

The Impact of *Hallyu* on Korean food consumption: The role of imitation intention.

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Abstract

Due to its unique flavour, health benefits, and cultural value, *Hanshik* has grown to be known and loved around the entire globe. This study explains how the attitudes towards Korean culture, normative social influence, and perceived behaviour control the intention to consume Korean food and further explores how consumers' imitation intention of Korean entertainment is positively associated with consumption intention. The study subjects are based on primary data collected from 569 Malaysian consumers. Convenience sampling was the method used in sampling. The analysis was conducted in two stages, the first of which involved testing the measurement model to ensure the validity and reliability of this study, and the second of which involved using the (PLS-SEM) to understand the significant impact of the predictors on intention to consume Korean cuisine *Hanshik*. The results show that attitude towards Korean culture, normative social influence, and perceived behavioural control are highly influenced by the intention to consume *Hanshik*. Additionally, this study looked at the role of imitation intention by using the Theory of Imitation and found the imitation intention has a positive impact on Korean food consumption intention. This research shows that consumers and marketing professionals promoting

Korean food, or other Korean cultural items have improved their understanding of and interest in Korean food due to exposure to Korean entertainment media.

Keywords:

Korean wave *Hallyu*, Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), Theory of imitation, Korean food (Hanshik).

1 Introduction

The term "*Hallyu*" or "Korean wave" describes South Korean popular culture's global appeal and impact, including music, television shows, movies, fashion, and cosmetic products. It highlights the expansion of Korean entertainment and cultural products on a global scale, which has increased interest in and demand for Korean goods abroad. The purposeful introduction of K-pop (Korean popular music) to listeners all over the globe is what is referred to as the "Korean wave" (Williams & Ho, 2014). BoA, Big Bang, Super Junior, Girl's Generation, SHINee, and other K-pop artists have been at the forefront of the *Hallyu* wave industry since 2000 and have a unique fanbase.

According to a study by Kim Bok Rae(2015), there are four stages of the Korean wave: *Hallyu 1.0*, which started with the popularity of Korean television dramas (K-dramas); *Hallyu 2.0*, which started with the popularity of Korean popular music (K-pop), *Hallyu 3.0*, which started with the popularity of K-culture, and *Hallyu 4.0*, which started with the popularity of K-style phenomena. Jin (2016), on the other hand, categorizes the Korean wave into two phases: *Hallyu 1.0*, which started in the 1990s, and *Hallyu 2.0*, which began in 2007 and continues to grow fast today. *Hallyu* is a well-known cultural phenomenon with practically universal appeal because of its effect on South Korean popular culture items such as cinema, music, cuisine, and fashion. *Hallyu* is expanding due to the government, entertainment, and telecommunications organizations in South Korea's complete backing and becoming more widespread.

The primary source of interest in Korean food has evolved into Korean films and dramas. Food culture is the most significant indicator of the industrialization of food and local or ethnic identity (Jeon et al., 2009). *Han*, which means Korea in Korean, and *Sik*, which means food, combine to make *Hanshik*, a classic Korean cuisine. The flavour and ingredient density of Korean food are well known. Korea's traditional cuisine is well known due to its variety of flavours, brilliant colours, and attention to component balance (Oktay and Ekinchi, 2019). *Kimchi* is one of the top five healthiest foods in the world, and Korean cuisine is now acknowledged for its beneficial elements (Jeon et al., 2009).

Chee and Yazdanifard (2021) claimed that Malaysia's Korean community has consistently expanded. Malaysia has flourished in many facets of Malaysian life. Many aspects of Malaysian life have prospered. As a result, interest in Korean cuisine has soared. Malaysia has embraced Korean culture in society, as seen by the popularity of the Korean wave, which has flourished in Malaysian life. The demand for authentic Korean restaurants run by Korean people, such as *Mr Dakgalbi*, *K-fry*, *Seoul Garden*, and

others, has increased in Malaysia due to the rising popularity of Korean popular culture, notably K-pop and k-drama (Norliza and Noor' Ain, 2021), according to a survey on South Korean cultural content across a few nations conducted in 2022, Malaysians like Korean cuisine the highest (Figure 1). Over 68 per cent of Malaysian consumers said that Korean food was well-liked in this nation.

