

How The Media Is A Significant Promotional Tool To Deliver Marketing Messages To Audiences?

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ABSTRACT

Previous studies (e.g., Desai and Basuroy 2005) have frequently examined the influence of media such as film and soap operas on the marketing and tourism industry and also with various audience characteristics (Kwak, Zinkhan, and Dominick 2002). This study explores 1) what factors affect U.S. audiences' preferences toward Asian Soap Operas; 2) how U.S. audiences perceive products/services that are shown on Asian Soap Operas; 3) how such attitudes affect actual behavior; and 4) how such attitudes affect their willingness to travel to a country shown in the soap opera. This study also investigates whether such factors as cultural impact, image of the country, preferences of actors and actresses affect ease of use and usefulness of a product and how ease of viewing and usefulness affect attitudes toward overall satisfaction. This study collected surveys in the U.S. and various statistical analyses, such as factor analysis, regression analysis, and ANOVA are applied. The findings of the study will contribute to the development of the use and gratification theory by applying it to the audiences' attitudes toward Asian Soap Operas. Further, this study provides implications and offers suggestions to Asian Soap Operas in the U.S. market.

Keywords: Media, Product Placement, Cultural Impacts, Overall Satisfaction.

INTRODUCTION

The media has been a significant tool to directly and indirectly promote and advertise tangible and intangible products, culture, and other messages. Such direct and indirect promotion/advertising is accomplished through the media by using TV soaps and film, which evoke audiences to purchase products, taste foods, listen to music, follow fashions, use services, and also interact with other cultures particularly when the TV soaps and film are based on different cultures. In previous studies, the medium of TV addressed the representation of consumption (DeFleur 1964). O'Guinn and Shrum (1997) investigated that TV commonly uses consumption symbols as a means of visual shorthand and addressed what TV characters have and the activities in which they participate mark their social status. Marketing Communication Mix (MCM) through TV, such as advertising, promotional tool, and product placement has been frequently applied as a tool for the representation of consumption. Further, researchers have argued whether such MCM tools are effective.

As Percy (2006) stressed, product placement (PPL) certainly can be effective, but only within a carefully understood and controlled environment. A well-known example of the affects film or TV has on audiences' attitudes towards a product would be the BMW automobile seen throughout the James Bond 007 movie series. More recently, there are a number of products that are highlighted in films and TV sitcoms in order to establish an image with the public such as the introduction of a new automobile model for Audi, which has been featured in the film "Transporter 2," a BMW Mini Cooper in the film "The Italian Job," the furniture and other products of Pottery Barn featured in the sitcom "Friends," Big Boy Restaurants in the film "Austin Power," and Reeses Pieces candy in the film "E.T.," all hoped to entice audiences to become customers. There is a preponderance of evidence that Product Placement (PPL) is frequently used in films and TV. Product Placement (PPL) has not only been used in the U.S.

films and TV, but is also widely used in the other countries. According to Russell and Belch (2005), marketer's approach to using entertainment content to promote their products has been manifested by sponsor-owned shows. While product placement is widely and directly used in U.S. films and TV series, in some countries where product placement is banned, such as in the U.K. and Korea, it is used indirectly. Even though product placement is indirectly used, it seems to still be effective as brand names/products/services are easily recognized by audiences. Research issues in this study, along with product placement include how it evokes audiences to be aware of a certain brand name which ultimately affects the purchase decision process.

Since the 1960s, U.S. films and TV series have been widely introduced in Asian countries and play a significant role in delivering U.S. cultures around the world. Due to the increasing number of Asian TV cable stations and satellite TV, the number of viewers watching Asian dramas is increasing world wide. According to Park (2005), the number of people watching satellite television has increased annually with the digital services, such as The Asian Network (TAN) station. How audiences accepted U.S. films and TV series greatly affect the acceptance of U.S. brand names, products, and services. There is evidence that TV dramas significantly change audiences' life style, buying habits, brand name preferences, etc. In addition, TV dramas affect the image and culture of the country. In contrast, U.S. residents' interests in Asian culture, such as food, have been gradually increased since the 1980's. More recently, U.S. audiences' acceptance of Asian films and TV series has seen a dramatic increase and the American public has a great interest in Asian culture as well as in experiencing Asia through films and TV shows (<http://forums.yellowworld.org/archive/index.php/t-21694.html>).

Based on the consideration above, the objective of this study is to examine i) the recent popularity of Asian television programs primarily the *Korean Soap Opera* (a.k.a., *K-Drama*) in various countries, particularly in the U.S. market, ii) K-Drama's impact on cultural perception, fashion and lifestyle among different ethnic groups, iii) how audiences of K-Drama in the U.S. market perceive the products and services shown in these TV soap operas, and iv) K-Drama's impact on the tourism industry to Korea. This study's fundamental belief is that K-Dramas have a strong influence in these areas and the influence will continue to grow even further. This research will explore the phenomenal popularity of K-Drama, K-Cinema, and K-Pop culture that has created the K-drama syndrome, and understand its positive influence in people's perception of a business sector e.g. the tourism industry. Detailed research questions for this study explore 1) how factors such as preferences of a celebrity, image of a culture, image of a country, and entertainment factors affect perceived usefulness and ease of viewing; 2) how perceived usefulness and ease of viewing affect the overall satisfaction toward Asian TV dramas; 3) how the overall satisfaction toward Asian TV dramas affects attitudes, such as willingness to purchase a product, adjoin cultures, taste foods, or use services shown on the TV series; and 4) how the overall satisfaction toward a Korean TV drama evokes the audiences' willingness to visit the country.

HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

Various theories have supported how U.S. audiences' acceptance toward Asian TV soaps affects their attitudes and behavior. *Cultivation theory* (Gerbner et al. 1977) holds that television viewing significantly assists in creating or cultivating a view of reality that is biased toward the highly formulaic and stylized narrative content of television. According to Morgan and Signorielli (1990), cultivation analysis is to determine whether differences in attitudes, beliefs, and the actions of light and heavy TV viewers reflect differences in their viewing patterns and habits, independent of (or in interaction with) the social, cultural, and personal factors that differentiate light and heavy TV users. Thus, cultivation analysis attempts to document and analyze the independent contributions of television viewing to viewers' conceptions of social reality. There is significant evidence on how Asian TV soaps and dramas have affected the cultural and social phenomenon. For example, Park (2005) stated that popularity of K-Dramas has been affected by the social, cultural, and government relationship with other countries, such as Japan.

The present study has been supported by another theory, proposed by Ajzen and Fishbein (1980) which is often used in behavioral research. The *Theory of Reasoned Action* (TRA), which suggests that an individuals' performance of a given behavior is primarily determined by their intention to perform that behavior (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980). The proposed model of this study (Figure 1) is determined by the different factors that arouse perceived ease of use and usefulness and also dummy variables for the levers across the stages of Asian TV soap

viewing with coefficients. In this study, perceived usefulness and ease of use are considered predictors to investigate the external variables that affect a users’ acceptance of TV soaps in the U.S. Both variables, perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use, are the equivalent of internal beliefs (b_i) from the *Theory of Reasoned Action* (TRA). The uses and gratification theory (Herzog 1944; McGuire 1974; Luo 2002) has been also applied in this study to explain the audiences’ attitudes toward Asian TV shows and their overall satisfaction. The uses and gratification theory have been frequently used to measure multiple social and psychological factors that influence media enjoyment (Katz et al. 1974; Rubin 2002). This study developed the model (Figure 1) based on *Uses and gratification theory* (Herzog 1944; McGuire 1974; Luo 2002).

This study is also supported by *disposition theory* (Raney 2004), which addressed the enjoyment of the media that is dependent upon a character liking. *Disposition theory* stressed that the preference of a character increases when liked characters’ experiences positive outcome or disliked characters experience negative ones. Furthermore, *disposition theory* of a drama closely associated with the *moral sanction theory* (good vs. bad) that the feelings that viewers hold towards the characters portrayed are of utmost importance to enjoyment (Raney, 2004). Hence, Asian dramas’ popularity in the U.S. is fully supported by Raney’s *disposition theory* of media enjoyment. In other words, this study indicates that Asian dramas carry many aspects of the disposition theory which capture a viewer’s positive experience in watching an Asian drama. Therefore, it can be said that there is a cause and effect relationship between *disposition theory* and the popularity of Asian dramas.

