

# The Influence of the Korean Wave on the Purchasing Behavior among North Eastern Indian Youth

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## Abstract

The Korean Wave (Hallyu), encompassing K-Dramas, K-Pop, K-Food, beauty products, and innovative packaging, has gained significant global popularity, profoundly influencing consumer behavior. This study explores how the Korean Wave impacts the purchasing behavior of North Eastern Indian youth, aged 18–30, with a focus on cultural resonance, celebrity endorsements, and product appeal. Using a qualitative research approach, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 19 participants to gather insights into their experiences with Korean media and products. Thematic analysis was employed to identify recurring patterns, revealing key themes such as Cultural Influence, Celebrity Endorsements, Product Aesthetics, and Social Media Impact. Findings highlight that Korean cultural content which fosters emotional connections, driving preferences for Korean food, beauty products, and merchandise. Participants noted the role of celebrity endorsements in influencing their decisions, as well as the appeal of aesthetically pleasing and high-quality products. The study underscores the significance of cultural phenomena in shaping consumer behavior and offers valuable implications for marketers seeking to leverage Hallyu to engage Indian youth. Future research could examine the long-term impact of the Korean Wave and its comparison with other cultural trends.

**Keywords:** Korean Wave, consumer behavior, cultural influence, celebrity endorsements, North Eastern India

## Introduction

The Korean Wave (Hallyu) refers to the global popularity of South Korea's cultural exports, including pop culture, entertainment, music, TV dramas, and movies. The term "Hallyu," which translates to "Korean Wave" in Chinese, encompasses the phenomenal growth of Korean culture and popular culture, including music, movies, drama, online games, and Korean cuisine. (Roll, 2021). South Korea is unique in its dedicated goal to become the world's leading exporter of popular culture, a priority set by the government. Former U.S. President Barack Obama even referenced the Korean Wave during his state visit to Korea in March 2012. This goal aligns with the concept of "soft power," a term coined by Harvard political scientist Joseph Nye in 1990, referring to the intangible influence a country wields through its image rather than through military or economic might. (Roll, 2021). Hallyu first spread to China and Japan and later to Southeast Asia and other countries worldwide, continuing to have a strong impact. In 2000, the lifting of a 50-year ban on the exchange of popular culture between Korea and Japan facilitated the

surge of Korean culture in Japan. South Korea's broadcast authorities have actively promoted their TV programs and cultural content internationally. (Roll, 2021).

Hallyu's growth since 1999 has been well-managed by key stakeholders. The continued popularity and expansion of Hallyu into other markets can be attributed to several factors: Popularity of Korean Brands: Companies like Samsung, LG, Hyundai, and AmorePacific have improved Korea's global image. Increased R&D: Investment in research and development has led to superior quality in products and entertainment. Global Reach of Korean Entertainment: Korean movies, dramas, and pop music have gained international acclaim. For instance, the film "Parasite" made Oscar history by winning four Academy Awards, including Best Picture. K-Pop Explosion: K-pop bands like Big Bang, Super Junior, PSY, and Girls' Generation have sold millions of records worldwide. The number of Hallyu fans has grown significantly, with millions of fans in Asia, the Americas, and Europe. Evolution of Korean Dramas: Korean dramas have evolved to explore a variety of themes, appealing to a broad international audience.

The rise of the Korean Wave has significantly enhanced Korea's global presence, introducing its culture to audiences previously unfamiliar with it. In India, the introduction of Korean culture began in Manipur in the early 2000s. Korean dramas and films gained popularity due to restrictions on Bollywood content and the limited availability of Hindi channels. The widespread availability of affordable pirated Korean CDs in local markets further fueled the consumption of Korean media in Manipur and neighboring states (Kuotsu, 2013). The availability of pirated Korean CDs and the launch of the Arirang channel in Mizoram in 1996 provided a gateway to Korean entertainment. According to Ms. K.C. Neela's study, "The Rise of Hallyu - A Study on the Consumption of Korean Content in India," the ban on Bollywood products in 2000 and close trade connections with Myanmar and China further fueled the consumption of Korean content in these areas (Chakravarthy, 2018). Korean dramas gained immense popularity, with several being remade into Hindi. Shows like "Kaisi Yeh Yaariyan," inspired by the beloved K-drama "Boys Over Flowers," and "Kahani Hamari Dil Dosti Deewanepan Ki," based on "Heirs" starring Lee Min Ho, exemplify this trend. Korean brands like Samsung and LG also began making significant inroads into the Indian market during the 1990s, further cementing the connection between the two cultures (Das and Bhattacharjee, 2023).

