

Marketing Information Exposure Behavior through Soft Power: The Korean Drama Popularity Phenomenon among Thai Housewives

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ABSTRACT

This research aimed to: (1) examine the marketing information exposure behavior through Soft Power via the popularity of Korean drama series among Thai housewives based on personal factors; (2) investigate opinions toward the effectiveness of marketing communication, both overall and by dimension; (3) examine the relationship between marketing information exposure behavior and personal factors; and (4) compare opinions on the effectiveness of marketing communication according to personal factors. This study employed a quantitative research approach using a questionnaire as the research instrument. Data were collected from 400 Thai housewives with experience watching Korean drama series. The data were analyzed using SPSS. Statistical methods included frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, Chi-square test, Independent Samples t-test, One-way ANOVA, and Scheffé's post hoc comparison. The findings revealed that: (1) most respondents were under 40 years old, married, held a bachelor's degree or higher, had a household income of 15,000–30,000 baht per month, and preferred watching Korean drama series on weekends through Netflix; (2) the overall effectiveness of marketing communication through Soft Power was rated at a high level ($\bar{x} = 4.26$, S.D. = 0.34), with the highest mean scores in Appealing and Asking; (3) certain personal factors were significantly associated with marketing information exposure behavior through Soft Power; and (4) certain personal factors significantly influenced differences in opinions regarding the effectiveness of marketing communication through Soft Power.

Keywords: Soft Power; Korean Drama Series; Marketing Information Exposure Behavior; Marketing Communication; Thai Housewives.

INTRODUCTION

The concept of **Soft Power** was first coined by Dr. Joseph Nye of Harvard University. It refers to the ability to shape the preferences of others, gaining their acceptance and compliance voluntarily through attraction rather than coercion or force. This stands in contrast to **Hard Power**, which relies on military force or economic pressure to compel compliance. Soft Power is, therefore, a form of power that depends on persuasion and creating a positive impression, prompting recipients to willingly align their attitudes or behaviors with the intent of the power user (Santad Pothisa, 2026).

Culture serves as a vital mechanism for driving Soft Power, alongside value creation and consistent communication. When these elements receive appropriate support, they can elevate narratives, products, or cultural identities into cultural power that generates significant economic value. Key instruments for disseminating culture and generating national revenue include cuisine, beauty products, films, television series, and music (Arunrat Jinda, 2025).

South Korea stands as a clear example of success in utilizing Soft Power. The country has successfully spread Korean culture worldwide—including in Thailand—through the global popularity of Korean food, beauty products, films, television series, and K-Pop. This success stems from continuous government support, turning Korean culture into a key driver of both national revenue and positive global image (Papawin Nontawong, 2024). Furthermore, according to the **Global Soft Power Index 2022** by Brand Finance, Thailand ranked 35th globally and 6th in Asia, showing strong performance in Business & Trade, Culture & Heritage, and People & Values, which reflects Thailand's potential in cultural capital (Thai PBS, 2022).

Based on these background context, the researcher is interested in studying **the exposure behavior to marketing information in the form of Soft Power through the Korean drama wave among Thai housewives**. Housewives represent a demographic segment that frequently consumes Korean dramas and plays a crucial role in household purchasing decisions. The findings of this study will be beneficial for analyzing and planning marketing communications. Moreover, they can be applied to develop policies and strategies for public agencies, private sectors, tourism industries, import-export businesses, and cultural industries effectively.

Research Objectives

1. **To study** the exposure behavior to marketing information in the form of Soft Power through the Korean drama wave among Thai housewives, categorized by personal demographic factors.
2. **To examine** the opinions regarding the effectiveness of marketing communications, both overall and across the 5 dimensions—**Awareness, Appealing, Asking, Action, and Advocacy**—among Thai housewives, categorized by personal demographic factors.
3. **To investigate** the relationship between personal demographic factors and the exposure behavior to marketing information in the form of Soft Power through the Korean drama wave among Thai housewives.
4. **To compare** the opinions regarding the effectiveness of marketing communications in the form of Soft Power, both overall and across the 5 dimensions, among Thai housewives categorized by personal demographic factors.

