




“Movie-related Korean Wave and intention to visit: The role of country image as a mediating factor”

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MOVIE-RELATED KOREAN WAVE AND INTENTION TO VISIT: THE ROLE OF COUNTRY IMAGE AS A MEDIATING FACTOR

Abstract

The Korean Wave, also known as Hallyu, is a phenomenon of globalization of South Korean culture that has influenced many aspects of life in various countries. Indonesia is a country affected by the Korean Wave due to globalization through the media. This paper aims to analyze the impacts of four detailed movie-related Korean Wave variables (visual, vocal, celebrity, and language) on intention to visit South Korea, with country image as a mediating variable. The research sample consisted of 302 fans and non-fans of the Korean Wave who either experienced or were interested in Korean Wave cultural contents. Data were collected from September to October 2023. The results were analyzed using the Partial Least Squared Structural Equation Model (PLS-SEM). The results confirm that four Korean Wave traits positively affect Indonesian tourists' desire to travel to Korea. Improving the movie quality, including visuals, voice, celebrity, and language, might motivate Indonesian tourists to visit Korea. Likewise, the country's image is positively and significantly influenced by each of the four Korean Wave variables. The findings were statistically significant at 5% significance level. Moreover, the study discovered that the perception of the country considerably affected the desire to travel and served as a go-between for the effects of film visuals, celebrity presence, and language on the decision to visit.

Keywords

movie, Korea, Indonesia, travel, tourism, visual, vocal, celebrity

JEL Classification

M21, M31, L82

INTRODUCTION

The Korean Wave (Hallyu) refers to the global popularity of the Korean cultural economy, which exports popular culture, entertainment, music, TV series, and movies (Hwang et al., 2008). Hallyu means "Korean Wave" in Chinese. It is an umbrella term that refers to the amazing growth of Korean culture and popular culture, including music, movies, dramas, online games, and Korean food (Hun Kim, Hy.Kim, Chang, & Park, 2021). South Korea is one of the few countries that has set its sights on becoming the world's largest exporter of popular culture (Jin et al., 2024). This is one way to develop Korea's "soft power". "Soft power" is a famous term coined by Harvard politician Joseph Nye in 1990. It refers to the intangible power of a nation, and it exercises this power through image rather than hard power (Jin, 2024).

The Korean Wave is a form of successful entertainment product that increases the extraordinary popularity of Korean culture (Kim & Park, 2020). Local media quickly picked up on this signal and covered the rise of the Korean Wave. The Korean wave phenomenon that flourished in Indonesia is interesting. K-drama/K-movie played an important role in the Korean Wave in Indonesia, as evidenced by the growth of K-drama and K-movie fan communities, Indonesian websites sharing content about Korea, and the rise of Korean actors, singers, and

idols in Indonesia (Liu, 2023). Being depicted in movies and dramas with stunning cities and landscapes makes South Korea one of the top tourist destinations (Connell, 2012). Experiencing culture, products, cities, and landscapes in Korean films helps create a favorable perception of South Korea in Indonesia (Dela Cruz & Lacap, 2023).

Several studies, including those by Melisa et al. (2023), Hyo-jin (2019), and Lee et al. (2020), have explored the impact of the Korean Wave on individuals' desire to visit South Korea. However, few studies focused on Korean movies. Blanchet and Fabry (2020) found that cinema directly affects how tourists view a place and implies a real interest in understanding future trends. This study specifically explores the scientific problem, which is whether Korean movies influence the desire of Indonesian people to travel to Korea.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES

Consumer behavior theory is the theoretical foundation for understanding why people intend to visit. This theory describes how individuals or groups search, evaluate, use, and buy products and services to fulfill their needs (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2007). This theory involves an individual utilizing resources such as time, money, and effort to attain the highest utility possible. While using the resources at hand, an individual collaborates with their groups to refine their purchasing choices to achieve the highest level of satisfaction (Lim et al., 2023). Consumers' buying decisions are influenced by advice from groups or families when considering purchasing products or services (Hadi et al., 2023; Cohen et al., 2014). According to Chen (2023), reference groups serve the purpose of evaluating, impacting, and controlling individuals' beliefs, principles, and actions.

Under this consumer behavior theory, customers' decisions to purchase and take an interest in Korean products can be analyzed about the country's reputation and desire to travel there. Korean cinema plays a significant role in the Korean cultural wave, influencing Indonesian perceptions of South Korea and their desire to visit (Sukendi et al., 2023; Melisa et al., 2023). As stated by Dela Cruz and Lacap (2023) and Eom and Braithwaite (2023), four key Korean Wave factors in movies are important: visual, vocal, celebrity, and language.