1.1 Recent studies of Korean food consumption in Malaysia

There is limited study of the Korean wave impact focus on Korean food consumption. The effect of the Korean wave has made Korean cuisine and culture famous in Malaysia, according to the most recent research by Lee Sanghyeop (2019). However, this study only used a limited sample size in Kuala Lumpur. Meanwhile, research by Loke Jing Yi (2020) has shown the influence of K-dramas on Malaysian youth's behavioural intentions regarding travel, fashion, cuisine, and language. Lee Chang and Lee Seoung (2019) also examined how Malaysian customers behaved towards Korean food and agricultural products. They discovered that Malaysian consumers had a favourable attitude towards Korean cuisine, which may impact their intentions to purchase. The primary goal of this research is to determine the influence of the Korean wave based on the Theory of planned behaviour (TPB) on the intention to consume *Hanshik*. This research also uses the Theory of Imitation to explore the role of imitation intentions of Korean entertainment impact on consumers' intentions to eat Korean cuisine since exposure to Korean entertainment media might be associated with this relation. With this approval, the research will fill a gap in the minor literature on Korean wave cuisine consumption in Malaysia.



Figure 1: Popularity of South Korean Cuisine worldwide in 2022, by selected country
Source: Statista.com

2 Literature Review

2.1 Food consumption

The variety of considerations that each person must make when choosing what and where to eat daily makes food selection a complex issue (Vabo & Hansen, 2014). Because such a wide range of food is accessible, eating requirements are not always in line with what the body requires. Whether a person would be willing to eat Korean cuisine or prefer to do so, Korean food consumption depends on various psychological factors, underlining the importance of understanding consumption attitudes (Babicz Zielinski, 2006).

Social factors bring about a shift in food consumption behaviour in addition to attitudinal effects. When individuals eat in groups, mainly when they are made up of known people, there is evidence of a greater degree of food choice conformity (De Castro, 1995). A source of reference for food consumption intentions, including willingness to try new foods, comes from family and peer pressure (McIntosh, 1996). Although it is often the case, parental influence is essential, particularly among younger generations (Gleason et al., 2015). Teenage is sometimes seen as a time when people want to distance themselves from their families and their parents' influence (Dennison & Shepherd, 1995; Ting & de Run, 2015).

The negative effects of unhealthy behaviours, such as drinking excessively and eating foods high in sugar and fat, have also been linked to self-control (de Ridder et al., 2012; Friese & Hofmann, 2009). Self-efficiency, which relates to how much a person believes in his abilities to perform activities and achieve goals, is also relevant (Ormrod, 2006). Thus, a better explanation of volitional control in human conduct may be found in perceived ability or control (Ajzen, 1991). The past studies have also shown the significance of comprehending the control aspects that could encourage or discourage food intake intention and behaviour (Conner & McMillian, 1999).

2.2 Theory of planned behaviour (TPB)

The theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) explains the association between consumption intention and actual behaviour. The TPB suggests that actual behaviour and consumption intention are related. According to the TPB, three factors, such as attitude, social norm, and perceived behavioural control, determine one's desire to consume.

The theory of Planned Behaviour believes that intentions are the most significant predictor of behaviour when it comes to eating. Consumption intention is a reliable predictor of actual consumption behaviour, according to Ajzen and Fishbein (1980), and the chance that behaviour will occur rises with the intensity of the desire to consume. The desire to consume is a complex idea influenced by several factors, such as attitudes, beliefs, and perceived behavioural control. It might improve marketing campaigns and product development because it predicts behaviour well.

Attitude towards Korean culture

First, an attitude refers to how either positively or negatively an individual views a specific behaviour; such a positive attitude is generated when a person finds benefits from an attitude object, while negative attitudes stifle the behaviour, Ajzen et al., (1991).

Since the 2000s till the present, Korean pop culture has gained enormous popularity. The South Korean government vigorously pushed it to strengthen its influence on international media tastes and boost the export of Korean culture. K-pop was aggressively promoted, which helped it become popular all over the globe and sparked curiosity in South Korean culture among several other civilizations. Cho (2010) investigated how Malaysians have assimilated Korean cultural and economic practices. A Malaysian was discovered to have acquired Korean from watching and listening to Korean television and music and even thinking about incorporating Korean foods into their diet. Zhang et al., (2020) agreed that those more acquainted with Korean culture are likelier to have unfavourable sentiments about it. This heightened interest in Korean culture led to imitation and idolization of Korean culture. As a result, this research looks at how positive attitudes about Korean culture affect people's intentions to imitate it. The following hypothesis is proposed:

H1: Attitude towards Korean culture has a positive influence on imitation intention.

