

# DEVELOPING RESEARCH FRAMEWORK AND SCALES FOR THE KOREAN WAVE'S EFFECTS: AN APPLICATION IN MALAYSIA

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## ABSTRACT

This study develops synthetic research frames and scales on the Korean Wave effects based on discussions and theoretical models suggested in previous research. The research frames and scales are applied to Malaysia where the Korean Wave newly arrived. The aim is to examine the ways in which the Korean Wave economically affects Malaysia.

*Keywords: pop culture, diffusion, formation, audiences, qualitative, subsidiary*

## BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES OF RESEARCH

The Korean Wave which introduced Korean pop culture—TV dramas, movies, and Korean pop music—to East Asian countries started in the late '90s in China and Taiwan. It has spread to Hongkong, Vietnam, and Mongolia, after that, towards Singapore and Japan in the 2000s.

The Korean Wave, in its broad and original meaning, is being commonly used to indicate a boom of Korean pop culture in East Asian area. The term was first used by Ministry of Culture and Tourism in Korea when it planned and produced a CD with the purpose of promoting Korean pop music to neighboring countries in 1999. Its title in English was Korean Pop Music, while its Chinese version was "Hanryu—songs from Korea."

The term has gained wide popularity since the Chinese newspapers represented the success of Korean singers in China as the Korean Wave. The success was ignited by Korean singers' concerts in Beijing, especially by Clone in November, 1999 and H.O.T. in February, 2000. It is therefore not a simplification to say that the Korean Wave did not mean anything more than the popularity of Korean pop music at its beginning stage.

While the Korean Wave's fever and diffusion have brought active mass media coverage and/or academic discussions, a certain policy research has activated on the

initiative of relevant branches of government and subsidiary institutions since the 2000s. The policy research mainly deals with the economic effects as a consequence of the Korean Wave, and suggests plans to maximize these effects.

The Korean Wave has been examined by scholars since 2002. The initial interest was from China, which is the representative venue of the Korean Wave, having big potential of market value in respect to population growth and speed of economic development, and the center of Confucian culture in the East Asia Cultural Region. That is why China has been noted as the subject of academic Studies as well as policy research. Since then, the studies on the Korean Wave have been disseminated to the countries where the Korean Wave is popular.

The early academic research on the Korean Wave mainly focused on technical, critical, or expansive discussions about current states, processes of formation, and effects. It also included plans to develop the effects, based on the second data from domestic and foreign media coverage.

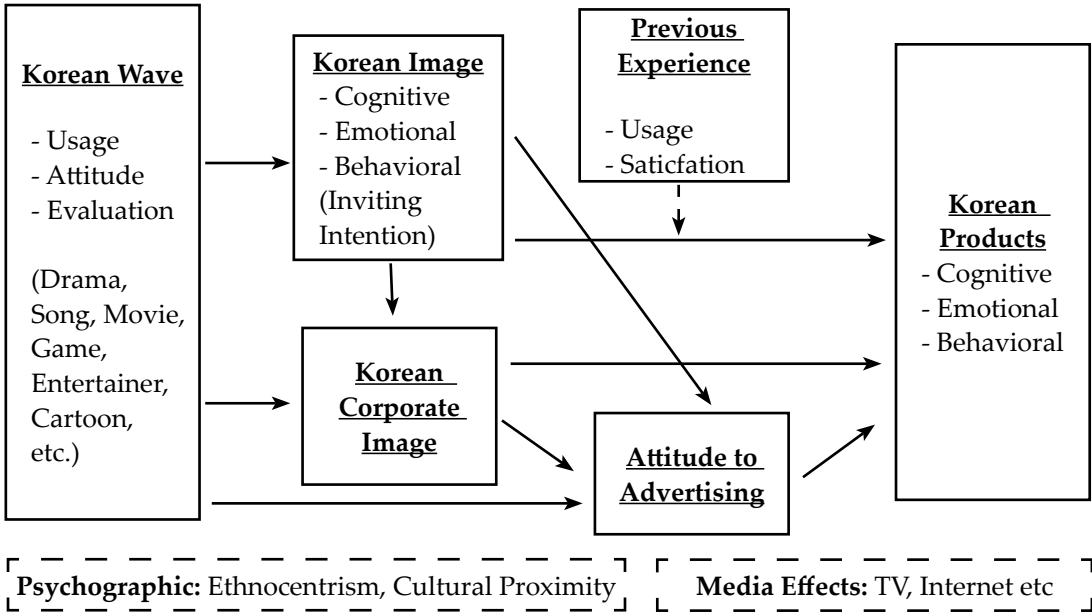
There was qualitative research done on audiences in countries in which the Korean Wave phenomenon happened earlier on. However, this research was flawed since the sample sizes were not quite sufficient, and the reports of the survey were for experts rather than layperson, and also the questionnaires were limited. So, it is not possible to be generalized. Later, though there was research which analyzed audiences' responses to BBS (Bulletin Board System) on the Internet, that research was also limited, for sexes, ages and vocations of the audiences could not be identified, and their non-qualified responses were not systematic.