The visual aspect is seen as a crucial element in Korean films that impacts the desire to visit, as the portrayal in movies enhances one's understanding of a specific culture (Araújo-Vila et al.,

2021). A Korean film showcases common characteristics of thin, tall, and appealing physiques that can enhance visual perception (Bai, 2022). Visual elements in Korean films captivate viewers to become devoted fans of Korean celebrities (Chan et al., 2018). Korean films have rapidly gained popularity worldwide due to their distinctive style, effectively showcasing Korean culture to a global audience.

The second impact, known as vocal, undeniably influences the perception of a country and the desire to visit, including Indonesia's image (Lee & Yang, 2022). The use of popular music in movies is crucial in promoting the Korean Wave and reaching a wider audience of different ages and regions (Chansanam et al., 2023). The Korean products market, previously only focused on Asia until 2010, is now spreading to the Middle East, the United States, Europe, and Australia (Ganghariya&Kanozia, 2020; Chao et al., 2005; Shin et al., 2020).

The third impact, known as celebrity, is a powerful strategy for drawing tourists to particular locations (Biswas & R.V., 2022). Several researchers, including Ma (2021) and Park and Lin (2020), have investigated the methods for creating strong connections between celebrities and consumers through celebrity worship. Celebrity influence boosts consumers' readiness to focus on and invest attention. Celebrity adoration boosts feelings towards an object and its surroundings (Hidalgo-Crespo et al., 2023), indicating that fans engage in celebrity-related activities as a way to express themselves and as a natural part of life. This includes shaping their views on their country's image and their desire to visit locations associated with celebrities (Y. Lee, C. Lee, S. Lee, & Babin, 2008).

Studying language, which is the fourth aspect, is also highly intriguing. Truly, the use of a specific accent and individual delivery style in language learning draws audiences to immerse themselves in both the language and the spoken culture (Samsudin et al., 2021). The language used in films also conveys an important message to viewers about the character or traits of the speaker (Higuchi et al., 2023). In addition to movies, the country's image and intention to visit are also influenced by the Korean language used in K-pop lyrics (Chao, 2022). Gaining knowledge about a specific country is highly connected to acquiring language skills (Park, 2014; Pyun et al., 2014). According to Fraschini and Caruso (2019), knowing the language promotes a greater appreciation for the country and enhances the desire to travel there.

The image of a place can be defined as the beliefs and impressions that people hold about that place (Kiryluk & Glińska, 2015). Destination marketers heavily rely on promotional videos, including movies, as a successful visual communication tactic to entice prospective tourists (Allred et al., 2000). An individual's perception of a country, including culture, development, economy, and tourism, contributes to the formation of that country's national image when the individual views it portrayed in movies. Li and Weng (2022) view a country as a brand, product, or visual content that is crucial for tourist destinations in their research. The scenes depicted in films, including various activities, landscapes, and people, create an impression of a country, sparking curiosity and possibly motivating viewers to learn more or even travel there. Showing a product in a film enhances its practicality and appeal, impacting the national image and perceptions (Allison et al., 2004). Individual decisions on investments, product purchases, change of residence, and travel are often impacted by the country's image (Lee et al., 2023). The use of visualization in films plays a significant role in marketing a country's image, attractiveness, and products (Li & Zhang, 2023). According to Liu et al. (2024), the destination image is shaped by audience perceptions of specific tourist attractions.

Once tourists learn about a destination's features, they will become interested in visiting it (Beerli & Martín, 2004; Yang et al., 2022). When fans develop a favorable perception, they are more likely

to plan a trip to Korea (Lim et al., 2023). Therefore, the more positive the perception of Korea is boosted by popular culture like Korean films or K-pop music, the more likely potential tourists will be to consider visiting South Korea (Chung et al., 2015).

The use of Korean movie sound effects helps global audiences become familiar with Korean culture and the country's image. The use of accessible cross-country genre-blending, frequent incorporation of Korean lyrics, a reflection of current global influences, and advanced acoustics deepen the vocal impact (Su et al., 2024). Even if you don't speak Korean, the music in dramas and movies still has a strong effect and is easy to remember and replicate. Korean producers' consistent efforts to expand into global markets and improve themselves have helped K-drama and K-pop become successful worldwide (Matzler et al., 2016). K-pop music and its idols influence tourists' desires and perceptions of South Korea, promoting the country as a potential tourist destination and boosting travel intentions (Kim et al., 2023).

According to Hasan et al. (2017), celebrity endorsers are individuals who are widely recognized by the public and leverage this recognition to promote consumer products or services by featuring in advertisements. A mix of diverse product options, appeal, and characteristics is included to form a perception for the decision-making process using a range of data sources (Gorji et al., 2023). Hence, it can be inferred that tourists' perceptions of a destination as a tourist attraction have a positive influence on their behavior, shaping the image of the destination (Afshardoost & Eshaghi, 2020). Multiple researches indicate that the impact of celebrity endorsers in ads on a company's sales surpasses that of commercials lacking their approval (Guan et al., 2022). The connection established through celebrity endorsement is frequently linked to other ideas like recognition, understanding, familiarity, and skills, ultimately enhancing the image of the country (Liu et al., 2023; Chi et al., 2020; Tapia, 2017).