Normative social influence

Next, Childers and Rao (1992) found that social normative influence, the beliefs containing initial information about what members of a particular social group think to be frequently associated with online influencers, influences consumer behaviour in the contemporary digital environment. These celebrities are often paid to promote a product to their followers (Stanberry, 2015). Marketing professionals increasingly approach vloggers for their content. This study found that people's social connections may influence whether they wish to mimic the media figures they watch when they consume Korean cuisine. As a result, it sheds light on how people could see their reference groups if they engaged in such activities. Positive and negative assessments of each point of view and two interrelated degrees of confidence in other people's judgements make up the normative social influence. A person who is influenced by the reference group's positive outlook and a strong desire to enjoy Korean food may be affected by this understanding. Since the "Korean Wave" in Korean entertainment has contributed to the spread of Korean cuisine, we may apply this idea of normative social influences to the context of Korean entertainment.

H2: Normative social influence has a positive influence on imitation intention.

Perceived behaviour control (PBC)

Lastly, perceived behaviour control (PBC) refers to how a person perceives their capacity to act (Ajzen et al., 1991). Even if their attitude and subjective norm are still favourable, people who believe they need more opportunity or resources to participate in a particular behaviour will likely create solid behavioural intentions or motives for action. According to this study, consumers are more likely to plan to imitate what they have seen of Korean Celebrities in Korean entertainment if they feel more in control of their actions. The effect of PBC on the desire to imitate is investigated using the following hypothesis:

H3: Perceived behaviour control has a positive influence on imitation intention.

2.3 Theory of imitation

The theory of imitation (Tarde, 1969; Baldwin, 1925) explains how individuals change through time and how society develops. People spend hours making their look "fit in" with the conventions of the group with which they most identify while also developing their distinctive style since they are born with both problems and strengths in their physical appearance, personalities, and sense of style. They would spend hours in front of the mirror trying to achieve these goals (Gentry & Campbell, 2002). When a person tries to emulate something amusing and advantageous, like physical beauty and elegant dressing, the process of individual existence may be suggested (Ellwood, 1901). Through copying behaviours, people develop confidence and feel comfortable in society (Bandura, 1977).

In the context of this research, imitations occur when individuals meet or see a particular person, particularly in movies, television, or endorsements from celebrities who are attractive and draw others to mimic them. According to Bandura and Walters (1977), people learn by imitating and watching other people's behaviours. People's imitation techniques change as they become older. First, imitation for young infants consists of physical actions like walking and talking, whereas for adults, it may develop to include things like how they dress or what they eat. According to Leung (2012), extending the Korean wave into nations with limited previous exposure to Korean culture has encouraged interest in South Korean culture. According to Zhang et al., (2020), consumers who have developed a favourable opinion of the Korean wave due to exposure to Korean entertainment are more inclined to copy the Korean celebrities they see and purchase the Korean goods these stars utilize. Loke Jing Yi (2020) found a Malaysian youths observe the behavior of Korean characters, they are more likely to engage in similar behaviors themselves. In this research, the desire to imitate is used to investigate if the imitation intention of Korean celebrities in Korean entertainment may affect the intention to consume *Hanshik*. Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H4a: Imitation intention has mediated the relationship between attitude towards Korean culture and intention to consume *Hanshik*.

H4b: Imitation intention has mediated the relationship between normative social influence and intention to consume *Hanshik*.

H4c: Imitation intention has mediated the relationship between perceived behavior control and intention to consume *Hanshik*.

H5: Imitation intention has positive influence on intention to consume *Hanshik*.