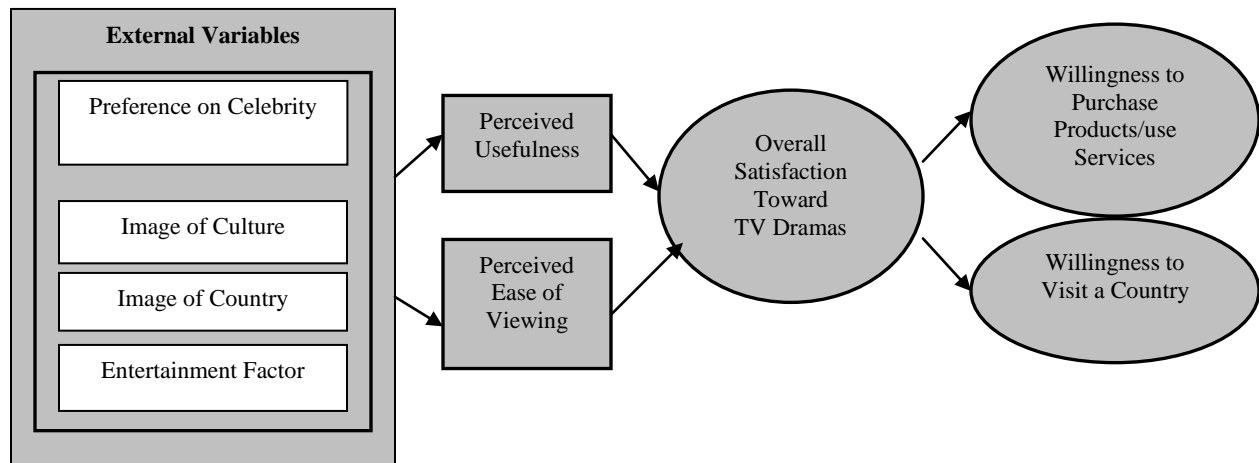


Figure 1. The Proposed Model of Audiences’ Attitudes toward Asian TV Dramas

In traditional market places the emphasis is placed on “customer satisfaction” as a way to earn consumer loyalty and attract customers. Previous studies (Cho and Fjermstad 2005) have examined a firm’s approach to Customer Relationship Management (CRM) in order to account for the new realities of a market place. According to Cho and Fjermstad (2005), maximizing customer satisfaction and maintaining customer loyalty are major components for Customer Relationship Management (CRM). This study focuses more on customer satisfaction because it provides clues as to what managerial changes might have induced different and more desirable behaviors, raising the issue of customer loyalty myopia. Satisfaction/Dissatisfaction theories such as cognitive dissonance theory (Festinger, 1957), contrast theory (Engel and Blackwell, 1982; Howard and Sheth, 1969; Cardozo, 1965), Assimilation-Contrast Theory (Oliver, 1980), expectation – disconfirmation theory (Oliver and Desarbo, 1988), level of aspiration (LOA) theory (Yi, 1990), and adaptation level theory (Helson, 1959 and 1964) have been applied in this study to measure TV drama satisfaction. Other theories such as comparison-level theory, equity theory, and value-percept disparity theory have also been applied in explaining satisfaction. In an effort to provide a positive contrast for the new against the old, this paper addresses how customer attitudes toward an Asian TV series affect customers’ overall satisfaction.

Hypothesis 1: As perceived usefulness (U) of a K-Drama is greater, the audiences' positive overall satisfaction toward an Asian soap opera increases.

Hypothesis 2: As perceived ease of viewing (EOV) of a K-Drama is greater, the audiences' positive overall satisfaction toward the Asian soap opera increases.

Preference On Celebrity

Selection of a spokesperson has been considered as a significant factor for advertising effectiveness. Previous studies have found that customers' willingness to purchase products through advertising has been greatly affected by which spokesperson or persona is used in advertising. Kotler (2003) also stated that a well-chosen celebrity can draw attention to a product or brand, as where Bill Cosby entertains a group of kids while eating a bowl of Jell-O. Choi et al. (2005) stated that many successful individuals from various fields ranging from entertainment to sports are often elevated to celebrity status and used in marketing ads. In a research paper by Choi et al. (2005) emphasized the effectiveness of celebrity endorsement called "match-up hypothesis" (Choi et al., 2005) which examined the fit or match-up between the celebrity and the product being endorsed. The match-up hypothesis also suggests that celebrity endorsement is more effective when the images and characteristics of the celebrities are well matched with the endorsed products (Choi et al., 2005). Therefore, it is very important to choose the appropriate endorsers since its impact is far more powerful than the traditional advertising method (Choi et al., 2005).

Researchers Erdogan, Baker, and Tagg (2001) also have considered the importance of celebrity characteristics when selecting an endorser and factors' importance according to product types.

Another study by Choi et al. (2005) discussed the effectiveness of celebrity endorsement that contributes to celebrities' influence on consumers through perceived attributes such as expertise, trustworthiness, attractiveness, familiarity, and likeability. Celebrity characteristics with product/service type are also frequently considered in films/TV dramas. For example, BMW's product lines, such as the Z3 roadster or 750i represent James Bond's characteristics, such as mission-oriented. Moreover, the image of "made in German" product along with a U.K. gentleman spy, represent a cultural aspect, such as organized, aiming for safety, and high quality (Kotler 2003). Pottery barn also successfully portrayed the image of modern life by using the upscale persona through Rachel, played by actress Jennifer Aniston, in the sitcom Friends. Previous studies demonstrated that for some products (e.g., products associated with high-quality Asian manufacturing ability) response may be enhanced among mainstream customers through the use of Asian models (Cohen 2001). Therefore, this study posits that models in K-Dramas are effective in influencing a customer's opinion and can lead to a purchase decision particularly for certain products. For example, the use of mobile phone products or services by a Korean actor/actress could be very effective marketing as m-commerce is highly advanced in Korea.

Hypothesis 3a: As audiences' preference of actor/actress is higher, the perceived usefulness also increases.

Hypothesis 3b: As audiences' preference of actor/actress is higher, the perceived ease of viewing also increases.