Moreover, the attraction of verbal or written communication is essential in impacting tourism associated with movies (Maconis & Sparks, 2009). The distinctiveness of the language in a film is entirely personal and depends on the emotional impact of the language and the particular settings shown in the movie. Tourists visiting a filming lo-

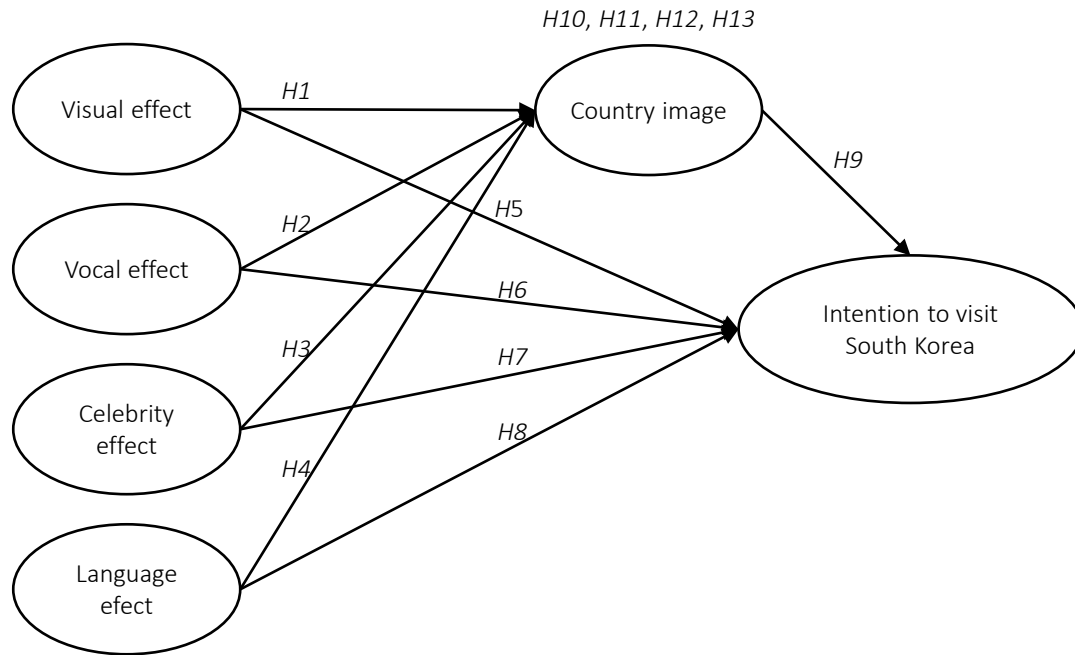


Figure 1. Conceptual framework of the study

cation may have a more open-minded perspective on the authenticity of the location if they were influenced by a film they watched (Bolan et al., 2011; Hargitai et al., 2023). Many Asian tourists come to South Korea and use Korean that they pick up from watching movies or listening to music (Ryan & Granville, 2020). Hence, it is important to be careful when examining the significance of authenticity in tourism driven by cinema (Blanchet & Fabry, 2020).

This study attempts to investigate the effects of the four Korean Wave effects (visual, vocal, celebrity, and language) on intention to visit with country image as a mediating factor. Therefore, 13 hypotheses are put forwards:

- H1: *Visual generates a positive and significant effect on country image.*
- H2: *Vocal provides a positive and significant impact on country image.*
- H3: *Celebrity affects positively country image.*
- H4: *Language has a positive significant impact on country image.*
- H5: *Visual generates a positive and significant effect on intention to visit .*

- H6: *Vocal provides a positive and significant impact on intention to visit.*
- H7: *Celebrity positively affects intention to visit.*
- H8: *Language has a positive significant impact on intention to visit.*
- H9: *Country image significantly influences intention to visit.*
- H10: *The relationship between the visual effect and the intention to visit is mediated by country image.*
- H11: *Country image mediates the impact of vocal on intention to visit.*
- H12: *There is a positive mediating effect of country image on the relationship between celebrity and intention to visit.*
- H13: *Country image is a mediating factor in the relationship between language and intention to visit.*

The theories are visually represented in a structural connection (see Figure 1). The diagram illustrates how variables are interconnected and the country image's role as a mediator in the relationships.