To advance the Korean Wave in India, the Korean government undertook several initiatives, including the establishment of the Korean Culture Center in New Delhi in 2012. This center has played a crucial role in promoting Korean culture through exhibitions, Korean language classes, monitoring the popularity of Korean dramas, and organizing K-pop festivals. Despite its modest beginnings, the first K-pop festival hosted by the Korean Culture Center in India saw significant participation (Gogoi, 2017). The advent of streaming platforms like Netflix also contributed to the surge in popularity of Korean dramas in India. Initially, there was limited interest in paid entertainment services among the Indian population. However, with the introduction of user-friendly and affordable subscription plans, including free trial periods, Netflix experienced a substantial increase in Indian subscribers. By 2020, Korean dramas had become some of the most sought-after content on the platform (Rahaman (n.d.)). The appeal of Korean media lies in its ability to blend contemporary global cultural elements with traditional values, resonating with diverse audiences. In regions like Manipur, often referred to as "Mini Korea," young people are particularly influenced by Korean popular culture, adopting the fashion, hairstyles, and language of their favorite celebrities (Rahaman (n.d.)).

The surge in popularity of Korean culture has significantly influenced Indian consumer habits. This trend is evident in the increasing fondness for Korean food, fashion, language, and beauty products, often showcased by celebrities and in K-Dramas (Singh, 2022). In India, the Korean Wave's influence has notably increased over the past decade, with a significant surge during the COVID-19 lockdown. Korean dramas gained popularity on Indian OTT platforms, leading to a 370% increase in viewership in 2020. The growing fascination with Korean culture has translated into increased demand for Korean products, including food, beauty items, and merchandise. Brands like Nong Shim have made their mark in the Indian market, and Korean beauty products have become widely available on e-commerce platforms. Collaborations like the BTS meal from McDonald's India and the reported 40% monthly growth in Korean product sales by platforms like Korikart illustrate the rising consumer interest in Korean products (Singh, 2022). Korean media, including K-Dramas, K-Pop, and K-Beauty, has created a profound cultural appeal among Indian consumers. This appeal extends beyond mere entertainment to influence purchasing decisions. The exposure to Korean culture through popular media has led to increased interest in Korean products, such as beauty products, food, and electronics (Singh, 2022). K-Beauty Products: Korean beauty standards and products have become highly sought after in India. The emphasis on skincare routines and innovative beauty solutions in K-Dramas and K-Pop has driven Indian consumers to explore and adopt Korean skincare products. Social media platforms and resellers have played a crucial role in this trend, with Korean beauty products becoming widely available and popular (Singh, 2022). K-Food: The popularity of Korean food, particularly instant noodles and snacks, has surged. Korean cuisine's unique flavors and presentation, as seen in media, have attracted Indian consumers. The rise in the availability of Korean food products in Indian markets, coupled with increasing consumer demand, highlights this trend (Singh, 2022). With the rise of internet usage in India, the influence of Korean pop culture has intensified, reaching a broader audience through social media, YouTube, OTT platforms, and streaming services like Netflix and Amazon Prime Video. The popularity of K-dramas, movies, and K-pop music has surged, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, as people turned to entertainment for comfort and distraction (Rahaman (n.d.)). The allure of Korean pop culture is attributed to its diverse genres, engaging choreography, compelling narratives, and charismatic performances, reflecting Korea's vibrant creative scene and multicultural influences. Overall, the Korean Wave has enriched India's cultural landscape and strengthened cultural ties between the two nations, showcasing the impact of cultural exchange and globalization (Rahaman (n.d.)). The impact of Korean media extends to consumer behavior through celebrity endorsements and media exposure. K-Pop idols and actors often become influencers, shaping consumer preferences and buying habits (Osman, 2022). Celebrity Influence: The portrayal of K-Pop idols using specific brands or products creates a trend among fans. This influence extends to the adoption of fashion, beauty products, and lifestyle choices showcased by these celebrities. Indian consumers, especially the youth, are drawn to products endorsed by their favorite Korean stars, leading to increased sales of these products (Osman, 2022). Media Exposure: Korean dramas and music videos often feature various products, which indirectly promotes these items among viewers. The depiction of luxurious and desirable lifestyles in K-Dramas creates a desire for similar experiences among Indian consumers, translating into a higher demand for Korean products (Osman, 2022).

Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), a prominent psychological theory developed by Icek Ajzen in 1985 and expanded upon in 1987. It highlights the empirical support for the theory, indicating that it successfully predicts intentions to perform a wide range of behaviors. According to TPB, these intentions are influenced by three main components: attitudes toward the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived

behavioral control (Ajzen, 1991). Attitudes refer to the individual's positive or negative evaluations of performing the behavior. Subjective norms involve the perceived social pressures to either perform or abstain from the behavior. Perceived behavioral control, on the other hand, is the individual's perception of their ability to perform the behavior, which can directly influence both their intentions and the behavior itself. Together, these factors significantly predict a person's intentions, which in turn, along with perceived behavioral control, account for a considerable amount of variance in actual behavior (Ajzen, 1991). It also touches upon the relationship between attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control, and their respective salient behavioral, normative, and control beliefs. However, it notes that the exact nature of these relationships is still uncertain. Expectancy-value formulations, which attempt to quantify these relations, have been only partly successful. To address measurement limitations, the review suggests the optimal rescaling of expectancy and value measures (Ajzen, 1991). Furthermore, the inclusion of past behavior in the prediction equation is proposed as a method to test the theory's sufficiency, although this remains an unresolved issue. The available evidence suggests that the TPB is quite effective in predicting behavior, even when compared to the maximum accuracy possible, considering the reliability of the behaviors being studied (Ajzen, 1991).

Herbert Kelman's Social Influence Theory (SIT), originally formulated in the 1950s. Kelman's theory was developed to explain the conditions under which social influence leads to changes in attitudes or behavior, especially in the context of the socio- political changes occurring during that period. SIT addresses the limitations of previous theories by analyzing different types of influence situations and the associated responses, focusing on the underlying processes of collective persuasion and social compliance (Davlembayeva & Papagiannidis, 2024). The theory identifies three primary modes of social influence acceptance: Compliance: This occurs when individuals conform to the expectations or demands of others to achieve favorable reactions or avoid negative outcomes, without necessarily believing in or valuing the change themselves. Identification: In this mode, individuals accept influence because they desire to establish or maintain a satisfying self-defining relationship with another person or group. They align their attitudes and behaviors with those of the influencing agent to create or reinforce a positive relationship. Internalization: This is the most profound form of influence, where individuals adopt the induced behavior or attitude because it is congruent with their own value system. They integrate the new attitudes or behaviors into their belief system, finding them rewarding and satisfying. Kelman's SIT also builds on the intellectual foundations of other research streams, such as conformity and social dynamics, cognitive dissonance/consistency theories, and functional theories of attitude. The theory emphasizes the interaction between new information introduced by an influencing agent and an individual's inclination towards stability in their belief system. This interaction determines the degree and mode of acceptance of the influence. Kelman's work on SIT aimed to explain the qualitative distinctions between different responses to social influence and their implications for long-term behavior change (Davlembayeva & Papagiannidis, 2024).

### **Need and Significance of the Study**

Lack of comprehensive research on how different aspects of the Korean Wave (K-Food, K-Beauty, K-Dramas, K-Media, and K-Packaging) together influence purchasing behaviour. The study provides a complete picture of how various aspects of the Korean Wave affect consumer choices in North Eastern India. It reveals how Korean media and products impact the purchasing decisions of youth.

## **Review Of Literature**

The influence of the Korean Wave, or Hallyu, on consumer behavior has been widely explored in recent studies. Sharma et al. (2022) highlighted how cultural proximity significantly impacts the acceptance of Korean products in Mizoram. Their findings showed that elements like food habits and familial themes in K-Dramas resonate deeply with local youth, fostering a sense of connection and representation. Similarly, Anil and Lakshmy (2024) found that the COVID-19 pandemic amplified exposure to Korean media, leading to a surge in interest in Korean products such as cosmetics and food, particularly among Indian youth. Celebrity endorsements play a pivotal role in shaping consumer behavior.