Image Of Culture

This study posits that films and TV shows significantly affect the audiences' image of a culture. Previous studies found that advertising as a medium is an important tool to deliver cultural values. Various studies have established that dissimilarities stemming from cultural differences have been found to be prevalent in advertising themes (Han and Shavitt 1994; McCarty and Hattwick 1992; Mueller 1987; Tansey, Hyman and Zinkhan 1990). Cultural values have also been built from advertised products as well as the image of products. For example, Mercedes-Benz may represent German culture such as organized, technologically advanced, safety, performance, and high quality (Kotler 2003). According to Belch and Belch (2004), cultural values are beliefs and goals shared by members of a society regarding ideal end states of life and modes of conduct. According to Bae and Lee (2004, pp.2), the term "Entertainment – Education (EE)" affects an individual's behavioral change and social change due to the impact of the broadcast of media. This study also addressed that entertainment-education (EE) simply can be described as "the intentional placement of educational content in entertaining messages (pp.2)." Various studies

found that there is a tremendous impact of Asian dramas toward a culture. Hua (2005) stated that through the Asian dramas, the viewers learn how people in today's Asian dress, think, and behave, as well as what they prefer to eat. A study by Boentaram (2002) found that there was a passion for Asian cultural products by Asian people who share a similar process of modernization" (Boentaram, 2002). Chung (2005) stated that the recent popularity of Korean television drama (K-drama) is full of emotion, laughter, and meaning of life. It portrays human emotions, and helps viewers to try to understand the cultural views of family and relationships through dramas (Chung 2005). The basic idea of this theory is supported by Bae and Lee (2005) where EE is supported by K-Dramas in which audiences are exposed to a cultural aspect or country tradition while watching the soap opera possibly resulting in a different behavior due to the exposure to such a drama (Bae & Lee, 2005).

According to Hua (2005), as a result of the popularity of K-drama, audiences developed affection and a positive image of the country of Korea, Korean fashion, and Korean lifestyle through a mere television show. Chung (2005) stated that strong family values and respect are part of Korean culture and can be seen many times in the K-dramas. Boentaram (2002) addressed that Korean dramas give a sense of hope and strength to women and familiarity of life experiences to those viewers, while Taiwanese dramas have the same characteristics but they are often poorly produced and it is full of male dominant story plot. In the K-Drama, Korean food is depicted as one of Asia's favorites and is one of life's simplest pleasures (www.hellohallyu.com). The Korean wave website promotes an eating tour of K-drama featured restaurants, so that fans can illustrate each memorable restaurant scene from their favorite shows (www.hellohallyu.com). A professor in Beijing stated that "we Chinese cannot directly adopt the culture from the West due to cultural differences, but we can easily embrace Korean pop culture, as it combines Asia and the West" (www.koreantimes.co.kr).

A study by Bae and Lee (2004) found that audience involvement with Korean dramas (K-drama) validated how K-dramas have actually impacted people's perception on cultural issues, such as divorce in Korea. Studies (e.g., Bae and Lee 2004) also addressed that entertainment programs, especially the K-drama series are an extraordinarily effective tool for reaching a large number of people over a prolonged period of time and also audience members of a certain K-Drama series shown in Japan get deeply involved in the lives of the televised actors. Some highly involved audience members use a dating agency that introduces Korean males to Japanese female clients who want to date Korean men as they are portrayed as handsome, kind gentlemen in the K-Drama (Bae and Lee 2004). Therefore, this study suggests that K-dramas have an impact on viewers' perceptions, attitudes, and lifestyles. In this study, the researchers hypothesized that the image of culture affects audiences' perceived usefulness and ease of viewing.

Hypothesis 4a: As audiences' positive image of the culture is higher, the perceived usefulness also increases.

Hypothesis 4b: As audiences' positive image of the culture is higher, the perceived ease of viewing also increases.

Image Of Country

Various studies addressed the impact that TV dramas have on people's attitude towards a country. Hua (2005) also posits that the Asian dramas represent westernization of Korea. Bae and Lee (2004) also stressed that K-Drama certainly changed people's perception toward the country of Korea as well as the people of Korea at large. In a research paper written in 2004, Bae and Lee (2004) stated that K-Drama fans from Japan worships Korean actors and is another perfect example of how K-Drama has impacted people's attitude towards Korea and the people of Korea (Bae and Lee 2004). Raney (2004) claimed in the Disposition theory that K-Dramas have many qualities that positively impact viewers' perception and grow an affinity towards Korea and Korean people. A previous study by Samiee (1994) also stressed that the "stereotype" of a country constructed by such assessments is affected by the consumers' positive or negative attitudes toward the products from that country. For instance, the Mercedes Benz, automobile brand is closely related to the consumers' image of Germany as a technologically advanced country.

Researchers of this study posits that the impact of TV dramas toward the image of a country also has a similar effect on how global brands build awareness throughout sports event, films, or any other advertising tools. Various global brands including online and offline, Hyundai, Perrier, etc. promoted via sporting events, films, TV shows, and any other marketing promotional campaigns help enhance the image of a country. Previous studies (Cho and Ha 2005) explored that consumer attitudes toward a brand "made in ___" are affected by various constructs,

such as the country's image along with the brand name, and attitudes toward the advertising during an international event. A study by Cho and Ha (2005) also found that the impact of marketing campaigns during an international event such as World Cup significantly affect customers' belief of the brand and the country simultaneously. Studies also addressed that the impact of different degrees of recall regarding how advertising during an international event affects consumers' attitudes toward the brands, as well as how advertising by different media affects attitudes toward the brand. This study hypothesized that the image of a country is constructed by the audiences' attitudes toward a film or TV show.

Hypothesis 5a: As audiences' preference with the image of a country increases, the perceived usefulness also increases.