2. METHODOLOGY

This paper used a quantitative approach by distributing questionnaires to a sample of 302 participants. The survey includes data on how the Korean Wave affects people’s desire to travel to Korea and their perception of the country. The effects of the Korean Wave are categorized into four impacts related to movies. The questions in the survey are based on Dela Cruz and Lacap (2023), Eom and Braithwaite (2023), Rajaguru (2014). Table 1 displays the latent construct of variables and items.

In this research, predictive and causal research methods were used to investigate the direct and indirect impacts in a structural model. This research assesses the considerable impact of four components of Korean Wave-related media on travel intent and perception. Meanwhile, the indirect influence looks at how the nation’s reputation influences the relationships between the four media-related Korean Wave elements and the urge to visit. Predictive and causal research methods are used to evaluate these suggested relationships.

The respondents’ characteristics are detailed in Table 2. Among the respondents, the majority (85.8%) of 302 respondents are females, while the minority (14.2%) is males. There is a total of 47.4% of respondents in the age range of 18-20 years old, while 40.1% are between 21 and 25 years old,

and the remaining 12.6% are over 25 years old. In terms of occupation, 23.8% of respondents work in the private sector, 15.9% work for the government, 5.3% are businessmen, the majority (53%) are students, and 1.7% are unemployed. Moreover, when categorized by their monthly earnings, approximately 53.3% of respondents declare a gross household income of less than 5 million rupiahs, while 27.5% earn between 5 and 10 million. Additionally, 12.3% report earnings of 10-15 million, with the remaining 7.3% earning over 15 million rupiah. When asked how many Korean movies they have seen, 18.9% reported watching between 1 and 3 times, while 33.4% claimed to have watched 4-6 times, 37.4% stated they have seen 7-9 times, and 10.3% mentioned watching more than 9 times. The top choice for watching Korean movies is paid streaming services such as Netflix, Viu, etc., used by 53.6% of people, followed by online sites/blogs at 38.1%. 82.5% of respondents say they have never been to South Korea, 11.3% have visited once, 4% have visited twice, and 2.3% have visited more than twice when asked if they have been to Korea.

To examine the dataset, the researchers utilize a path model and employ partial least squares (PLS) to estimate the structural relationship between variables. The primary rationale behind utilizing this approach is the emphasis on forecasting and elucidating underlying variables, in addition to

Table 1. Construct of variables, items, and sources

Variable	Items	Description	Source
Visual (X1)	Vi1	I enjoy how the bright city of Korea is portrayed in Korean dramas and films.	Dela Cruz and Lacap (2023), Rajaguru (2014).
	Vi2	I feel that Korea is more alluring travel destination as shown in Korean movies and dramas.	
	Vi3	I am eager to see vibrant, real-life Korean night scenes in dramas and films.	
Vocal (X2)	Vo1	I’m impressed with the Korean language’s rhythm.	Dela Cruz and Lacap (2023), Rajaguru (2014).
	Vo2	I am impressed with the Korean pop music.	
Celebrity (X3)	C1	Korean stars attract me.	Dela Cruz and Lacap (2023), Rajaguru (2014).
	C2	I consider Korean celebrities as Korean’s nation image representative.	
	C3	Because of Korean performers, I feel that Korean films are more intriguing.	
Language (X4)	L1	I want to learn Korean language through watching Korean movies and dramas.	Eom and Braithwaite (2023)
	L2	Korean language is easier to learn when I spend more time watching Korean movies and dramas.	
Country image (Y1)	Ci1	South Korea is a nation with advanced technology.	Dela Cruz and Lacap (2023)
	Ci2	South Korea is a nation with a stable economy.	
Intentions to visit South Korea (Y2)	IV1	After watching of Korean dramas or films, I looked up more details about Korea.	Dela Cruz and Lacap (2023), Eom and Braithwaite (2023), Rajaguru (2014).
	IV2	I’ve considered traveling to Korea ever since I started watching Korean dramas or movies.	

Table 2. Respondent profile

Criteria	Sub criteria	%
Gender	Female	85.8
	Male	14.2
Age	18-20	47.3
	21-25	40.1
	>25	12.6
Occupation	Government employees	15.9
	Private employee	23.8
	Businessman	5.3
	Student	53.0
	Unemployed	1.7
	Other	0.3
Monthly gross household income	Less than Rp. 5.000.000	53.3
	Rp. 5.000.000- <Rp. 10.000.000	27.2
	Rp. 10.000.000- <Rp. 15.000.000	12.3
	Above Rp.15.000.000	7.2
Number of Korean films (dramas/movies) watched	1-3	18.9
	4-6	33.4
	7-9	37.4
	Above 9	10.3
Frequently platform used in watching Korean films	Video-sharing platforms (e.g., YouTube, Dailymotion)	5.6
	Paid streaming apps (e.g., Netflix, Viu)	53.6
	Online sites/blogs	38.1
	Social media sites (e.g., TikTok, Instagram)	1.7
	Local TV channels	1
Number of visits to Korea	0	82.5
	1	11.3
	2	4.0
	Above 2	2.2

the fact that the sample size in the study is relatively small. The process of data analysis involves conducting tests for validity, reliability, and hypotheses using SEM-PLS. All four latent variables influence the indicators within the formulation, demonstrating complete reflexivity.