Tiara and Gunadi (2022) demonstrated that endorsements by K-Pop idols and Korean celebrities enhance brand perception and consumer trust, ultimately driving purchase intentions. Adding to this, Rahmiati (2023) emphasized the emotional connections that consumers form with their favorite idols, which significantly influence their product preferences and purchasing decisions. The appeal of Korean products is also closely linked to their innovative aesthetics and packaging. Son and Kijboonchoo (2016) revealed that minimalistic yet visually appealing designs are a major factor in attracting consumers, particularly in the cosmetics industry. Packaging not only enhances the perceived value of products but also aligns with global trends favoring sleek and functional designs.

Finally, studies such as Putri and Hariasih (2024) highlighted the role of social media and influencers in amplifying the reach of Korean products. Peer recommendations and digital platforms were found to shape consumer preferences, with online reviews playing a critical role in decision-making. Despite these positive influences, challenges such as high costs and limited accessibility persist. Lita (2023) noted that while Korean products are desirable, their premium pricing and limited inclusivity often act as barriers for consumers. These insights provide a comprehensive understanding of the factors driving the global appeal of Korean products, while also highlighting areas for improvement.

While existing research often focuses on individual elements of the Korean Wave, such as K-Dramas or K-Pop, there's limited comprehensive analysis on how multiple aspects K-Food, K-Beauty, K-Dramas, K-Pop, celebrity endorsements, and Korean packaging designs collectively influence purchasing behavior. This study could address this gap by examining how these diverse elements interact and contribute to the purchasing decisions of North Eastern youth in India. This approach would provide a holistic view of how various components of the Korean Wave impact consumer behavior in this specific region.

## **Method Objectives**

1. To understand how Korean TV shows, music, and other media affect North Eastern youth's interest in buying Korean products.
2. To find out how Korean celebrities and K-Pop stars impact the decision to buy Korean products.
3. To look at how attractive aspects of Korean product packaging lead North Eastern youth to spend more than planned, and to identify other factors that influence their buying decisions.
4. To see how Korean cultural elements, like food, beauty products, and fashion, influence buying choices among North Eastern youth.

## **Operational Definition**

### **1. Korean Wave (Hallyu)**

The Korean Wave, or Hallyu, refers to the global popularity and influence of South Korean culture,



encompassing various media and cultural elements.

## **2. Korean Food**

Korean food includes traditional and modern Korean cuisine items, such as kimchi, bibimbap, and Korean BBQ. This study will explore how the appeal and consumption of Korean food influence purchasing decisions.

## **3. Korean Media**

Korean media includes various forms of content produced in South Korea, such as television dramas (K-Dramas), variety shows, and films. The study will investigate how exposure to this media affects interest in Korean products.

## **4. Korean Beauty**

Korean beauty refers to skincare and cosmetic products originating from South Korea, known for their innovative trends. This study will assess how these products impact purchasing behavior.

## **5. K-Pop**

K-Pop (Korean Pop) is a type of music from South Korea that includes songs performed by groups or solo artists. The influence of K-Pop on purchasing decisions will be examined.

## **6. Korean Dramas**

Korean dramas (K-Dramas) are television series produced in South Korea, often known for their storytelling and production quality. The study will explore how K-Dramas influence the buying behavior of North Eastern youth.

## **7. Korean Product Packaging**

Korean product packaging refers to the design, aesthetics, and presentation of products from South Korea. This dimension will be explored to understand how packaging design affects consumer spending.

## **8. Korean Celebrity Endorsement**

Korean celebrity endorsement involves promoting products through South Korean celebrities or K-Pop idols. The study will investigate how such endorsements impact consumer attitudes and purchasing behavior.

## **Research Questions**

1. How does engaging with Korean TV shows or K-Pop influence interest in purchasing Korean products?
2. Have any Korean celebrity or K-Pop star influenced the decision to buy a Korean product, despite its high cost?
3. How do attractive aspects of Korean product packaging lead North Eastern youth to spend more than planned, and what other factors influence their buying decisions?
4. How do Korean cultural elements, such as food, beauty products, and fashion, influence the purchasing behaviors of North Eastern youth?

## **Sample**

North Eastern youth in India who are familiar with or engaged with Korean media, such as K-Dramas, K-Pop, Korean beauty products, Korean food, and Korean product packaging. A sample of 19 individuals between age of 18 to 30 years were used for the study.