Thereafter, the established discussions were criticized because they did not suggest sufficient qualitative grounds. So the qualitative audience research on the Korean Wave was launched regarding the realities, effects, reasons, or prospects for the Korean Wave. Subsequently, some studies searching for qualitative evidences of the Korean Wave's effects are based on theoretical models on the perspective of economic development.

This study develops synthetic research frames and scales according to factors about the Korean Wave effects on the basis of diverse discussions and theoretical models suggested in previous research. Moreover, in this study, these research frames and scales are applied to Malaysia where the Korean Wave newly arrived, in order to examine its diverse economic effects and causal relationship in which the Korean Wave affects Malaysia.

## **RESEARCH DESIGN AND FRAMEWORK**

- Demography: Gender, Age, Religion, Income, Education, Occupation, Ethnicity, etc.
- Sample Size: 500 persons living in Kuala Lumpur
- Sampling Method: quota sampling (sex/age/religion/area)
  - Muslim 50%, non-Muslim 50%; men 50%, women 50%;
  - 12–19 years 20%, 20–29 years 20%, 30–39 years 20%, 40–49 years 20%, above, 50 years 20%
- Field Work: 2006. 6. 1–14 (2 weeks)



## SURVEY RESULTS

### 1. Experience and Preference of Korean Wave

#### a. Frequency of Experiencing Korean Wave

- How many times do you watch Korean TV dramas (Arirang TV) in a month?
- How many times do you watch Korean movies in 6 months?
- How many times do you listen to Korean popular songs in a month?
- How many times do you see Korean cartoons (animations) in a month?
- How many times do you play Korean online games in a month?

	TV Drama	Arirang TV	Movie	Song	Cartoon	Online Game
no	41.3	83.1	43.7	658	76.3	83.7
1-2 times	33.0	12.4	31.0	23.5	14.1	8.4
3-5 times	11.3	2.0	13.0	6.7	4.5	1.8
6-9 times	3.6	0.8	5.5	1.2	1.6	1.4
above 10 times	10.7	1.6	6.9	2.8	3.5	4.7

- Do you like to watch Korean TV drama (Arirang TV, movie)?
- Do you like to listen to Korean popular songs?
- Do you like to see Korean cartoons (animations)?
- Do you like to play Korean online games?

	TV Drama	Arirang TV	Movie	Song	Cartoon	Online Game
dislike very much	17.2	32.9	19.2	26.0	32.5	35.5
dislike	12.5	21.7	12.0	17.3	21.6	32.0
so so	32.0	34.2	33.9	32.3	28.9	22.0
like	26.9	6.9	26.6	19.4	12.9	6.8
like so much	11.4	4.3	8.4	5.0	4.1	3.7
(mean)	3.03	2.29	2.93	2.60	2.34	2.11

b. Favorite Entertainer/Singer

	Actors or Actresses	Singers
Yes	18.4	8.6
No	86.6	91.4

2. Evaluation of Korean Culture (5-point Likert scale)

1	Korean culture is funny.	2.38
2	Korean culture is beneficial.	2.93
3	Korean culture is foregoing.	2.9
4	Korean culture is intimate.	2.96
5	Korean culture is particular.	3.06
6	Korean culture is sophisticated.	3.04
7	Korean culture is disgusting.	2.52
8	Korean culture is fresh.	3.09
9	Korean culture is advanced.	3.14
10	Korean culture is sympathetic.	2.79
11	Korean culture is liberal.	2.97
12	Korean culture is traditional.	3.26
13	Korean culture is westernized.	2.85
14	Korean culture is dynamic.	3.08
15	Korean culture is easy.	2.87
16	Korean culture is heterogeneous.	2.92
17	I want to imitate Korean culture.	2.66
18	I am satisfied with Korean culture.	2.99
19	Korean culture is violent.	2.57
20	Korean culture is sexually appealing.	2.73
21	Korean culture is romantic.	3.16

