

**KIMCHI: THE KEY INFLUENCE OF KOREAN WAVE AND ITS
IMPACT ON KOREAN FOOD TOWARDS THAI CONSUMPTION**



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ABSTRACT

Recently, the Korean Wave became widespread globally including Thailand which has increasingly risen on Korean consumption. The purpose of this study is to look into how the Korean wave has a significant impact on Thai consumers, especially on the food industry and how it affects the intention to consume Kimchi among Thai consumers. Moreover, this study identified the essential factors that have a greatest influence in consuming Korean culture by having an interview with 5 interviewees who were interested in Korean culture including food, music and fashion. Also, the interviewees were categorized into 2 sections; Kimchi consumer and Kimchi producer in order to examine different perspectives. The findings reported that Thai consumer behavior has shifted due to Korean media such as K- Drama which has the most impact on Thai consumers. Other factors include attitude towards Kimchi, Family influence and eWOM which is also an influential factor on the consumer's intention to consume Kimchi.

KEY WORDS: Kimchi / Consumer behavior / Attitude / eWOM / Subjective norms / Cultural values / Korean Wave

26 pages

CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	ii
ABSTRACT	iii
LIST OF TABLES	vi
LIST OF FIGURES	vii
CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Background of the Study	1
1.2 Research Question and Its Objective	4
1.3 Research Scope	5
1.4 Expected Benefit	5
CHAPTER II LITERATURE REVIEW	6
2.1 Definition of related terms	6
2.1.1 Korean wave	6
2.1.2 Soft Power	6
2.2 Variables	6
2.2.1 Consumer behavior	6
2.2.2 Attitude towards Kimchi	7
2.2.3 Subjective norms	7
2.2.4 eWOM	8
2.2.5 Cultural values	9
CHAPTER III RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	10
3.1 Research Design	10
3.2 Data Collection and Methodology	10
3.3 Instruments	13
3.3.1 Interview Questions	13
3.3.2 Secondary Data	15

CONTENTS (cont.)

	Page
CHAPTER IV FINDINGS ANALYSIS	16
4.1 No Kimchi means no Korean food	16
4.2 Like mother like son - Family Experience	17
4.3 The power of attitudes	17
4.4 Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM) leads to success	18
CHAPTER V CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION	20
5.1 Conclusion	20
5.2 Limitation	21
5.3 Recommendation	21
REFERENCES	23
BIOGRAPHY	26

LIST OF TABLES

Table		Page
3.1	Questions for Kimchi Consumer	13
3.2	Additional Questions for Kimchi Producer	14



LIST OF FIGURES

Figure		Page
1.1	Kimchi consumption scene in K-Drama“F4”	3
1.2	The preparation of Kimchi (Park & Jeong, 2016)	4



CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Nowadays, we have to admit that Korean culture has been involved in Thai's consumption more than usual and it has continually increased over the last few years. The significant reason is because their pop culture including K-pop, TV shows and series has become globally known as "Hallyu" and it is also considered to be Asian values. The media and entertainment industry also called them "Korean Fever" (Song, 2016) as they have expanded their culture not only for K-Pop and K-Drama but also movies, games, food and fashion. It turns out that their culture has effects towards Thai users by producing its exclusive culture and advancing its own tradition. The Korean government also supports them to create their own assets and identity and recover their economic issues since the economic failure in 1997 in order to leverage its world famous culture by generating soft power which helped to promote their positive image and create South Korea's attraction into the global stage.

The recent years shows that Korea can succeed in terms of influencing their soft power through several TV series, dramas and movies. Some of them were winning global prizes such as an Oscar as the movies portray their way of living and reflect the reality of people perfectly. Korean producers are using the true story in order to make their movies and series become unique and touch to their audiences. Their production affects Thai consumption in many ways such as the way they live and the way they eat. There are several Korean restaurants in Thailand which become famously known and visited because of the portrayal of the series. It becomes well known even more during this period which shows the increase of Thais' awareness towards Korean culture. It seems that Korean culture and its production has succeeded to launch into several Asian countries, especially Thailand as Thai people tend to watch and consume their way of living and try to adapt their culture in all activities which makes Thailand become one of the leading Korean culture consumers.