RESEARCH METHODS

Research Design

study employed a **survey research** design. Data were collected through a structured **questionnaire** administered to the sample group. The collected data were analyzed using the **Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS)**.

Population and Sample

The population consisted of **Thai housewives who had experience watching Korean television dramas and played a role in household purchasing decisions** for products and services across Bangkok, its metropolitan area, and other provinces of Thailand. The sample size was determined using **Taro Yamane's formula** for an unknown population at a **95% confidence level** with a **0.05 margin of error**, resulting in a minimum required sample of **385 respondents**. To enhance the reliability of the findings, data were collected from **400 respondents**.

Instrument Quality Assessment

The research instrument was a **structured questionnaire** consisting of four sections: (1) respondents' demographic information, (2) marketing information exposure behavior, (3) opinions regarding the effectiveness of Soft Power marketing communication, and (4) additional suggestions. The questionnaire was examined for **content validity** by a panel of experts and tested for **reliability** before being used for the actual data collection.

Data Collection

Data were collected using an **online questionnaire** distributed through **social networking platforms** to Thai housewives who had experience watching Korean television dramas. The data collection was conducted between **December 2023 and February 2024**. After collection, the responses were checked for completeness and accuracy before being analyzed statistically.

Data Analysis

data were analyzed using **SPSS**. **Descriptive statistics**, including frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation, were used to summarize the data. **Inferential statistics** included the **Chi-square Test**, **Independent Samples t-test**, **One-way Analysis of Variance (One-way ANOVA)**, and **Scheffé's post hoc test** for pairwise comparisons to test the research hypotheses.

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RESEARCH RESULTS

Part 1: Findings on Exposure Behavior to Marketing Information in the Form of Soft Power Through the Korean Drama Wave Among Thai Housewives, Categorized by Personal Demographic Factors

The results revealed that the majority of the respondents were under 40 years old (65.75%), married (68.50%), held a Bachelor's degree or higher (56.50%), and had an average monthly family income between 15,000 and 30,000 Baht (47.25%). Regarding residential location, most resided in Bangkok and its vicinity (65.75%). For housing type, the majority lived in private detached houses (44.50%), with a family size of 3–4 members being the most common (51.50%). These findings reflect that the majority of the sample consists of working-age Thai housewives with families, a relatively high level of education, middle-level family income, and residence primarily in urban areas. Consequently, this demographic possesses continuous access to media and diverse opportunities for exposure to marketing information through Korean drama series.

Regarding **marketing information exposure behavior**, most respondents preferred watching Korean dramas during weekends or holidays, with a viewing frequency of 3–5 days per week. The preferred viewing time was during the daytime after lunch, with an average duration of 1–2 hours per session. The most popular genre was life and drama. Viewing was mostly done together with their spouses, and **Netflix** was the primary platform chosen for watching. The primary motivation for viewing was to keep up with current social trends.

Regarding **perceptions derived from Korean dramas**, respondents perceived that the outstanding feature of Korean series is the presentation of unique culture and traditions, particularly the seamless integration of content concerning Korean cuisine and dining culture. These elements significantly attract viewers' interest and enhance recall. Furthermore, product placements and marketing content were integrated smoothly and appropriately with the storyline, leading to effective recognition and recall of Korean products and brands.

Regarding **post-viewing consumption behavior and attitudes**, the majority of respondents were familiar with and had used various types of Korean products, particularly electrical appliances, mobile phones, cosmetics, and skincare products. Additionally, they exhibited a tendency to repurchase products after watching Korean drama series. They recognized South Korea as a globally renowned nation in terms of cuisine, culture, beauty, and the entertainment industry. Furthermore, they agreed that the success of South Korea's Soft Power stems from the synergy between the public sector, private sector, and national unity in driving cultural resources toward international recognition.