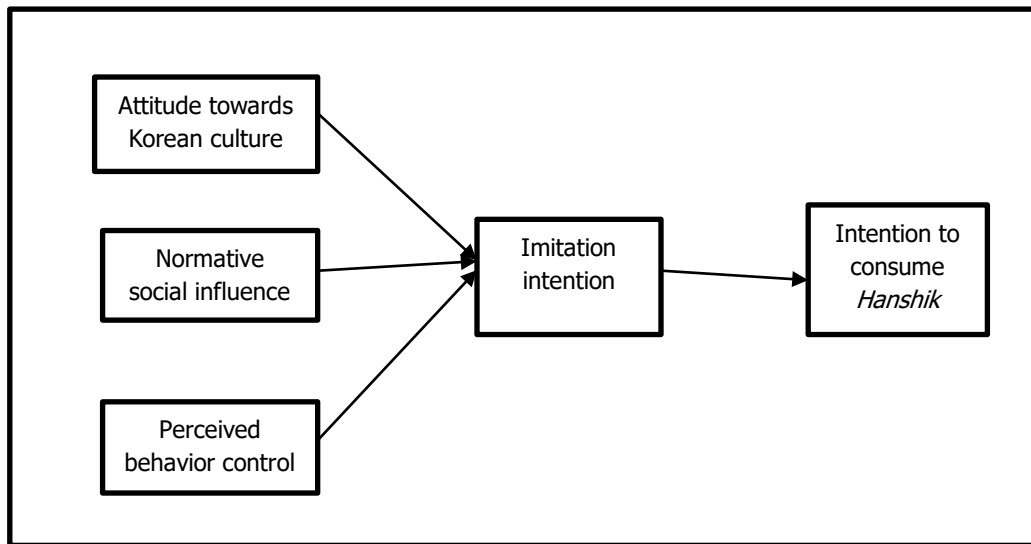


Figure 2: Research conceptual framework

3 Methodology

3.1 Instrument

The survey instrument was developed based on previous studies, as mentioned in (Table 2). The questionnaire consisted of two sections to investigate sociodemographic characteristics of the consumers and attitude towards Korean culture, normative social behaviour, perceived behaviour control, intention to imitate Korean celebrities and intention to consume Korean foods were estimated by a Five Likert Scale, ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). There were various reasons for adopting the Five-Likert scale namely the response rate would improve using the five Likert scale as the respondents would fill up the questionnaire with honesty and devotion, and the five-Likert scale would help to reduce the frustration of respondents compared to seven or nine Likert scale (Bhatti et al.,2019). The surveys were collected between March 1 and May 2023 via Google Forms and social media sent to the participants and distributed based on a purposive sampling. All the questionnaires were prepared in English and Malay. The questionnaires were applied to Korean cuisine consumers in Malaysia.

3.2 Data analysis

In total, 569 respondents were collected. The data obtained with the collected surveys were coded and transferred to the statistical package program data set SPSS V.26 for descriptive analysis. For the second part of path analysis, this paper will validate the theoretical model and test the hypothesis. The analysis was carried out in two phases, which is the measurement model tested at the first level to ensure the validity and reliability of this study, and after that, the second level used the (PLS-SEM). PLS-SEM is also suitable for analyzing data collected via a Liker scale (Hair et al.,2017). This study uses smart PLS to understand the important impact of the predictors on the intention to consume Korean food *Hanshik*. However, before carrying out analyses of the models, data screening was undertaken. In the context of data screening, missing data were controlled. No missing values were found. After the data screening process, the outer model was examined, followed by the inner model.

4 Findings

4.1 Demographic result

Table 1 demonstrates that (78.6 %) of the research participants were female. (7.0 %) of participants were 45 years old and above, compared to 70.8% aged 15 to 24. (88.9 %) of the participants were single. In contrast, (61.2%) of people held a bachelor's degree. Islam is the primary religion among the participants (85.6%), and the majority of them are Malay (65.4%), followed by Bumiputera Sabah (23.9%). This survey also discovered that individuals were motivated to consume Korean food because of their attraction to Korean culture (55.2%), passionate of Korean cuisine (35.9%), seeking healthy and exotic foods (26.4%), and no preferred reason (0.7%). Additionally, *Bibimbap* was identified as the most popular Korean dish consumed in Korean restaurants by participants (68.9%), followed by *Kimbap* (68.8%), *Bulgogi* (55.9%), and *Samgye-tang* (17.8%). These meals were among the top five Korean dishes consumed by the participants.

Table 1: Demographic of participants

Categories	Percent (%)	Categories	Percent (%)
Gender		Ethnic group	
Male	21.4(122)	Malay	65.4(372)
Female	78.6(447)	Bumiputera Sabah	23.9(136)
Age		Bumiputera Sarawak	1.8(10)
15-24 years old	70.8(403)	Chinese	6.5(37)
25-34 years old	17.6(100)	Indian	1.8(10)
35-44 years old	4.6(26)	others	0.7(4)
45 years old and above	7.0(40)	Motivated to eat Korean food <i>Hanshik</i>	
Educational level		Attracted to Korean culture	55.2(314)