Hypothesis 5b: As audiences' preference with the image of a country increases, the perceived ease of viewing also increases.

Entertainment Factor

According to Dencham (2004), television dramas have been at the center of media entertainment for ages. As media consumers, we want to get more enjoyment out of the media other than just an accurate weather report, breaking news of current events, and the latest style in fashion trends (Dencham, 2004). In addition, what consumers wish to get out of media entertainment is recreational fantasy (Dencham, 2004). Previous studies (Raney 2004) examined how the enjoyment of media entertainment is an important factor where viewers form and maintain strong feelings toward media characters. A study by Dencham (2004) also posits that media enjoyment reflects a coalescence of three factors including social norms, viewing situations, and program content. In the field of media studies, there have been a series of discussions on relationships between exposure to certain type of content such as action or drama, and enjoyment level expressed by viewers in response to the program content and viewer response. Mostly, the television dramas have been at the center of media entertainment for ages (Dencham, 2004). According to Chung (2005), TV dramas in the U.S. portray stories of love triangles and family intrigue, the characters of the K-Drama programs have entertained and touched many audiences' hearts. In this study, the researchers hypothesized that entertainment factors affect the perceived easy of use and usefulness of Asian dramas.

Hypothesis 6a: As Asian drama's audiences perceive it more entertaining, the perceived usefulness also increases.

Hypothesis 6b: As Asian drama's audiences perceive it more entertaining, the perceived easy of viewing also increases.

Willingness To Purchase Products/Use Services

Media such as TV dramas and films have become an effective tool to promote specific products, services, brands, or companies directly or indirectly and is called Product Placement (PPL). There have been numerous arguments and legal regulations for Product Placement (PPL), as it often affects i) the audience who lose their focus from the main theme of the TV dramas or films and ii) use of PPL as a promotional tool in TV dramas and films provides an image for commercial purposes. Various studies addressed the impact of marketing issues that are influenced by TV dramas. Studies found that it is very common for actors and actresses to promote products and services in TV dramas throughout the world (www.picturephoning.com). Previous studies stressed that consumer attitudes toward products that are affected by the television programs are a natural result (www.picturephoning.com).

Studies (www.movieexclusive.com) stated that demand-supply relationships between K-Dramas and product placement are an increasingly effective marketing strategy among top consumer products that have frequently been seen in K-Dramas. Product placement is currently used in K-Dramas to help compensate for the high casting fees of Korean actors (www.hancinema.net, 2005). A product placement marketing agency in Korea claims that it is impossible to cast top stars without product placement (www.hancinema.net, 2005). Studies found that TV producers and scenario writers decided what the advertisers want from the show and where the products are placed by considering which products are appropriate for the actors and proposals are then sent to potential advertisers who then complete for the advertising slot (www.hancinema.net, 2005). Even though a direct promotion of products/services in TV dramas is illegal in many countries, product placement is still frequently used indirectly

by hiding brand names, while customers are able to determine which brand names or products are being used. For example, in Korea, dramas often show TV characters using LG mobile phones and Samsung MP3 players, driving Hyundai cars across the country have all influenced the viewer's perception of the product familiarity and affinity while product placement is not legal (www.picturephoning.com). In addition to such indirect product promotions, mobile phone services, such as chatting with friends through mobile phones, wireless services in a car, using specific website services, etc are frequently used in the K-Dramas. The preferences of actors and actresses also tremendously affect the increase of sales. The recent increase in sales of Hyundai's products (i.e., Korea's top automobile manufacturer) in Asian countries, specifically where K-Drama actors are driving these cars, is evidence of the effect that the K-Dramas and their actors have on consumers' purchasing preferences. According to the Taipei Times (2005: <http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/>), Korea's top automobile manufacture is going along with *Hallyu* (Korea boom) to boost sales by attracting Japanese females who customarily hold the purse strings on the family money. It is also reported (Taipei Times 2005: <http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/>) that this trend in reality has caused three positive impacts to the consumer's mind; 1) it broke Japanese consensus of "European cars are always the best imported cars", 2) it improved customer perception towards Korean automobile quality, 3) it helped Hyundai to position itself competitively in the Japanese auto industry. These effects of TV drama toward marketing issues will even increase as the number of viewers increases (Boentaram 2002).

Hypothesis 7: As audiences' overall satisfaction with K-Dramas increases, their willingness to purchase products/use services from such dramas increases.