## Inclusion Criteria

- Participants should be familiar with Korean media, including K-Dramas, K-Pop, Korean beauty products, and Korean food.
- Focusing on North Eastern youths, which might typically include individuals aged 18-30 years.

## Exclusion Criteria

- Individuals who have not purchased or shown interest in purchasing Korean products.
- Individuals who were originally from North Eastern states but have permanently migrated and no longer reside there.

## Tools for the Study

### Semi- Structured Interviews

These interviews, conducted via telephone, were used open-ended questions to explore participants' experiences and perceptions regarding Korean media and products. To gain deep insights into how Korean TV shows, music, K-Dramas, K-Pop, K-Beauty products, and packaging design influence purchasing behavior among North Eastern youth.

### Research Design and Technique

The study adopts a qualitative research approach to explore and understand the influence of the Korean Wave on the purchasing behavior of North Eastern youth in India. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with North Eastern youth to gain detailed personal accounts of how Korean media, celebrities, and products impact their buying decisions. These interviews allowed participants to share their experiences and opinions in their own words.

In this research study, purposive sampling was used.

## Results

**Table 1: Presenting the Codes, Themes, Sub themes, Examples**

Codes	Themes	Sub-Themes	Examples
Cultural Influence of K-Media	Cultural Influence	K-Dramas, and Connection	<p>"Coming from the Northeast, their food resonates with me... I bought tteokbokki because I saw it in dramas."</p> <p>"Buying BTS albums and lightsticks made me feel like a true fan."</p> <p>"I loved the female lead's outfits in the show Food, and bought some formal pants after watching Hometown Cha Cha Cha."</p> <p>"Reply 1988 made me want to consume Korean food more, learn how to use chopsticks, or buy vintage items like cassette players."</p> <p>"Seeing characters in K-Dramas use sheet masks so often made me want to include them in my skincare routine."</p>

Codes	Themes	Sub-Themes	Examples
Influence of Idols and Influencers	Celebrity & Social Influence	Emotional Connection & Peer Impact	"Hwasa inspires confidence to love my own skin."
			"A friend swore by the Laneige serum, and I felt motivated to buy it." "I saw Jennie from BLACKPINK using a lip balm, and I wanted to try it too." "My dressing style changed after following my favorite idols; I started wearing baggy clothes like them." "I bought a Puma sneaker because I saw Lisa from BLACKPINK wearing it in a dance practice video."
Appeal of Korean Product Aesthetics	Product Aesthetics	Innovative and Eye-Catching Packaging	"Even simple things like sheet masks feel like gifts because of their adorable packaging." "I love how their packaging reflects Korean traditions, making it feel unique." "Korean product packaging is minimalistic yet cute, fitting my aesthetic." "The color palettes, fonts, and sleek designs make unboxing feel special." "Seeing my favorite idols on limited-edition packaging made me want to buy it, even if I didn't need the product."
			"COSRX snail mucin delivered more than I expected; it was worth the price." "Beauty of Joseon sunscreen really worked well for my dry skin, and now I always restock it." "Laneige lip balm was expensive, but I bought it because I heard great reviews, and it worked perfectly for me." "My friend recommended AXIS-Y Dark Spot Correcting Glow Serum, and after seeing the results, I trust the brand completely." "I hesitated before buying my first Korean sunscreen, but after using it, I never went back to other brands."
Perceived Quality and Effectiveness	Product Quality	Effectiveness & Brand Trust	



Codes	Themes	Sub-Themes	Examples
Challenges in Buying Korean Products	Accessibility & Cost	High Cost & Mismatched Expectations	<p>"Korean products are expensive, but they work well, so I feel it's worth it."</p> <p>"The BB cream I bought online was way too light for my skin tone."</p> <p>"Shipping and customs charges make Korean products even more expensive for me."</p> <p>"I wanted a TXT-endorsed eyeshadow palette, but it was out of my budget."</p> <p>"Some Korean brands don't offer shade ranges suitable for Indian skin tones, which makes finding the right product difficult."</p>
Impulse and Trend-Driven Purchases	Buying Behavior	Social Media Hype & FOMO	<p>"The limited-edition lip tint packaging made me buy it even though I didn't need it."</p> <p>"I bought a Rom&amp;nd lip tint because I kept seeing it trending on Instagram, and it turned out to be my favorite."</p> <p>"I saw TXT endorsing an eyeshadow palette, and I really wanted it, but it was out of my budget."</p> <p>"I bought an Etude House lip tint because social media influencers kept raving about it."</p> <p>"Seeing BTS in a Samsung ad made me choose a Galaxy phone over other brands."</p>