High school	11.1(63)	Passionate about Korean food <i>Hanshik</i>	35.9(53)
Diploma	21.6(123)	Seeking healthy and exotic food	26.4(39)
Bachelor's degree	61.2(348)	Interested in Korean entertainment	19.7(29)
Master's degree	4.6(26)	No preferred reason	0.7(1)
Doctoral Degree	1.6(9)	Others: interest in Korean entertainment	0.7(4)
Foods the respondent ate at a Korean restaurant			
Religion		<i>Bibimbap</i> (mixed rice with assorted vegetables)	68.9(392)
Islam	85.6(487)	<i>Kimbap</i> (Korean seaweed rice rolls)	68.8(392)
Christians	8.6(49)	<i>Bulgogi</i> (marinated meat cooked on the grill)	55.9(318)
Buddhism	4.4(25)	Korean stews such as (<i>Sundubu jjigae, kimchi jjigae, and Budae jjigae</i>)	42.2(241)
Hinduism	1.4(8)	<i>Samgye-tang</i> (ginseng chicken soup)	17.8(101)
Marital status		<i>Others: such as Rameon</i> (Korean instant noodle)	5.1(29)
Single	88.9(506)	Korean spicy chicken	
Married	10.2(58)	<i>Tteokbokki</i> (spicy rice cakes)	
widowed, divorced, or separated	0.9(5)	<i>Kimchi</i> (napa cabbage)	
		<i>Jajangmyeon</i> (noodles in black bean sauce)	
		<i>Patbingsu</i> (a Korean shaved ice dessert)	
		<i>Japchae</i>	

4.2 Outer model

PLS-SEM consists of two stages: the outer and inner models. Firstly, the outer (measurement) model was examined. Then, only the inner (structural) model was examined. Due to all the constructs in the model being reflective, discriminant validity, internal consistency, and convergent validity were checked, and the outer model results are presented in Table 2.

Composite reliability values are between 0.84 and 0.95, and Cronbach's alpha values are between 0.64 and 0.93. Also, the factor loadings of the items are between 0.53 and 0.94, and the average variance extracted (AVE) values are above 0.50. Therefore, internal consistency and convergent validity were established. The Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio and Fornell-Larcker criterion were used to assess discriminant validity. According to the Fornell-Larcker criterion, the square roots of AVE values should be below the correlations of the relevant constructs for discriminant validity to be achieved (Fornell & Larcker,1981). As seen in Table 3, this requirement was met. In addition, the HTMT values of the relevant construct were below 0.90. Therefore, discriminant validity was achieved (Henseler et al.,2015).

Table 2: Result of the outer model

Construct	Items	Loadings	Cronbach's alpha	CR	AVE	CV (AVE>0.5)
Attitude towards Korean culture (ATTCULTURE) Ha Bang Joon (2010)	ATT.CULTURE1	0.644	0.864	0.872	0.600	YES
	ATT.CULTURE2	0.683				
	ATT.CULTURE3	0.842				
	ATT.CULTURE4	0.793				
	ATT.CULTURE5	0.840				
	ATT.CULTURE6	0.823				
Normative social influence (NORM) Cheah et al. (2018)	NORM1	0.528	0.908	0.926	0.611	YES
	NORM2	0.740				
	NORM3	0.780				
	NORM4	0.834				
	NORM5	0.788				
	NORM6	0.869				
	NORM7	0.820				
	NORM8	0.844				
Perceived behaviour control (PBC) Kabir and Islam (2022)	PBC1	0.870	0.802	0.830	0.711	YES
	PBC2	0.840				
	PBC3	0.819				
Imitation intention (IMI) Wan roazha et al., (2019)	IMI1	0.825	0.895	0.898	0.705	YES
	IMI2	0.883				
	IMI3	0.878				
	IMI4	0.802				
	IMI5	0.806				
Intention to consume Hanshik (CONS) Kabir and Islam (2022); Li et al. (2019)	CONS1	0.847	0.907	0.915	0.729	YES

	CONS2	0.902				
	CONS3	0.905				
	CONS4	0.755				
	CONS5	0.852				

NOTE: ATT.CULTURE= Attitude towards Korean culture, NORM= Normative social influences, PBC=Perceived behavior control, IMI=Intention to imitate Korean celebrity, CONS= Intention to consume *Hanshik*

Table 3: Result of discriminant validity

NOTE: ATT.CULTURE= Attitude towards Korean culture, NORM= Normative social influences, PBC=Perceived behavior control, IMI=Intention to imitate Korean celebrity, CONS= Intention to consume *Hanshik*

Fornell-Larcker	ATT.CULTURE	CONS	IMI	NORM	PBC	HTMT	ATT.CULTURE	CONS	IMI	NORM	PBC
ATT.CULTURE	0.775					ATT CULTURE					
CONS	0.557	0.854				CONS	0.621				
IMI	0.637	0.520	0.840			IMI	0.715	0.560			
NORM	0.518	0.479	0.583	0.782		NORM	0.570	0.496	0.625		
PBC	0.514	0.767	0.480	0.433	0.843	PBC	0.612	0.910	0.543	0.478	

4.3 Inner model

4.3.1 Analysis framework of the structural model

Examining the R², standard deviation (SD), and the corresponding t-values via a bootstrapping procedure with a resample of 5000 to assess the structural model. In addition to these basic measures, the predictive relevance (Q²) and the effect size (f²) should also be reported. The coefficient of determination (R²), a score that demonstrates the predictive statistical accuracy of a model, is the coefficient of determination. R² expresses the cumulative effects of independent parameters on dependent parameters. If it goes above 15%, the value of R² is deemed acceptable (Falk & Miller, 1992). Furthermore, Cohen (1998) proposed three ranges of structural model quality poor (0.02 and 0.12), moderate (0.13 and 0.26), and substantial (0.26 and above). In this analysis, R² and adjusted R² scores to the intention to consume Korean food are substantial, as shown in Table 6.