Impact Toward Tourism Industry – Willingness To Visit A Country

Effects of preference on actor/actress, TV dramas, and films have affected audiences' willingness to visit countries. Previous studies (e.g., Chung 2005) stated that the boom of the K-drama has a positive affect on the tourism industry due to the popularity of the K-drama, which has impacted so many viewers' perception and understanding on how people think and live in another part or region such as Korea. Chung (2005) also addressed various factors such as positive preference of actors/actresses, culture, products/services affect and willingness to visit country. These tendencies are even more substantial as audiences' involvement in the TV dramas is increased, such as involvement with the online communities, becoming a member of e-commerce, etc. How audiences actively involve e-commerce, such as www.hellohallyu.com, which was launched by the Korean government in order to promote *Hallyu* (韓流), and organize events for overseas fan clubs and appoint popular Korean actors as "tourism ambassadors," is an example that reflects the fans' willingness to visit this country. Now with the *Hallyu* website, anyone can get an synopsis of the K-drama (if they missed watching it on TV), and obtain information on how to get to the film location site of the hit K-drama, *Winter Sonata*, fans can even make their travel plans on the website (www.hellohallyu.com). Furthermore, the website provides a tool for a one-stop-shopping concept for those who love to travel to Korea, enjoys Korean shows, and desire to learn more about Korean culture and lifestyles (www.hellohallyu.com). Due to increasing interests in K-Dramas, various travel agents have arranged specific K-Drama tours. For example, Hawaii travel agents offers package tour for "K-drama fans that cannot miss an episode of the shows such as "Secret Lovers," (Chung 2005). Korean National Tourism Organization (KNTO), which is a non-profit organization and its legitimate source is to find pertinent information, provides an efficient and secure virtual travel agent where one can directly make travel plans safely to Korea (www.tour2korea.com).

Based on the consideration above, this study hypothesized that audiences' overall satisfaction with TV dramas will affect their willingness to visit the country shown in the TV drama and also their different degrees of involvement also will affect their willingness to visit.

Hypothesis 8: As audiences' overall satisfaction with TV dramas increases, their willingness to visit a country shown in the TV drama increases.

METHODOLOGY

Selection of Media and Location: This study measures the impact of Asian TV dramas in the U.S. particularly in Hawaii. Hawaii has been chosen as an appropriate location to deliver Asian culture to the U.S. or vice versa. For

example, Hawaii International Film Festival (HIFF) plays an important role to mediate Asian films to the U.S. market. For this study, K-Dramas were selected for a number of reasons such as its popularity in the U.S. market, particularly Hawaii. The impact of K-Dramas on Hawaii has been selected for this study as previous studies (Lee 2004) prove that the impact of Korean Immigrants on the U.S. is growing. Chung (2005) addressed that TV programs from South Korea have been bringing a phenomenal increase in peoples' curiosity of Korea as well as a cultural boom to the United States, Japan, and other parts of Asian countries. Hawaii is an excellent location to measure the impact of Asian TV dramas as it is one of the few U.S. destinations besides New York and Los Angeles to broadcast various Korean programs such as Korean music and drama series (Chung 2005). With the recent technology of using satellite TV and the introduction of digital service in 1998, the number of people watching satellite television has increased annually (Chung 2005; Park 2005). Viewers also can easily download episodes from the Web, and post their opinions about the shows via online, which influences the K-Drama writers and producers, and consequently influences future plots of the K-dramas (Hua, 2005).

Data Collection: This study conducted a survey of two hundred seventy randomly selected subjects in Hawaii. The survey was distributed to randomly selected audiences from Jan 2006 to May 2006. The response rate was about 80% and approximately 91% of respondents answered that they have previously watched Korean soap operas (i.e., K-Dramas). The data collected was from both offline and online. Offline survey collection was conducted via mall intercept (i.e., three selected shopping malls in Hawaii) and randomly selected locations in Hawaii. The online survey was conducted via email through invitation. Online survey was also collected from the Korean broadcasting websites in Hawaii.

Operational Measures: Multi-item scales were used to measure each of the seven constructs that served as the basis for the questionnaire items. The item scales were taken from previous studies (e.g., Davis 1989; Davis, Bagozzi, and Warshaw 1989; Bearden and Teel 1980; Ajzen and Fishbein 1980; Succi and Walter 1999; Zhou 2002; Schubert and Selz 1999; and Chen and Wells 1999) and modified to serve the objectives of the present study. Likert scales were used to measure the items. For Likert scale questions, a seven-point scale was used with extremes labeled "Strongly Disagree" and "Strongly Agree" was used¹. Quantitative methods, including factor analysis, regression, and ANOVA (Analysis of Variance), were applied to measure perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, overall satisfaction toward K-Dramas, willingness to purchase products/use services, and willingness to visit a country.

RESULTS

The study included a survey with 270 randomly selected subjects in Hawaii. Of the 270 respondents, about 43.0% answered that they watch K-Drama less than once a week, 26.4% answered that they watch K-Drama once or twice a week, 8.8% answered that they watch K-Drama 3 or 4 times a week, 3.6% answered that they watch K-Drama 5 or 6 times a week, and 18.1% answered that they watch K-Drama everyday. About 25.4% have been a K-Drama fan for less than a year, 25.9% have been a K-Drama fan for about one year, 22.8% have been a K-Drama fan for about 2 to 3 years, 5.7% have been a K-Drama fan for 4 to 5 years, and 20.2% have been a K-Drama fan for more than 5 years. About 27.5% remembered at least one or two K-Drama title(s) and 18.7% answered that they remember 3-4 K-Drama titles, 8.8% answered that they remember 5-7 K-Drama titles, and 21.8% answered that they remember more than 8 K-Drama titles. Respondents answered that their main source of information about K-Dramas are friends and family in the neighborhood (49.2%), magazines (22.2%), friends and family in Korea (15.9%), newspaper (11.1%), and radio (1.1%).