3. RESULTS

Before evaluating the connection between the variables in question, a validation and reliability testing process is carried out on the dataset. Table 3 shows the results of Outer Loading, Cronbach's alpha, Composite Reliability, and Average Variable Extracted for each item in the variable. Table 3 demonstrates that the validity and reliability tests were successfully passed by the items of each variable.

Table 3 shows that visual ($\{1\}$) is assessed with three valid measurement items, each having an outer loading ranging from 0.827 to 0.857, confirming

the validity of the items. Visual's reliability level is deemed acceptable based on Cronbach's alpha and Composite Reliability values exceeding 0.70. When considering convergent validity, an AVE value of 0.712 surpasses the recommended threshold of 0.70, demonstrating strict convergent validity. In general, the mean value of measurement items for this X1 is 71.2%. These findings suggest that visual items are trustworthy and dependable for assessing how visual effects influence Indonesians' interest in visiting South Korea.

Concerning vocal (X2), it becomes clear that there are 2 measurement items with outer loadings of 0.884 and 0.874, demonstrating that these two items accurately represent the vocal aspect. Cronbach's alpha and Composite Reliability are both above 0.70, indicating acceptable reliability. The AVE value of 0.773 exceeds the 0.70 threshold for strict convergent validity. The AVE value indicates that the mean value of the measurement items amounts to 77.3%. In brief, the results of the Vocal variable measurements suggest

Table 3. Outer Loading, Cronbach’s alpha, Composite Reliability, Average Variable Extracted

Variable	Items	Outer Loading	Cronbach’s alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE
Visual (X1)	Vi1	0.827	0.798	0.881	0.712
	Vi2	0.848			
	Vi3	0.857			
Vocal (X2)	Vo1	0.884	0.706	0.872	0.773
	Vo2	0.874			
Celebrity (X3)	C1	0.785	0.795	0.880	0.710
	C2	0.873			
	C3	0.868			
Language (X4)	L1	0.885	0.730	0.881	0.787
	L2	0.889			
Country image (Y1)	CI1	0.889	0.703	0.870	0.771
	CI2	0.866			
Intentions to visit South Korea (Y2)	IV1	0.887	0.730	0.881	0.787
	IV2	0.888			

that Indonesian interest in visiting South Korea is influenced by the vocals in Korean movies and dramas.

Concerning celebrity (X3), 3 measurement items are valid with outer loading between 0.785 and 0.868, reflecting the validity of these three items. The reliability test results show that Cronbach’s alpha and Composite Reliability above 0.70, meaning the data pass the reliability test. The level of convergent validity AVE has a value $0.710 > 0.70$, which confirms the fulfillment of strict convergent validity. The average value of celebrity measurement items reaches 71.0%. Thus, the celebrity effect of Korean movies and dramas can further be estimated as an important variable affecting Indonesians’ intention to visit Korea.

Similar findings appear in language variable (X4). Two measurement items are valid with outer loading between 0.885 and 0.889. The level of reliability is acceptable as shown by Cronbach’s alpha and Composite Reliability above 0.70. The level of convergent validity is shown by the AVE value of $0.787 > 0.70$ which meets the requirements for strict convergent validity. On average, the measurement items reach 78.7%. Hence, these two items can be used as language aspects in estimating the effect of Language on Indonesian people’s desire to visit South Korea.

Concerning Country image (Y1), the validity test passed with two valid items having outer loadings ranging between 0.889 and 0.866. The reliability test was also successful, with Cronbach’s alpha

and Composite Reliability values exceeding 0.70. The AVE value of 0.771 demonstrates a high level of convergent validity, exceeding the threshold of 0.70, thus meeting the criteria for strict convergent validity.

Concerning the intention to visit South Korea (Y2), it is found that both validity and reliability tests were passed. Two valid measurement items have outer loading values of 0.887 and 0.888, reflecting the validity of the data. The value of Cronbach’s alpha and Composite Reliability above 0.70 confirm the fulfillment of reliability. Convergent validity is shown by the AVE value of $0.787 > 0.70$, which meets the requirements for strict convergent validity.

Following validity and reliability assessments, it is essential to evaluate discriminant validity using the Fornell and Larcker criteria (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The results of discriminant validity under the Fornell and Larcker criteria are displayed in Table 4. The correlation among latent reflective constructs is shown by the diagonal values, which are related to the square roots of AVEs. The diagonal value should surpass the correlation values outside of the diagonal (Kock, 2015).