Effect size (F²), the main effect model. The impact size, or F², measures the change in R² caused by excluding a certain explanatory construct from the model. This score implies whether the factor omitted significantly affects the outcome variable (Hair et al., 2017). According to the exogenous latent construct estimates of 0.350, 0.150 and 0.020 the effect sizes are large, medium, and small. Attitudes toward Korean food and normative social influence have a medium impact on the intention to consume Korean food as per table and effect size estimates based on F² values suggested by Cohen

(1998). Meanwhile, perceived behaviour control seems to greatly impact the intention to consume *Hanshik*.

Predictive relevance (Q2), the Q2 value of Stone-Geisser, should be assessed as a predictive accuracy parameter, along with the magnitude of the R2 values (Geisser,1974; Stone,1974). The blindfolding technique was used to test the Q2 of cross-validated redundancy and cross-validated commonality. Q2 values greater than zero for a particular reflective dependent variable in a structural model suggest the predictive significance that the values above 0.4 should be sufficient. Child (2006), however, suggested that values below 0.2 should be excluded (Table 4&5). The Q squared value was calculated using a blindfolding technique; all the Q2 values meet the necessary criterion, as the tables show.

Table 4: Cross-validated commonality

	SSO	SSE	Q ² (=1-SSE/SSO)
ATT.CULTURE	3414.000	1902.652	0.443
CONS	2845.000	1180.477	0.585
IMI	2845.000	1274.107	0.552
NORM	4552.000	2238.459	0.508
PBC	1707.000	1013.717	0.406

NOTE: ATT.CULTURE= Attitude towards Korean culture, NORM= Normative social influences, PBC=Perceived behavior control, IMI=Intention to imitate Korean celebrity, CONS= Intention to consume *Hanshik*

Table 5: Cross- validity redundancy

	SSO	SSE	Q ² (=1-SSE/SSO)
ATT.CULTURE	3414.000	3414.000	
CONS	2845.000	2321.409	0.184
IMI	2845.000	1842.846	
NORM	4552.000	4552.000	
PBC	1707.000	1707.000	

NOTE: ATT.CULTURE= Attitude towards Korean culture, NORM= Normative social influences, PBC=Perceived behavior control, IMI=Intention to imitate Korean celebrity, CONS= Intention to consume *Hanshik*