Of the two hundred seventy respondents, 64.4% were female and 35.6% were male. About 7.4% were between the ages of 18-20; 23.3% were between the ages of 21-25; 19.0% were in the 26-30 age group; 12.7% were in the age group 31-35; 9.0% were in the age group 36-40; 6.9% were in the age group 41-45; 4.2% were in the age group 46-50; and about 17.5% were more than 51 years old. Approximately 15.3% reported that their highest educational level was high school graduate, while 39.7% had an associate degree, 34.9% had a bachelor's degree, 10.1% had master degree or higher. Approximately 10% had an annual average income below \$20,000, 18.4% had

¹ Seven-point scales (1 = strongly dissatisfied, 7 = Strongly satisfied) were used.

between 20,001 and 40,000, 10.8% had between 40,001 and 60,000, 10.3% had between 60,001 and 80,000, 10.7% had more than \$80,001, and about 40% didn't report annual income. Over 71.4% were Asian, 9.2% were Caucasian, 2.7% were Hispanic, 7.1% were Pacific Islander, 0.5% were African American, 1.1% were Middle Eastern, 7.8% were others.

Quantitative methods, including factor and regression analyses, ANOVA (Analysis of Variance), and ANCOVA (Analysis of Covariance), were applied to measure the audiences' attitudes towards TV dramas, willingness to purchase or use a product or services shown in the K-Drama, visit the country shown in the TV drama and overall satisfaction. This study measured whether factors such as "preference of celebrity," "image of country," "image of culture," and "entertainment factor" affect perceived usefulness and ease of viewing toward Asian TV dramas. In order to check reliability, this study measured Cronbach's alpha for multi-item scales to measure each of the constructs that served as the basis for the questionnaire items. This study found that Cronbach's alpha for preference on celebrity shows 0.82; image of culture, 0.86; convenience factor, 0.85; image of country, 0.78; entertainment factor, 0.93; ease of viewing, 0.89; and perceived usefulness, 0.75.

The first step in this analysis was intended to validate the factors that affect two predictors, perceived usefulness and ease of use. This study ran the confirmatory factor analysis to identify those factors. Using principal components analysis as the extraction method and Varimax rotation methods with Kaiser Normalization, the most relevant data emerged. This analysis showed a distinct reduction of four factors, with Eigen values over 1.00. As shown in table 1, four factors that affect perceived usefulness and ease of use toward K-Drama appeared to be "preference on celebrity," "image of culture," "image of country," and "entertainment factor." A separate factor analysis (table 2) was done to group scale items for the predictors, perceived usefulness and ease of viewing, which affect attitudes toward K-Drama. Scale items were developed from the previous study by Davis (1989). This study shows the results of factor analysis for external variables, which affect perceived usefulness and ease of use. Factors, which have Eigen values over 1.00 are grouped as variables.

Table 1: Component Matrix

External Factors*	Items Scale Items	Component			
		1	2	3	4
Entertainment4	K-Drama is my favorite among other TV series.	.807			
	I like to watch K-Dramas everyday.	.797			
Entertainment1	Watching K-Drama is more entertaining than any other TV	.784			
Entertainment5	dramas/shows.				
Culture4	I like K-Drama because I like Korean culture.		.737		
Culture3	I like K-Drama because I like the trendy fashions that are seen		.685		
	on the K-Dramas.				
Culture2	I would like to visit Korean restaurants.		.663		
Culture1	I like K-Drama because I like the foods that are shown on the		.662		
	K-Drama.				
Culture6	I like K-Drama because I like the Korean language.		.614		
Pre_Celebrity2	I like to watch K-Drama because I like the Korean actors on			.833	
	the K-Drama.			.793	
Pre_Celebrity1	I like to watch K-Dramas more when my favorite actor/actress			.685	
	plays a role in it.			.659	
Pre_Celebrity4	I only watch K-Drama when my favorite actor/actress plays a				
	role in it.				
Pre_Celebrity3	I have at least one K-Drama actor/actress that I prefer.				
Country9	I believe my perception of Korea as a county has improved				.801
	since watching K-Drama.				
Country1	I like K-Drama because I like the image of Korea.				.785
Eigen Value		9.677	2.102	1.791	1.229

* Entertainment: Entertainment factor; Culture: Image of culture; Pre_Celebrity: Preference on celebrity; and Country: Image of country.

