theories used by previous studies (i.e. Kumar and Hundal, 2015; Khan and Lodhi, 2016; Yang, Zhang and Kou, 2016; McCracken, 1989; Erdogan, 1999; Shimp, 2003; Silvera and Austad, 2004; Biswas, Biswas and Das, 2006; Magnini, Honeycutt and Cross, 2008; Dash and Sabat, 2012; Ibok, 2013; Aziz, Ghani and Niazi, 2013; Ohanian, 1990; Kahle and Homer, 1985). A common theme among these studies is

the use of the famous Theory of Reason Action and the Theory of Planned Behaviour as extensions in explaining individuals' perceived behavioural control (Ajzen, 1991; Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980). These theories are employed to support the relationships of independent variable, mediating variable, moderating variable and dependent variable. However, the focus of this study is on the consumers' intention to imitate behaviour of celebrities. Therefore, it is important to observe which theories that can be matched and fit with the current study in order to support the relationships between all the variables. Thus, the theories that can be used in this study is Theory of Parasocial Interaction proposed by Horton and Wohl (1956) and Theory of Imitation proposed by both Tarde (1969) and Baldwin (1925). Theory of Parasocial Interaction refers to the face to face interaction that occurs when consumers have watched the television or social media that is expected to impact the consumers' attitude towards imitating celebrity endorsement. Besides that, the Theory of Imitation suggests that the process of suggestion-imitation which refers to the view that whatever offered or suggested by celebrities has an effect on the consumer's intention to imitate celebrity behaviour. In this study, the Theory of Para-social Interaction and the Theory of Imitation will be used to operationalize of the conceptual framework.



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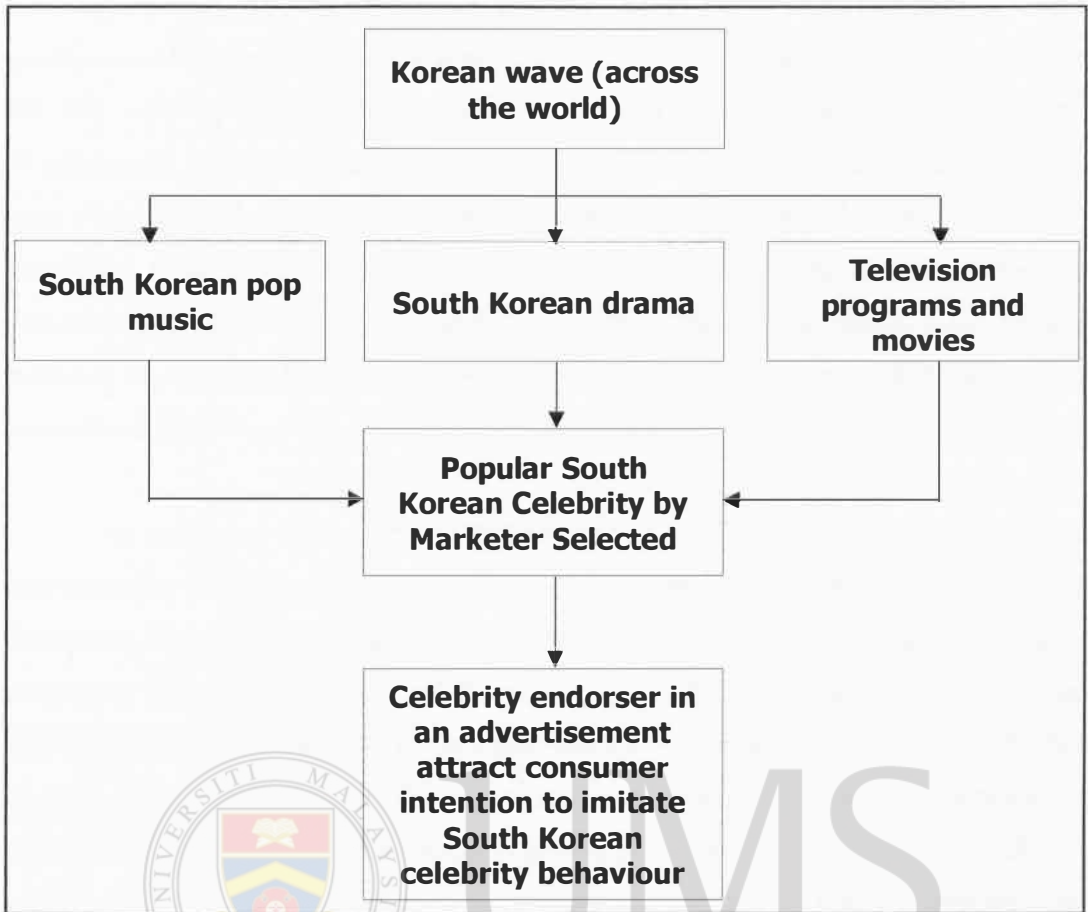


Figure 1.1 : Illustration of This Study

Sources : Raviv *et al.* (1995); Harper (2000); Hogg and Banister (2000); Martin and Bush (2000); Ariffin (2012).

The figure above presents the overall illustration of this study. The first thing that raise the issue as to the reason that this study needs to be conducted is due to South Korean now becoming one of the most popular countries around the world. This is especially true among other Asian countries which practise a large portion of culture from South Korea. The country itself has successfully launched its concept of cultural product in promoting their cultural products around the world to which many of countries such as America in the West as well as China and Japan in the East have failed to follow suit.

This so-called cultural product has been spread by introducing it in different mediums such as music, dramas, movies, television programs and so on. South Korea has successfully introduced their culture through all the platforms that have

been provided by current technology and the popularity of this phenomenon which is known as the Korean Wave is wide-spread. This has proven to be very profitable for the country of South Korea especially in the context of its economic development. Marketers have mostly have jumped into finding suitable celebrities who could potentially become the success factor as commercial spokespersons for promoting their products or brand. Since South Korean celebrities have become popular and appear in advertisement as celebrity endorsers, societies have become addicted or inspired to change their self-identification to appear identical as their beloved celebrities resulting in the process of imitation.

As explained above, this is the process of how the impact of Korean Wave phenomenon promoted by South Korean celebrities as celebrity endorsers on Malaysian consumer intention to imitate their style of personality, dressing, behaviour and so on. The imitation behaviour for Malaysian consumers can contribute either in a positive or negative manner depending on what the objective of that particular individual. For example, if the consumer does an imitation to improve hir or her self-identification in the hope of good expectation the result is considered to be good or vice versa. Thus, from this explanation, it can be seen that Malaysian consumers have imitated Korean celebrities that appeared in advertisements is due to the belief that these Korean celebrities have shown their good side of their appearances. Therefore, the researcher understands that most Malaysian consumers have the intention to imitate Korean celebrity for the good implication on their self-identification. In this study, a few factors in the contexts of celebrity and individuals will be examined in order to examine what are the best factors of a celebrity who can effectively impact Malaysian consumer's intention to imitate.

This study is conducted as it is important to comprehend the process of imitation in the context of psychology and social science that are related to the marketing sphere. Thus, it is imperative to investigate what are the impacts on Malaysian consumers' intention to imitate and make purchases when exposed to their celebrities who endorse certain products. As such, this study will examine what are factors that contribute to the effectiveness of celebrity endorsements and their impact on consumers' intention to imitate.