The data was analyzed using thematic analysis, following an inductive approach. The process began with line-by-line coding of the responses from 19 participants. These codes were then grouped into six themes based on recurring patterns and ideas. For example, participants frequently mentioned how Korean dramas, K-pop idols, and media shaped their product preferences, which was categorized under Cultural Influence of K-Media and Influence of Idols and Influencers. Similarly, discussions around packaging design and product quality were grouped under Appeal of Korean Product Aesthetics and Perceived Quality and Effectiveness.

A constant comparison method was employed to refine themes and ensure they accurately reflected the participants' experiences. Direct participant quotes were used to support the themes, grounding the analysis in real consumer insights. The final themes were Cultural Influence of K-Media, Influence of Idols and Influencers, Appeal of Korean Product Aesthetics, Perceived Quality and Effectiveness, Challenges in

Buying Korean Products, Impulse and Trend-Driven Purchases.

## **Discussion**

The findings provide significant insights into how the K-Wave influences the purchasing behavior of North Eastern Indian youth:

### **Cultural Influence of K-Media**

Participants felt a strong cultural connection through Korean dramas and media. Traditional foods and cultural elements depicted in dramas often resonated with their own cultural practices, fostering a sense of familiarity. For instance, Participant O.N shared, "Their food reminds me of home... I bought tteokbokki because I saw it in dramas." Similarly, Participant U was inspired by K-drama fashion trends, saying, "I loved the female lead's outfits in Hometown Cha Cha Cha and bought some formal pants after watching it."

### **Influence of Idols and Influencers**

Korean celebrities and social media influencers played a pivotal role in shaping participants' purchasing decisions. Many expressed admirations for idols like BTS and Hwasa, whose endorsements encouraged them to try specific products. Participant A.H stated, "When I see my favorite idols using something, I feel it must be good." Similarly, Participant M.S shared, "I bought a Puma sneaker because I saw Lisa from BLACKPINK wearing it in a dance practice video."

### **Appeal of Korean Product Aesthetics**

Participants frequently praised Korean products for their eye-catching and innovative packaging. Many described how visually appealing packaging enhanced the consumer experience and made products feel premium. Participant A.H noted, "Even simple things like sheet masks feel like gifts because of their adorable packaging." Participant K.R also appreciated the design, stating, "Korean product packaging is minimalistic yet cute, fitting my aesthetic."

### **Perceived Quality and Effectiveness**

The effectiveness of Korean beauty and skincare products emerged as a crucial factor influencing purchases. Participants valued how products delivered visible results, often surpassing their expectations. Participant M.R shared, "COSRX snail mucin delivered more than I expected; it was worth the price." Participant M.A emphasized product reliability, saying, "Beauty of Joseon sunscreen really worked well for my dry skin, and now I always restock it."

### **Challenges in Buying Korean Products**

Despite positive experiences, cost and accessibility were major challenges. Many participants felt that Korean products were expensive, and international shipping and customs fees made them even less affordable. Participant D.S stated, "Korean products are expensive, but they work well, so I feel it's worth it." Another issue was the lack of shade diversity in Korean cosmetics. Participant A.H noted, "The BB cream I bought online was way too light for my skin tone."

### **Impulse and Trend-Driven Purchases**

Social media hype, FOMO (Fear of Missing Out), and limited-edition packaging contributed to impulse buying. Many participants purchased products they did not necessarily need because they were trending. Participant A.H admitted, "The limited-edition lip tint packaging made me buy it even though I didn't need it." Similarly, Participant B.N shared, "Seeing BTS in a Samsung ad made me choose a Galaxy phone over other brands."

### **Challenges and Negative Experiences**

Despite the positive experiences, participants noted challenges such as the high cost of products and limited shade ranges for makeup. Participant A.H mentioned, "The BB cream I bought online was way too light for my skin tone." Shipping and customs fees were also seen as barriers, making Korean products less accessible. Participant D.S stated, "Korean products are expensive, but they work well, so I feel it's worth it."