Table 2: Component Matrix (Rotated)

Items		Component	
Factors**	Scale Items*	1	2
EOV1	It is easy to view K-Dramas at home.	.920	
EOV2	It is easy to gain access to K-Dramas.	.920	
EOV3	I like the viewing time of K-Dramas.	.863	
EOV5	Watching a K-Drama makes my every day life schedule easier.	.681	
U	Watching a K-Drama is quite useful.		.882
U	Information from a K-Drama is quite clear and understandable.		.592
Eigen Value		4.561	1.048

* Scale items were modified from Davis (1989a and b)

** EOV: Perceived Ease of Viewing; U: Perceived Usefulness

This study used simple linear regression analyses and the analyses of variance (ANOVA). Factor scores were used for regression analyses. First, this study used regression analyses for the impacts of external variables to the predictors that are perceived usefulness and ease of viewing. Another regression analysis was conducted to examine the effects of perceived usefulness and ease of use to the overall satisfaction toward the K-Drama and the effects of overall satisfaction toward willingness to purchase products/use services seen in the K-Drama and visit the country of Korea. The following table (table 3) presents the results of the regression analyses for the effects of external variables to the perceived usefulness (U) and ease of viewing (EOV). Factor coefficients, found from factor analyses, were used for regression analyses. Stepwise regression analysis was applied to find how indicators affect perceived usefulness and ease of viewing. The results in table 3 show that all external variables affect perceived usefulness and perceived ease of viewing. Thus, hypotheses 3a, 3b, 4a, 5a, 5b, 6a, and 6b, the impacts of factors, such as preference of celebrity, image of culture, image of country, and entertainment factors- to perceived usefulness and ease of viewing were accepted, while hypothesis 4b., the impact of image of culture to perceived ease of viewing was rejected. The results of the analysis of variance found the models significant at .01 level with $F = 35.125$ and 18.785 (two-tailed, $r-square = .687$ and $.569$) for perceived usefulness and ease of viewing.

Table 3: Summary of The Effects of External Variables on the Perceived Usefulness (U) and Perceived Easy of Viewing (EOV)

Variable	Standardized Coefficient (t-value (Sig))	
	U	EOV
Preference on Celebrity	.148 (2.254*)	.356 (6.132**)
Image of Culture	.228 (3.469**)	.028 (.480)
Image of Country	.289 (4.405**)	.164 (2.822**)
Entertainment Factor	.406 (6.192**)	.562 (9.696**)

* Significant at 0.05 level (2-tailed); ** Significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Another regression analysis was conducted to see how overall satisfaction toward K-Dramas is affected by perceived usefulness and ease of viewing. Table 4 shows the results of regression analysis for the impact of U and EOV to the attitudes toward the K-Dramas. The results of analysis of variance found that overall, the regression model is significant ($F = 94.961$, significant at .01 level, two-tailed, $r-square = .713$). Therefore, hypotheses 1 and 2 were accepted.

Table 4: The Effects of Predictors on the Overall Satisfaction toward K-Drama

Predictors	Standardized Coefficient*	t-value (Sig)
Perceived Usefulness	.540	10.444**
Perceived Ease of Viewing	.465	8.992**

** Significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed).

As table 5 shows, this study found the impacts of the overall satisfaction toward K-Dramas to the willingness to purchase products/use services and visit Korea. The results of analysis of variance found that overall, the regression model is significant ($F = 54.031$, significant at .01 level, two-tailed, $r\text{-square} = .477$; $F = 86.703$, significant at .01 level, two-tailed, $r\text{-square} = .569$). Therefore, hypotheses 7 and 8 were accepted.

Table 5: The Effects of Overall Satisfaction on the Willingness to Purchase Products/Use Services and Visit a Country

Variable	Standard Coefficient*	t-value (Sig)
Willingness to purchase products/use services	.477	7.351**
Willingness to visit Korea	.569	9.311**

** Significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed).

CONCLUSION

This study measures how audiences in the U.S. perceive Asian soap operas. The study explored how factors such as preference on celebrity, image of culture, image of country, and entertainment factors affect perceived usefulness and ease of viewing. Furthermore, this study investigated how the overall satisfaction toward Asian soap operas affects audiences' willingness to purchase products/use services show in the K-Drama and visit the country of Korea. This study particularly considered the recent popularity of K-Dramas in Hawaii. Results of multivariate statistics found that all proposed factors significantly affect perceived usefulness and ease of viewing while image of culture does not significantly affect ease of viewing. This study also found that overall satisfaction towards Asian soap operas is a significant factor for both the marketing and tourism industry of Korea and Korean made products.

The findings of this study contribute to the development of the uses and gratification theory and Technology Acceptance Model by applying it to the audiences' attitudes toward Asian soap operas. Further, this study provides implications on the role that soap operas play in marketing and tourism industry. As other authors have stated that the effects of the soap opera and film industry to deliver the image of a culture and country, this study offers suggestions that the popularity of Asian soap operas, specifically K-Dramas will significantly affect the understanding and change the image perceptions of viewers on various Asian cultures and countries. Those impacts are also significantly related to the perceived usefulness and ease of viewing.

The study has some limitations. Although this study used multivariate statistics, such as factor and regression analysis, the study did not measure the cause and effect relationship using a program, such as LISREL. The researchers will consider this issue in future research. A framework to classify the different levels of involvement will be also developed and applied to measure audiences' attitudes toward Asian soap operas by also considering various regions. For future studies, the researchers will also investigate causes that affect different impacts toward Asian soap operas across cultures and countries. For future studies, a larger number of subjects will be surveyed.

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