The significant impact for Thai people after consuming Korean drama is food consumption. Food is also considered to be the culture transmission between each country (Zelinsky, 1985) as people have a different culture but they will be connected through ethnic food by sharing the same food and express their preference to all around. Similarly, Korean cuisine is considered to be the most flavorsome food throughout the world due to their simplicity but delicious as it combines different tastes with their dishes so that the consumer will feel like a celebration for their taste buds. Korean cuisine always serves as a set containing about 4-5 dishes on the table, so no matter how many side dishes are served, there will be only a certain dish that never fails to be present which is kimchi, the world renowned dishes. We also need to accept that during this Korean fever or Korean wave, everybody should have heard about Kimchi, a Korean national food which is a food preservation's heritage through fermentation since their ancient time. It is a fermented vegetable that Korean people consume as their side dish in every meal and it has become globally known by its taste and its procedure because Kimchi has a long process for fermentation. They need to be kept at the right temperature and at the appropriate time in a jar called "Onggi" and buried underground in order to taste good. Moreover, the taste of Kimchi of Korea is similar to Thai pickle vegetable in terms of sourness, but is spicier and has hints of ginger and garlic, with the vegetables being on the crisp side. People can consume it along with their main dish or as a snack because Kimchi will balance every meal perfectly. Kimchi is the national food that all Koreans consume but it is also widespread to other countries as well due to their government also promoting Kimchi to its potential guests among Asian countries especially Thailand, that there are several export Kimchi into Thai supermarkets and several Thai people began to start their business of Kimchi recently.

The main reason for a huge export regarding the influence of K-Drama is because after Thai consumers watched K-Drama, they got influenced by their way of living and eating at the same time through Korean Drama such as F4 (Boys Over Flower) which is the famous series coming to Thai's attention since 2009. This K-Drama is the most impactful series that catches Thais' consumers to start consuming Korean culture in terms of food and their culture. The below drama scene portrays the season when Korean families make their own Kimchi. They show all processes of Kimchi fermented step by step but they try to make it simple and not to advertise about

their national food. It makes the audiences feel comfortable to watch and most Thai people really enjoy this activity which gives a sense of togetherness between members as well which also leads to more influence towards Thai consumers. Moreover, the way K-Drama portrays this scene somehow tries to show about their culture perfectly as they try to portray Kimchi in every dining scene bit by bit. They want to spread their national food into a wider perspective worldwide and it seems to be successful that there are several Kimchi exported to other countries around the world.



Figure 1.1 Kimchi consumption scene in K-Drama“F4”

(<http://Cetabtitan.com/the-versatile-dish-that-adds-flavor-to-k-dramas/>)

Below is the process of how they make the Kimchi for their local consumption. It is a food that seems to be easily prepared but full of detail in order to make it taste better. Each family also has its own recipe but still has its own values and tradition underneath.



Figure 1.2 The preparation of Kimchi (Park & Jeong, 2016)

1.2 Research Question and Its Objective

The objective of this paper aims to identify how Korean waves have positively impacted Thai consumption of Korean food and its culture as there are increasingly export kimchi to the Thai market and become much more successful in Thailand. Several Korean restaurants are taking part in the Thai food industry, as you may see that there are the Korean Barbeque or even the red tent coming to Thailand especially in the heart of Thailand which is Bangkok. Moreover, this paper tries to find out what are the most significant factors that influence consumer's purchase intention of Kimchi. Therefore, making these research questions clear will benefit both Korean and Thai's Kimchi producers to adapt their marketing strategies by offering consumers the right experience matching with customer's preferences.

1.3 Research Scope

This research will be applied with a qualitative method by using in-depth interviews together with secondary data as the instruments. Also, this research separated the interviewees into 2 groups which are Kimchi consumer and Kimchi producer in which there are totally 5 interviewees for in-depth interview.