To check further the discriminant validity, another test is performed. This time, the discriminant validity is measured under the Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT). This measure is seen as more sensitive or precise when it comes to detecting discriminant validity. The suggested amount should be below 0.90. Based on

Table 4. Fornell-Larcker criteria

Variable	Visual	Vocal	Celebrity	Language	Country image	Intention to visit
Visual	0.825					
Vocal	0.317	0.911				
Celebrity	0.329	0.339	0.887			
Language	0.274	0.265	0.338	0.914		
Country image	0.535	0.505	0.567	0.489	0.807	
Intention to visit South Korea	0.586	0.543	0.579	0.542	0.756	0.803

Table 5. Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio of correlations

Variable	Visual	Vocal	Celebrity	Language	Country image	Intention to visit
Visual						
Vocal	0.348					
Celebrity	0.352	0.367				
Language	0.299	0.294	0.366			
Country image	0.591	0.563	0.616	0.542		
Intentions to visit South Korea	0.647	0.607	0.631	0.605	0.847	

the findings in Table 5, all constructs fulfill the necessary criteria. Therefore, it can be inferred that the underlying constructs are legitimate.

The results of the multicollinearity tests can be seen in Table 6. The findings indicate that the inner VIF value is below 5, indicating low multicollinearity among variables. These findings verify that the SEM PLS parameter estimation outcomes remain strong (unbiased).

Table 6. Multicollinearity check

Variable	Country image	Intention to visit South Korea
Visual	1.147	1.491
Vocal	1.219	1.252
Celebrity	1.199	1.344
Language	1.174	1.202
Country image		1.867

The structural path of the model is shown in Figure 2. The number in parentheses at the top

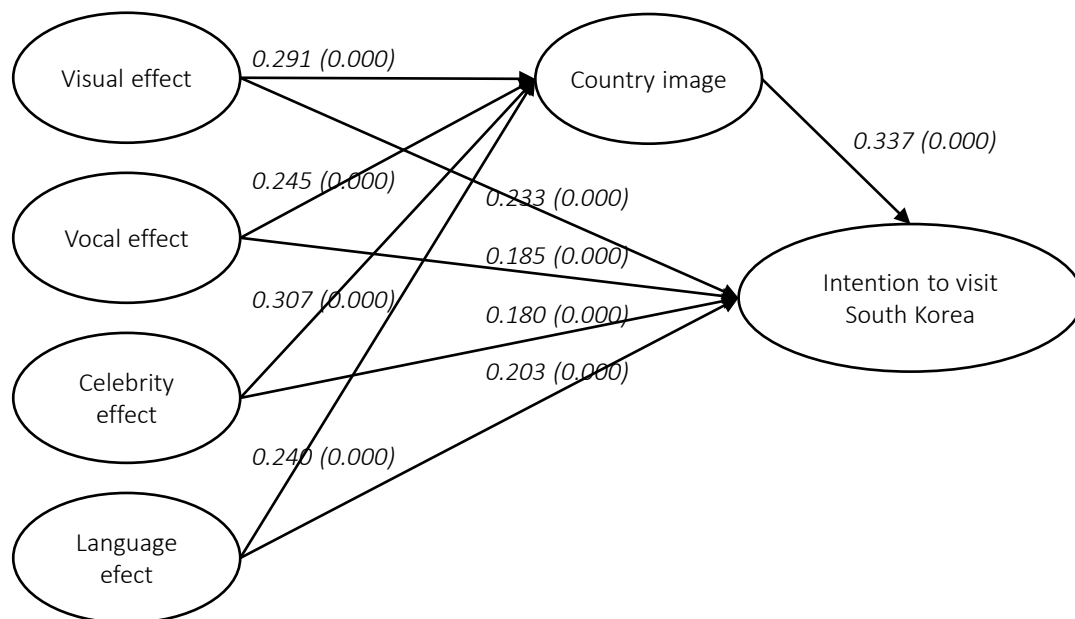


Figure 2. Path analysis of structural model

of each arrow in Figure 2 shows the probability of t-statistic for each variable, confirming that all Korean Wave variables provide positive and significant effect on Country image. Similarly, these four Korean Wave variables also provide positive and significant effects on intention to visit South Korea. A similar finding is pictured in the structural part from country image to intention to visit, as the probability of t-statistic smaller than 0.10.