Part 2: Findings on Opinions Toward Marketing Communication Effectiveness Overall and Across the 5 Dimensions (Awareness, Appealing, Asking, Action, and Advocacy) Among Thai Housewives, Categorized by Personal Demographic Factors

Table 1: Opinions Toward Marketing Communication Effectiveness in Overall Overview

Marketing Communication Effectiveness	Mean ($\bar{X}$)	S.D.	Interpretation
1. Awareness	4.23	0.41	High
2. Appealing	4.28	0.40	High
3. Asking	4.28	0.42	High
4. Action	4.26	0.42	High
5. Advocacy	4.25	0.41	High
Overall	4.26	0.34	High

As shown in Table 1, the overall opinion of Thai housewives toward the effectiveness of Soft Power marketing communications through the Korean drama wave was at a **high level** ($\bar{X} = 4.26, S.D. = 0.34$).

When considering each dimension individually, all dimensions were rated at a high level. The highest mean scores were found in **Appealing** ($\bar{X} = 4.28, S.D. = 0.40$) and **Asking** ($\bar{X} = 4.28, S.D. = 0.42$), followed by **Action** ($\bar{X} = 4.26, S.D. = 0.42$), **Advocacy** ($\bar{X} = 4.25, S.D. = 0.41$), and **Awareness** ($\bar{X} = 4.23, S.D. = 0.41$), respectively. These results demonstrate that marketing communications through Soft Power via Korean drama series effectively drive awareness, interest, information search, purchasing decisions, and brand advocacy among Thai housewives across all dimensions at a high level.

Part 3: Findings on the Relationship Between Personal Demographic Factors and Exposure Behavior to Marketing Information in the Form of Soft Power Through the Korean Drama Wave Among Thai Housewives

The research findings revealed that the exposure behavior to marketing information in the form of Soft Power through the Korean drama wave among Thai housewives was associated with personal demographic factors, including age, marital status, educational level, average monthly family income, residential location, housing type, and number of family members. Using the **Chi-square Test** at a statistical significance level of .05, the analysis indicated that certain personal demographic factors were statistically significantly correlated with exposure

behavior toward marketing information through Soft Power, whereas other factors showed no statistically significant relationship. This reflects that specific demographic characteristics influence the patterns and behaviors of information exposure among Thai housewives who watch Korean drama series.

Part 4: Findings on the Comparative Analysis of Opinions Toward Marketing Communication Effectiveness in the Form of Soft Power Overall and Across the 5 Dimensions Among Thai Housewives, Categorized by Personal Demographic Factors

The research findings demonstrated that Thai housewives' opinions toward the effectiveness of Soft Power marketing communications through the Korean drama wave—both overall and across the five individual dimensions (**Awareness, Appealing, Asking, Action, and Advocacy**)—differed based on personal demographic factors. Statistical testing was performed using **Independent Samples t-test** and **One-way Analysis of Variance (One-way ANOVA)** at a statistical significance level of .05, along with **Scheffé's post-hoc test** for pairwise comparisons where significant differences were detected.

The analytical results showed that certain personal demographic factors—namely marital status, average monthly family income, housing type, and number of family members—resulted in statistically significant differences in opinions regarding marketing communication effectiveness. Conversely, factors such as age, educational level, and residential location did not lead to statistically significant differences in opinions. These findings demonstrate that specific demographic attributes influence how different groups of Thai housewives perceive and evaluate the effectiveness of Soft Power marketing communications.

RESEARCH DISCUSSION

Discussion on Exposure Behavior to Marketing Information in the Form of Soft Power Through the Korean Drama Wave Among Thai Housewives, Categorized by Personal Demographic Factors

The study revealed that the majority of the sample consisted of Thai housewives aged 30–40 years, married, with a Bachelor's degree or higher, an average family income between 15,000–30,000 Baht, residing in Bangkok and its vicinity, living in private detached homes, and having 3–4 family members. Regarding information exposure behavior, most respondents preferred watching Korean series on weekends and holidays, with a frequency of 3–5 days per week and an average duration of 1–2 hours per session. They paid particular attention to the presentation of Korean culture, traditions, and lifestyles, especially cuisine and dining culture. This reflects that cultural Soft Power significantly influences the perception and interest of Thai consumers. This finding is consistent with the research by **Muthita Euangsuphaporn (2022)**, which found that Korean entertainment media significantly influences the purchasing decisions for Korean food among Thai consumers.