1.4 Expected Benefit

This paper can help the audiences to understand the impacts of Korean wave towards the consumption of Kimchi in Thailand especially on the influential factor in order to understand the key success factor that would be beneficial for both Thai and Korean Kimchi producers because understanding Thai people's awareness will portrays an insight information that will help the producers to find alternative solutions for creating their marketing strategies and elevate their brand to become unique and success during this Korean wave impact. Moreover, they will also know about Thai's preference due to their adaptation with Korean culture. Thus, this paper can also be an alert for the Thai government to put more concentration on preserving the valuable traditions of our own which have been our pride for centuries.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Definition of related terms

2.1.1 Korean wave

The Korean wave or "Hallyu" is a rise in the international visibility of Korean culture. Also, it can be known as a regional cultural trend that signifies a triumph of Korean culture (Hyejung, 2007) by portraying through several factors such as media which has influences towards others to have similar adaptation to its original.

2.1.2 Soft Power

Soft power is an attraction and persuasion that influences one to achieve goals. It portrays the charm of each culture to other participants throughout the world. Soft power is also relies on a country's attractiveness and comes from three resources: its culture (in places where it is attractive to others), its political values (when it lives up to them at home and abroad), and its foreign policies (when they are seen as legitimate and having moral authority) (Valieva, 2018)

2.2 Variables

2.2.1 Consumer behavior

In order to fulfill their needs, consumers are considered as the one who has an afford to purchase goods or services. Therefore, the research from (Moutinho, 1987) refers to consumer behavior as a process organizing the information whether to decide or evaluate the products and services that they can decide what they want to buy.

Moreover, consumer behavior can also be defined as a process of decision making to use the money upon the related products. (Schiffman & Kanuk, 1997).

From the above definitions, it can be implied that consumer behavior is the ultimate conclusion once decisions are made in order to spend money on products or services because they need to go through the evaluating process whether to choose to buy or not due to limited resources. However, consumer behavior is also unpredictable because it relates to human psychological activities which can be shifted through time (Scott, 1991). Thus, having knowledge of consumer behavior, it provides more understanding of their decision making and also illustrates the purchase action. According to the definitions, we can apply them altogether with reasonable marketing strategies in order to understand them clearly and act into a correct pathway.

2.2.2 Attitude towards Kimchi

Attitude has been a key factor in marketing research since 1960. Consumer psychology contains Fundamental concepts of psychology that define individual behaviors and influence behavior Consumption (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2004). It also refers to an individual's internal evaluation of an object (Sallam & Algammash, 2016) which can be beneficially used for predicting customer behavior of purchasing products and services.

Moreover, attitudes can be referred to as a positive or negative emotional assumption that is caused by the individual preconditional norm of judgment based on prior experience, personal preferences, and social construct that the person has an association with (Ariff et al, 2014). Attitude can boost confidence in one's decision making or prevent one from accessing the information that lays behind by its nature to be influential to one's decision making and consideration. In this study, attitudes toward Kimchi refers to some extent to which a person feels positive or negative towards Kimchi, and attitudes can determine how a person performs his or her consumption behavior towards Korean food.

2.2.3 Subjective norms

There are several sources that show that subjective norms can be described as people's perceptions of social pressure from significant others to perform the behavior

(Sheeran, Norman, & Orbell, 1999). Also, the research from (Jain, 2020) states that the subjective norm is a perception that his or her important think they should behave or not. It also has an effect on people's feeling by social pressure affecting their decision making. In addition, one of the studies indicates that subjective norms are perceived societal influences or pressures to engage or refrain from engaging in a specific action. Individuals' subjective norms reflect their expectations of how their reference groups will see them if they engage in a given conduct (Al-Swidi, Rafiul Huque, Hafeez, & Shariff, 2014)

Besides, the study of (Huda, Rini, Mardoni, & Putra, 2012) revealed that subjective norms are somehow similar to attitudes that both of them are influenced by beliefs. Thus, the research shows that subjective norms are acquired beliefs that are developed by people in one's life. In this study, subjective norms refer to how external factors like the influence from other people and society plays a role in one's decision toward Kimchi consumption.