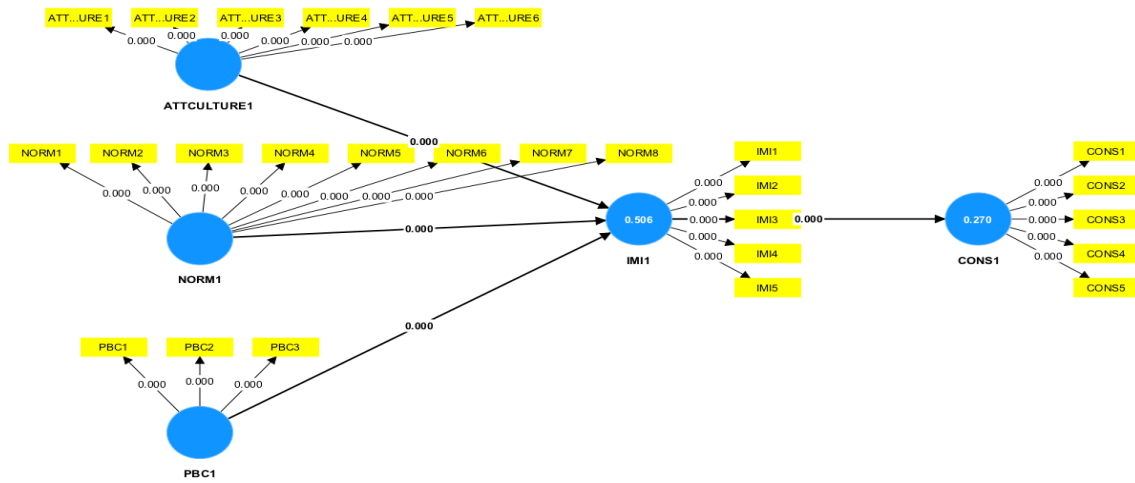


Figure 3: Bootstrapping result

According to the path coefficient for direct effect, (H1) attitude toward Korean culture has a positively influence on imitation intention (SD= 0.043, t= 9.418, p= 0.000, f2 = 0.207). On the other hand, (H2) normative social influence (SD= 0.039, t= 8.024, p= 0.000, f2= 0.140) and (H3) perceived behaviour control (SD= 0.038, t= 3.546, p= 0.000, f2= 0.026) show has a positive influence on imitation intention. Not only that, (H4) imitation intention has a positive influence on the intention to consume *Hanshik* (SD= 0.033, t= 15.853, p= 0.000, f2= 0.370).

All these relationships were significant in explaining the 50 % of the variance in usage and support H1, H2, and H3, and H4 were significant in explaining the 26 % of variance in usage and support this hypothesis.

According to the f2 value (Cohen,1988), attitude toward Korean culture on imitation intention had a medium effect (0.207), while (H2) normative social influence on imitation intention and (H3) perceived behaviour control and imitation intention had a small effect (0.140) and (0.026). Meanwhile, (H4) imitation intention had a high effect (0.370) on the intention to consume *Hanshik*. As the Q2 value is greater than zero for the intention to consume *Hanshik*, its explanatory latent construct exhibits predictive relevance. Because the Q2 value of the construct is (0.184), the intention to consume Korean food construct provides a high predictive relevance for the model (Hair et al.,2019).

Table 6: Result of direct effect

	SD	T-values	F ²	R ²	P-value	Results
Attitude towards Korean culture -> Imitation intention	0.043	9.418	0.207	0.506	0.000***	Significant
Normative social influence -> Imitation intention	0.039	8.024	0.140		0.000***	Significant
Perceived behavior control -> Imitation intention	0.038	3.546	0.026		0.000***	Significant
Imitation intention -> Intention to consume of <i>Hanshik</i>	0.033	15.853	0.370	0.269	0.000***	Significant

Notes: *P< 0.05, **P<0.01, P***<0.001.

NOTE: ATT.CULTURE= Attitude towards Korean culture, NORM= Normative social influences, PBC=Perceived behavior control, IMI=Intention to imitate Korean celebrity, CONS= Intention to consume *Hanshik*

The predictive effects on the intention to consume *Hanshik* (Table 7) were then examined whereby the attitude toward Korean culture > imitation intention > intention to consume *Hanshik* ($SD = 0.025, t = 8.343, p = 0.000$), normative social influence > imitation intention > intention to consume *Hanshik* ($SD = 0.023, t = 6.991, p = 0.000$) and perceived behavior control > imitation intention > intention to consume *Hanshik* ($SD = 0.022, t = 3.206, p = 0.001$) have shown as mediator and mediating the relationship between attitude toward Korean culture, normative social influence and perceived behavior control toward intention to consume of *Hanshik*.

Table 7: Result of indirect effect

	SD	T-values	P-value	Results
Attitude towards Korean culture -> Imitation intention -> intention to consume <i>Hanshik</i>	0.025	8.343	0.000***	Significant
Normative social influence -> Imitation intention-> intention to consume <i>Hanshik</i>	0.023	6.991	0.000***	Significant
Perceived behavior control -> Imitation intention -> intention to consume <i>Hanshik</i>	0.022	3.206	0.001***	Significant

Notes: *P< 0.05, **P<0.01, P***<0.001.

NOTE: ATT.CULTURE= Attitude towards Korean culture, NORM= Normative social influences, PBC=Perceived behavior control, IMI=Intention to imitate Korean celebrity, CONS= Intention to consume *Hanshik*

5 Conclusion

The primary aim of this study was to examine the impact of *Hallyu* or Korean wave on Korean food consumption intention. The Theory of Planned Behavior served as the study's theoretical foundation in this context and to comprehend how Korean food is intended to be consumed.

As shown by the direct result (Table 6). The (TPB) helps to analyze consumer behaviour and expected intentions, which supports (H1) attitude towards Korean culture on imitation intention. This research's findings confirmed a positive attitude toward Korean culture would make consumers more likely to want to imitate Korean people and behaviours. This result is comparable to a study by Zhang et al., (2020), a regular consumer of Korean entertainment media content showcases Korean lifestyle and Korean commercials of culture, and products prompted to imitate the media personas they watch. Moreover, Rafique et al., (2012) found through their clothing, lifestyles and advertisements, K-pop celebrities might be both intentionally and unintentionally endorsing Korean products. Consumers who are engaging with Korean entertainment are being exposed to the many endorsements these K-pop stars are making, and depending on their positive or negative attitude to K-pop, in this study context, a positive attitude from consumers toward Korean culture such attracts Korean food culture on how Korean's people eat *Kimchi* with rice and eats *bulgogi* wrap (grill meat wrap with cabbage) has adopted in their daily diet as in Korean entertainment has shown. This has attracted the consumer to try and imitate the culture, this could be swayed consumers either to purchase Korean products or to avoid them.