Discussion on Opinions Toward Marketing Communication Effectiveness Overall and Across the 5 Dimensions (Awareness, Appealing, Asking, Action, and Advocacy) Among Thai Housewives, Categorized by Personal Demographic Factors

The study demonstrated that respondents rated the overall effectiveness of Soft Power marketing communications at a **high level**, with a mean of 4.26. When considering each dimension individually, all dimensions were likewise evaluated at a high level, ranking as follows: **Appealing, Asking, Action, Advocacy**, and **Awareness**, respectively. These findings indicate that Korean drama series effectively generate awareness, stimulate interest, drive information searches, and ultimately lead to purchasing decisions for products and services. This aligns with the research by **Prasobchoke Praesikhao (2017)**, which discovered that digital media and content marketing influence the consumer decision-making journey across all stages of the 5A model.

Discussion on the Relationship Between Personal Demographic Factors and Exposure Behavior to Marketing Information in the Form of Soft Power Through the Korean Drama Wave Among Thai Housewives

The research findings indicated that certain personal demographic factors were related to the exposure behavior to marketing information through Korean drama series, including age, educational level, income, and residential characteristics. This reflects that demographic characteristics influence the frequency, duration, and patterns of consuming Korean entertainment media, as well as exposure to marketing information via Soft Power. This aligns with the concept proposed by **Kotler and Keller (2016)**, who explained that personal factors—such

as age, family life cycle, occupation, income, education, and lifestyle—are key factors influencing consumer behavior, information reception, and responses to marketing communications.

Discussion on the Comparative Analysis of Opinions Toward Marketing Communication Effectiveness in the Form of Soft Power Overall and Across the 5 Dimensions Among Thai Housewives, Categorized by Personal Demographic Factors

The results revealed that respondents with different personal demographic backgrounds held significantly different opinions regarding the effectiveness of Soft Power marketing communications, both overall and across all five individual dimensions (**Awareness, Appealing, Asking, Action, and Advocacy**). This reflects that demographic attributes affect the perception and response to marketing communications embedded in Korean entertainment media. This finding is consistent with the study by **Kaewnoen, Samit, and Phrueksathaporn (2020)**, which found that demographic factors influence consumer behaviors, perceptions, and attitudes toward the **Korean Wave (Hallyu)**, wherein consumers with distinct personal characteristics exhibit varying levels of perception and response to the Korean Wave.

Research Recommendations

Based on the research findings, the researcher presents the following recommendations:

1. General Recommendations

1. **For Entrepreneurs:** Businesses should adopt marketing communication strategies leveraging Soft Power through entertainment media—such as drama series, streaming platforms, and television shows—to build awareness, generate interest, and drive purchasing decisions. Content should be selected to align closely with the characteristics and needs of the target audience.
2. **For Media Producers & Businesses:** Product placement, culture, and Thai identity should be seamlessly and naturally integrated into content. This approach will maximize the effectiveness of Soft Power and foster a positive image for products, services, and the nation as a whole.
3. **For Public Sector Agencies:** Government bodies should continuously promote and support Soft Power development through policy implementation, budget allocation, and strategic partnerships with the private sector. This will drive Thailand's creative industries to compete internationally and generate sustainable economic value.

2. Recommendations for Future Research

1. **Broader Sample Diversity:** Future studies should expand to include more diverse demographics, such as teenagers, working professionals, the elderly, or male consumers, to compare exposure behaviors and opinions toward Soft Power marketing communications across different demographic groups.
2. **Exploration of Additional Variables:** Future research should investigate other variables that may influence the effectiveness of Soft Power marketing communications—such as social media influencers, brand loyalty, and digital marketing—or perform comparative studies on Soft Power from other nations (e.g., Japan, China, or Thailand) to build comprehensive knowledge for more effective marketing planning.

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