2.2.4 eWOM

Online communities are an essential source of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) that have an influence on people's minds when it comes to making a decision which can be referred to online reviews, online recommendations, or online opinions, which have gained importance with the emergence of new technology tools. It also defines all informal communications directed at consumers through Internet-based technology related to the usage or characteristics of particular goods and services, or their sellers. (Babić, Sotgiu, Valck & Bijmolt, 2015) People in today's society normally viewing comments of a particular product or service on social media, or reading a review on an online platform can affect a prospective consumer's attitude towards a product or service (Le, Dobele & Robinson, 2018).

Moreover, eWOM originates from WOM before electronic technology emerged. It is an influential information source during the decision-making process that a consumer goes through when selecting a product or brand (Hennig-Thurau, 2004). However, the research shows that eWOM gains higher credibility and relevance to customers than marketer created sources of information on the websites. (Bickart & Schindler, 2001).

In this study context, eWOM represents a significant improvement in consumer behavior which turns consumers to watch, share, read or consider information posted on online platforms before purchasing anything.

2.2.5 Cultural values

Cultural values refer to cultural-determined knowledge carried by one generation to another. It is the way that the culture is stored and expressed throughout generations. (Mourali, Laroche, & Pons, 2005) Additionally, cultural values play an important role that society passes through generations. It is preserved and has influence towards the way consumers behave (Luna & Gupta, 2001) and cultural values have been accepted by many scholars to be one of the main determinants of consumer behavior. Thus, the influence of the Korean wave which we considered as cultural value would be interesting in terms of influencing consumer behavior.

For this research, cultural values refers to the vehicle that carries a unique identity of each country then delivers through the consumer behavior which can be seen to portray the significant impact to Kimchi consumers in Thailand.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The purpose of this study is to determine which factors have the greatest influence on consumers' Kimchi consumption behavior in Thailand, as well as to investigate the effects of cultural values, consumer behavior, attitudes toward Kimchi, eWOM, subjective norm, on different groups between Kimchi producers and consumers' consume intentions. Therefore, using qualitative research is suitable for understanding the insight information of consumers. It is an open-ended question that doesn't limit their thoughts towards the questions provided. Thus, this research has used an in-depth interview approach for gaining customer insight and experiencing real lifestyle and behavior.

3.2 Data Collection and Methodology

According to this research, an in-depth interview technique is being used with 5 interviewers as a sample group combining into 2 perspectives; Kimchi producers and Kimchi consumers who are interested in Korean culture by understanding the environment and their experiences. Therefore, the interview aims to find the linkages between factors of Cultural values, Consumer behavior, Attitudes towards Kimchi, eWOM and subjective norms in order to lead to the ultimate decision of consumers' consumption.

For Kimchi consumers, the questions are generally general questions used for finding out the points of Kimchi that trigger them to continue consuming and their opinion towards Kimchi in Thai society whether there are significant impacts towards Thai behavior or not. On the other hand, for Kimchi producers, the question was asked deeper about marketing strategies they've used in order to influence Thai consumers and how they view Kimchi towards the Thai food industry. By asking questions within

the mentioned scope, we can summarize the significant influential factors that lead to the greatest number of Kimchi consumption in Thailand.

In order to determine the factor that influences Thai behavior of Kimchi consumption, by asking Korean fans who are interested in Korean culture such as K-pop or K-Drama and also consume Kimchi with their meals would be a good way to know what makes them change their behavior and attitude toward Kimchi. Moreover, having Kimchi producers as an interviewees would also be beneficial in terms of knowing their marketing tactics in order to compete with internal and external exporters. The number of interviewees is 5 people, 3 consumers and 2 producers who have different perspectives and have their own stories with Kimchi. Below is the summarize of their in-depth personal details;

Selected Kimchi consumers and Producers

Sample 1: Namob (Female)

Interview date: June 19, 2022

Location: Line call (Online)

Duration: Around 30 minutes

Personal information: Namob, a 26 years old woman who lives in Bangkok, Thailand and she works as a Sales person in the digital industry. She has an interest in Korean culture since the beginning of the launch of K-Drama, Dae Jung Kum is her first influence towards Korean culture. However, several years ago, Kimchi was not that popular and it was difficult to find in the Thai market so she didn't have an interest towards Kimchi at that time. But since Kimchi gained more popularity due to the increasing K-Drama consumption, she started to consume Kimchi as a side dish and continues to consume it until now.