Additionally, the estimation results of the structural equation model are presented in Table 7. The findings presented in Table 7 demonstrate how the Korean Wave factors impact both country image and the intention to visit. It is evident that the visual effect greatly influences the country image, shown by the positive path coefficient and the statistically significant p-value below 5%. This discovery validates the support for Hypothesis 1. Likewise, the vocal impact also has a positive and meaningful impact on the country image, indicating support for Hypothesis 2. The conclusion remains similar when considering the impact of celebrities on a country's image, as indicated by the positive sign on the path coefficient and p-value being less than 5%, supporting Hypothesis 3. The positive and significant impact of language effect on country image also confirms Hypothesis 4.

Analyzing the impact of visual, vocal, celebrity, and language on intention to visit reveals that visual has a positive and significant effect on intention to visit, thus confirming Hypothesis 5. The same result can be seen in vocal effects, having a positive and significant influence on the intention to visit, indicating support for Hypothesis 6. In the same way, the famous person greatly impacts the desire to visit, giving backing to Hypothesis

7. The language positively and significantly influences the intention to visit, indicating support for Hypothesis 8.

It is observed that the impact of country image on intention to visit is positive and statistically significant, shown by the positive path coefficient and a p-value below 5%. This discovery verifies the support for Hypothesis 9.

Table 8. R-squared and Q-squared of the structural model

Construct	R-squared	Q-squared (=1-SSE/SSO)
Country Image	0.571	0.363
Intentions to Visit	0.706	0.447

In Table 8, the R-squared and Q-squared values exhibit the influence of four Korean Wave factors on country image and intention to visit. R-squared is a statistical measure that represents the amount of variation in endogenous variables explained by other exogenous/endogenous variables in the model. According to Chin (1998), R-squared value of 0.19 shows low influence, 0.33 indicates moderate influence, and 0.66 represents high influence. In Table 9, it is discernible that the influence of visual, vocal, celebrity, and language on country image stands at 57.1% (moderate), while on intention to visit it is at 70.6% (high). Besides, Q-squared evaluates how well the structural model predicts outcomes and should exceed 0. According to the data given in Table 8, it can be deduced that Korean Wave factors account for 36.3% of the variation in country image and 44.7% in intention to visit.

Table 9. Goodness of fit result under SRMR measure

	Estimated model
SRMR	0.041

Table 7. Results for hypotheses testing of the direct effect

Hypotheses	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	t-statistic (O/STDEV)	p-values
Visual → Country image	0.291	0.291	0.057	5.115	0.000
Vocal → Country image	0.245	0.242	0.051	4.775	0.000
Celebrity → Country image	0.307	0.308	0.057	5.426	0.000
Language → Country Image	0.240	0.235	0.047	5.144	0.000
Visual → Intention to visit	0.233	0.235	0.051	4.519	0.000
Vocal → Intention to visit	0.185	0.182	0.043	4.331	0.000
Celebrity → Intention to visit	0.180	0.177	0.045	3.984	0.000
Language → Intention to visit	0.203	0.197	0.039	5.200	0.000
Country image → Intention to visit	0.337	0.334	0.081	4.142	0.000

Table 10. Results of hypotheses testing on mediating effects

Hypothesis	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	t-statistics (O/STDEV)	p-values
Visual → Country image → Intention to visit	0.098	0.098	0.034	2.903	0.004
Vocal → Country image → Intention to visit	0.082	0.082	0.030	2.710	0.007
Celebrity → Country image → Intention to visit	0.104	0.104	0.034	3.042	0.002
Language → Country image → Intention to visit	0.081	0.080	0.030	2.741	0.006

The overall goodness of fit of the structural models measured using Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) and the results are presented in Table 9. The value of SRMR (0.041) is smaller than 0.1, indicating that the structural model is fit.

Table 10 displays the outcomes of how country image mediates the influence of visual, vocal, celebrity, and language on the intention to visit. The p-values for the four hypotheses tests are below 5%, indicating support for Hypotheses 10, 11, 12, and 13. These results suggest that the mediating effect of country image is both positive and significant in enhancing the influence of visual, vocal, celebrity, and language aspects on the intention to visit.

Table 11 provides a summary of the findings to conclude the answers to the hypotheses tests. All hypotheses are supported, and the directions of impact are positive.

To sum up, after analyzing the evidence and observations, the authors conclude that the reliability and validity tests produce reliable and accurate data. The dataset was evaluated for multicollinearity and was determined to have a normal distribution in the first and second models, in line with the classical assumption test outcomes. This study concludes that the visual, vocal, celebrity, and language have an impact on intention to visit South Korea, both direct and indirect effects.