22	Korean culture is impressive.	3.15
23	I like Korean culture.	3.07
24	I like to experience more Korean culture.	3.15

3. The Most Favorite Foreign Culture

Japanese	(28.0%)
American	(20.8%)
Chinese	(11.0%)
Taiwanese	(9.7%)
European	(9.5%)
Indian	(6.2%)
Hong Kong	(4.6%)
Korean	(3.1%)

4. Korean Products

a. Evaluation of Product Categories (5-point Likert scale)

	Usage Experience	Degree of Satisfaction	Purchasing Intention
Korean cars	32.8	2.85	2.89
Korean white goods (refrigerator, washing machine, air conditioner)	35.3	3.04	3.07
Korean audio visual goods (TV, VCR, etc.)	34.2	3.06	3.13
Korean computers	20.6	2.97	2.98
Korean mobile phones	31.6	3.17	3.15
Korean digital devices (MP3 player, digital camera, etc.)	27.0	3.04	3.11
Korean kitchen utensils (Electric rice cooker, etc.)	25.6	2.94	3.07
Korean clothing	28.1	2.99	2.98
Korean cosmetics	19.9	2.88	2.85
Korean foods	30.6	2.96	2.88

b) General Evaluation of Korean Products (5-point Likert scale)

Korean products are unreasonably expensive.	2.83
Korean products are too imitated.	2.92
Korean products are not attractive.	2.77
Korean products need frequent repairs.	2.86

Korean products are cheaply manufactured.	3.01
Korean products are sold in many countries.	3.26
Korean products are intensively advertised.	3.10
Korean products are well providing information.	3.07
Korean products are easily available.	3.19
Korean products are long lasting.	3.00
Korean products have good value.	3.12
Korean products are prestigious.	2.97
Korean products have high quality.	3.09
I want to purchase and own Korean products.	3.02

5. Korean Advertising (5-point Likert scale)

I like Korean brands' advertising.	2.86
It is attractive.	3.05
It is appealing.	3.12
It is pleasant.	3.17
It is interesting.	3.20
It is important for me.	2.72
It is easy to understand.	3.01
It is simple.	3.05
It is new.	3.19
It is lively.	3.02

6. Korean Companies (5-point Likert scale)

Korean companies are superior.	2.86
Korean companies have high growth potential.	3.27
I want to have a job in a Korean company.	3.02

7. Korea/Korean

a. General Image (5-point Likert scale)

I am interested in Korea.	2.92
I want to know Korea better.	3.14
I like Korea.	3.05
I like Koreans.	2.97
I want to follow Korea.	2.70
Korea is an advanced country.	3.19

I have a good feeling about Korea.	3.11
Korea is an open country.	3.08
I want to visit Korea.	3.51
I believe in Korea.	3.01

b. Country of Origin, and Proximity (5-point Likert scale)

Koreans are well educated.	3.08
Koreans are hard-working.	3.49
Koreans pursuit high standards.	3.30
Koreans enjoy high living conditions.	3.21
Korea has high technical skills.	3.38
Korea has a similar political view.	3.00
Korea has a similar economic view.	3.10
Korea has a similar cultural view.	3.08
Korea has a similar thinking way.	3.02
Korea has similar family relations.	3.08
Korea has similar social relations.	3.11
Korea has a similar belief system.	3.03
Korea has a similar life style.	3.04
Korea has sophisticated fashions.	3.17
Korea has abundant historic and cultural heritage.	3.17

c. Relationship between Malaysia and Korea (5-point Likert scale)

Malaysia and Korea have close relations.	3.12
Malaysia and Korea are helpful to each other.	3.21
Malaysia and Korea should develop more interdependent relations.	3.57

8. Ethnocentrism (5-point Likert scale)

Only those products that are not available in Malaysia should be imported.	3.10
Malaysian products, first, last and foremost.	3.24
Purchasing foreign-made products is un-Malaysian.	2.77
It is not right to purchase foreign products.	2.61
A real Malaysian should always buy Malaysian-made products.	3.03
We should purchase products manufactured in Malaysia instead of letting other countries get rich off us.	3.11

Malaysians should not buy foreign products, because this hurts Malaysian business and causes unemployment.	2.85
It may cost me in the long run but I prefer to support Malaysian products.	3.27
We should buy from foreign countries only those products that we cannot obtain within our country.	3.15
cannot obtain within our own country.	
Malaysian consumers who purchase products made in other countries are responsible for putting their fellow Malaysians out of work.	2.84

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