This study stands out for its comprehensive approach, as it examines multiple facets of the Korean Wave, including K-Dramas, K-Pop, K-Food, K-Beauty, celebrity endorsements, and packaging design. Previous studies, such as Sharma et al. (2022), focused on cultural proximity and the role of Korean dramas in shaping consumer behavior, while Tiara and Gunadi (2022) explored the impact of celebrity endorsements. Additionally, Son and Kijboonchoo (2016) emphasized the importance of product aesthetics, particularly in the context of Korean cosmetics.

Unlike these studies, which focus on individual variables, this research integrates all these aspects, offering a holistic understanding of how the Korean Wave collectively influences purchasing behavior among North Eastern Indian youth.

### **Summary and Conclusion**

This study aimed to explore how the Korean Wave influences the purchasing behavior of North Eastern Indian youth by examining multiple aspects, including K-Dramas, K-Pop, K-Food, K-Beauty, celebrity endorsements, and product aesthetics. The analysis reveals that the Korean Wave has a profound impact on consumer behavior. Cultural elements, such as those depicted in K-Dramas, create a sense of connection and representation, while celebrity endorsements and social media amplify the desire to purchase. The emphasis on product aesthetics and quality further reinforces the appeal of Korean products. This study extends prior research by integrating multiple aspects of the Korean Wave- cultural resonance, celebrity endorsements, social influence, and product appeal. While Sharma et al. (2022) highlighted cultural proximity and Tiara and Gunadi (2022) emphasized the role of celebrity endorsements, this study provides a more comprehensive perspective by examining their combined influence. However, challenges such as high costs, limited accessibility, and occasional mismatches in product expectations highlight areas for improvement. These findings offer valuable insights for marketers and businesses seeking to leverage the Korean Wave to engage with this demographic. Future research could explore how these trends evolve over time and compare the influence of Korean products with other global or local brands.

### **Implications**

The findings highlight the strong influence of Korean media on consumer behavior, suggesting that brands can effectively use K-Dramas and K-Pop idols in marketing strategies. The depiction of K-Food and beauty products in dramas and endorsements has already driven purchases, making product placements and celebrity collaborations valuable tools for brand engagement. A key challenge identified is the high cost and limited accessibility of Korean products. Expanding local distribution and offering affordable product lines could make them more accessible. Additionally, the lack of diverse shade ranges in cosmetics remains a barrier, and brands could increase inclusivity by catering to a wider variety of skin tones.

Social media and influencers play a crucial role in purchasing decisions, with peer recommendations heavily impacting consumer interest. Collaborating with Indian influencers engaged with K-Wave content could make product promotions more relatable. However, many consumers make impulse purchases due

to FOMO, often leading to dissatisfaction. Providing better product education, such as shade-matching guides and skincare tutorials, could help consumers make informed choices.

### Limitations

This study has certain limitations that should be acknowledged. The sample consists only of North Eastern Indian youth, which restricts the implications of the research to other regions of India. Since the study focuses on self-reported experiences, there is a possibility of social desirability bias, where participants may have emphasized certain influences more than others. Additionally, the research relies on qualitative data, which provides in-depth insights but does not quantify the extent of the Korean Wave's impact on purchasing behavior. A mixed-methods approach incorporating quantitative analysis could offer a more comprehensive understanding of these trends.

### Suggestion for Future Research

For future research, studies could explore regional differences in how the Korean Wave influences consumer behavior across various parts of India. Investigating whether engagement with Korean media translates into long-term brand loyalty or if purchasing behaviors fluctuate with trends would also provide valuable insights. Additionally, examining the role of Indian influencers in promoting Korean products could help understand how local adaptations of K-Wave marketing influence purchasing decisions. Finally, future research could assess economic and accessibility barriers to purchasing Korean products, particularly in areas where affordability and availability remain challenges.

### Ethics Followed

Informed consent was a key aspect of this study. All participants, including those involved in telephonic and in-person interviews, were fully informed about the study's purpose, procedures, and potential risks. Confidentiality was maintained throughout the research. Participants' personal information is kept private by using anonymized identifiers. Participation in the study was entirely voluntary. Participants had the freedom to join the study or withdraw at any time without facing any negative consequences.

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