Moreover, Rizzolatti et al., (2001) opine that the individuals' desire to emulate certain aspects of character or behaviour often stems from the perception with the imitation occurring mostly when people meet or watch a specific person, especially models, TV celebrities, celebrity endorsement, athletes, and others who are attractive and initiative the intention to imitate.

Next, the H2 results show that normative social influence has a significant influence on imitation intention. In this study, the finding's claim that consumers believe other people expect them to do something, they are more likely to do it. People who believe that their friends and family expect them to imitate the behaviour of Korean celebrities in what they consume in Korean media entertainment. According to the findings of this study, individuals were more inclined to adopt similar eating habits if they were expected by a family member or friend to imitate the eating habits of Korean celebrities portrayed in Korean entertainment media. This result is supported by the study of (Fisher & Ackerman, 1998; Roper et al.,2013). A group can choose to regulate the conduct of its members through the establishment and reinforcement of norms.

H3 results show the perceived behaviour control has a significant influence on imitation intention. This result finding shows that consumer who believe that they have control over the behaviour of imitating the persona they watch in Korean entertainment

media are more likely to have an intention to imitate the behaviour. If a consumer has seen a Korean celebrity consume any Korean food in Korean entertainment, either in Korean drama or any variety show such as *Mukbang* they believe they can imitate the person, they seen and intend to have an intention to consume the same things as the consumer seen. This is supported by a past study by Chan,(2007) claims individuals who believe they lack the necessary resources or are unlikely to form strong behavioural intentions (motivation for action).

Lastly, (H4a, H4b,H4c) has shown a positive mediating relationship and (H5), shows a significant influence on the intention to consume *Hanshik*. The consumers who had a high intention to imitate, as seen in Korean entertainment media, can enhance the consumer intention to consume Korean food. If they see the Korean celebrity diet culture lifestyle in Korean entertainment it can influence them to imitate and follow their lifestyle, especially on what they eat in their daily meal. Zhang et al., (2020) found consumers of Korean entertainment media, are likely to imitate their K-pop idols in terms of their makeup, clothing, and lifestyle. In addition, a study by Loke Jing Yi (2020) also claim that a Malaysian youth may eat Korean food, learn Korean language because they see things portrayed positively in k-dramas, this driving a consumer to imitate what the celebrity eat/consume that they see in Korean media entertainment and intend them to build an intention to consume Korean foods. Since Korean food has bloomed in East Asian countries, Korean products are a lot more accessible, especially in Malaysia, it can easily help the Malaysian consumer to find and consume the Korean food that consumers seen in Korean entertainment media. Korean wave was found to be effective in sharing and embedding a deeper impression of an exotic culture, influencing areas beyond the music and entertainment industries, such as diet (Cho,2010).

Implication and Future Research

The research may contribute to a better understanding of the elements that affect Malaysian consumers' decisions to eat Korean cuisine and the extent to which Korean media influences Malaysian customers' desire to emulate Korean culture and celebrities' lifestyles. This research has some major theoretical contributions. It enhances the current understanding of how imitations affect purchase intention in the context of Korean food consumption. Previous studies have explored imitation intention in luxury Korean products (Zhang et al.,2020); social commerce (Chen et al.,2020), online social stock, software adoption, technology adoption and information adoption (Hasan,2018; Duan et al.,2009; Shen et al.,2010; Sun 2013). However, how imitation affects consumer purchase intention in the context of Korean food consumption has received limited attention. These findings provide adequate evidence to support the existence of imitation intention in Korean's entertainment media and further extend it from luxury product to food consumption study. A marketer may use this knowledge to design strategies to improve purchase intention by encouraging customers to copy the behaviour of others. Consumer appears to raise their intention to consume Korean cuisine by imitating the Korean celebrity they have watched.

This survey also identifies the Korean foods that Malaysian consumers find most appealing. The Korean food industry could use this knowledge to create new goods and menu items more likely to appeal to Malaysian consumers. The nature of this research may be longitudinal, allowing for examining changes in Korean food intake over time.

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