Table 11. Summary of the hypotheses results

Variable	Country image	Intention to visit
Visual effect	Hypothesis 1 supported: significant positive	Hypothesis 5 supported: significant positive
Vocal effect	Hypothesis 2 supported: significant positive	Hypothesis 6 supported: significant positive
Celebrity effect	Hypothesis 3 supported: significant positive	Hypothesis 7 supported: significant positive
Language effect	Hypothesis 4 supported: significant positive	Hypothesis 8 supported: significant positive
Country image	–	Hypothesis 9 supported: significant positive
Visual mediated by country image	–	Hypothesis 10 supported: significant positive
Vocal mediated by country image	–	Hypothesis 11 supported: significant positive
Celebrity mediated by country image	–	Hypothesis 12 supported: significant positive
Language mediated by country image	–	Hypothesis 13 supported: significant positive

4. DISCUSSION

Based on the evidence and findings above, one can argue that the validity and reliability tests yielded dependable and accurate data. Continuing with the classic assumption test results, the dataset shows no multicollinearity and is normally distributed for both the initial and subsequent models. This study concludes that the visual, vocal, celebrity, and language aspects impact the decision to visit South Korea. South Korea has managed to captivate a global audience, including Indonesia, through its films, as evidenced in a recent study consistent with Wan et al. (2019). The impressive visuals and celebrity performances in Korean films have significantly caught the public’s eye, particularly women, and have had a notable influence on audience perceptions, echoing the findings of Quan et al. (2022). The impact of K-drama and K-pop on beauty standards globally, as acknowledged by Baek and Choo (2018), is intertwined with the evolution of these standards. This particular attraction eventually developed as a wish to travel to South Korea.

The visual and celebrity factors had a major impact on South Korea’s national image. These results suggest that the portrayal of Korean visuals and Korean celebrities greatly contribute to the overall perception of South Korea. These findings are consistent with the study by Dela

Cruz and Lacap (2023). Furthermore, the presence of visual effects and celebrities enhances tourists' perception of South Korea as a nation that upholds quality and excellence in the entertainment sector (Halim & Kiatkawsin, 2021). In this study, it was also discovered that vocal and language have a positive and significant impact on improving South Korea's image and boosting interest in traveling to South Korea. The results are reminiscent of Li and Weng (2022) and Dela Cruz and Lacap (2023) as Korean films spark an interest in Korean culture, prompting viewers to delve deeper into South Korean customs. The combination of K-pop and language sets it apart from the norm, making it a hit among teenagers globally (Rojo et al., 2022; Park, 2023). According to Ding and Wu (2023) and J. Kim, K. Kim, Park, and Choi (2022), the appeal of South Korea as a top tourist destination can be enhanced by its vocals and language popularity. Showing motivation to learn a language demonstrates a willingness to participate in more difficult tasks. This drive holds more significance than activities such as buying skincare items or

eating food. By improving their language abilities, people can gain a more profound understanding of Korean culture and develop a longing to visit Korea (Samosir & Wee, 2022).

Besides the direct effect of the four movie-related variables, the country image strengthens significantly the effect of visual, vocal, celebrity, and language on intention to visit. These results demonstrate the indirect or mediating function of national reputation. The discovery of country image in moderating the influence of visuals on intent to visit correlates with the findings of Bang et al. (2021) and Wang (2022), while the discovery of country image in moderating the impact of vocals is congruent with Se. Kim, Sa. Kim, and Wong (2023) and Dela Cruz et al. (2023). Winterich et al. (2018) and Yen and Teng (2015) also identified the presence of country image as a mediator in the connection between celebrity effect and intention to visit. Additionally, Sevin et al. (2020) and Ban and Kim (2020) also discuss the mediating effect of country image on the relationship between language and intention to visit.

CONCLUSION

This paper aims to identify the factors that shape the perception of the country and interest in visiting South Korea, using consumer behavior theory and elements from Korean movies (visual, vocal, celebrity, and language). These theories and variables are utilized to comprehend the perspectives and aspirations of Indonesian individuals toward visiting South Korea.

The findings indicate that consumer behavior theory can accurately illustrate how successful international marketing can boost a nation's economy. Additionally, people's perceptions play a key role in shaping a country's image, and when these views are positive, they can lead to behaviors like wanting to travel to that specific destination. The results suggest that Korean movies successfully blend pop culture aspects like visuals (e.g., stunning suburbs and vibrant cities of Korea, its lively nightlife, and tourist spots), language, music, and Korean celebrities. All the different impacts of the Korean wave contribute to the tendency of people to travel to South Korea. Therefore, movies are powerful instruments not just for boosting popular culture items but also for encouraging people to travel to a specific country or location.

In conclusion, the Korean film industry (visual, vocal, celebrity, and language) has greatly boosted the interest of Indonesians in South Korea and enticed potential visitors. Besides, Korean movies (visual, vocal, celebrity, and language) have managed to make a positive and important contribution. The research indicates that utilizing films to attract tourists or visitors can improve their experience by offering film-related products such as movies and dramas. Policy makers and important industry players should use these factors as essential marketing tools.

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