Sample 2 : Jam (Female)

Interview date: June, 15 2022

Location: Line call (Online)

Duration: Around 40 minutes

Personal information: Jam is a 25 years old Kimchi lover who lives in Bangkok, Thailand. She's currently unemployed but studying for a Master Degree at Thammasat

University. She has been a fan of K-pop and K-Drama since she was young and she still consumes Korean culture in every aspect such as fashion, food, series and lifestyle. Her favorite culture is Korean food as she likes to visit several Korean restaurants and also bought Kimchi to store at her home all the time.

Sample 3 : Dave (Male)

Interview date: June, 18 2022

Location: Line call (Online)

Duration: Around 30 minutes

Personal information: Dave is a 28 years old guy who lives in Bangkok, Thailand. He works as an accountant at Ramintra. He is a fan of Korean idol, Suzy (Miss-A). So, he has a long experience towards Korean culture. He also watched K-Drama in which Suzy is an actress and started to be interested in Korean food culture by watching K-Drama. Moreover, his mother is a big fan of K-Drama who watched every single series. He also got the influences from his mother as well.

Sample 4 : Brian (Male)

Interview date: June, 14 2022

Location: Line call (Online)

Duration: Around 50 minutes

Personal information: Brian, a 28 year-old Korean guy who is a Korean food restaurant owner in Thailand. He started his business a few years ago and currently extends his restaurant into another branch. He also has their own brand of Kimchi “Like Kimchi” which sell via online platforms such as food delivery applications and facebook. He mentioned that he wants to make Thai consumers to be more familiar with the original taste of Kimchi and enjoy his healthy food.

Sample 5 : Kim (Male)

Interview date: June, 15 2022

Location: Phone call

Duration: Around 20 minutes

Personal information: Kim is a 36 years old who created his own Kimchi brand and promoted it in several pages such as Wongnai, Facebook and Instagram. His Kimchi brand called “กิมจิเม่นม by David Kim” which is a homemade recipe that he discovered by himself. His story began when he wanted to try Kimchi for the first time since Kimchi is still unpopular. Then, his likeness increases and tend to make Kimchi on his own for consumption within the family.

3.3 Instruments

3.3.1 Interview Questions

The interview was conducted separately into 2 groups which are Kimchi consumers and Kimchi producers and below are the questions that this research used for interviews for Kimchi consumers.

Table 3.1 Questions for Kimchi Consumer

Questions for Kimchi Consumer
How long have you been interested in the Korean Wave?
What do you think about Korean culture toward Thai consumption? Are there any effects?
What do you think about Korean culture, especially Korean Food?
Speaking of kimchi, what is the first thing that comes to your mind? And why you're choosing to consume them.
If Kimchi is a person, what kind of person or character do you think Kimchi represents?
If Kimchi was a person, what kind of a lover would he/she be?
What season of the year does Kimchi represent? why?

Table 3.1 Questions for Kimchi Consumer (cont.)

Questions for Kimchi Consumer
As you've mentioned that you've seen Kimchi from K-Drama, so if Kimchi appears in a scene you are watching, will you order kimchi right away?
Have you ever noticed about the frequency of Kimchi scenes in Drama, what do you think they're trying to portray?
Do you think that kimchi can replace Thai dish,? Which one would you like to replace and why?
If there is a dish of Kimchi and Thai pickled vegetables, which one do you prefer? Why?
If having Kimchi together with Thai food such as Pad Thai or Kra Prao, do you think the taste for dishes can go along? and Why is that?
Which Thai festival do you choose to represent and why?
How much money would I need to pay you to agree never to eat kimchi again?

Below is the additional part for Kimchi producers which aims to find deeper information for their market strategies being used with their restaurant.

Table 3.2 Additional Questions for Kimchi Producer

Additional Questions for Kimchi Producer
What do you think about the Kimchi in Thailand?
What do you think influenced Thai people to purchase Kimchi?
What is the opportunity you see in order to sell Kimchi in Thailand?

Table 3.2 Additional Questions for Kimchi Producer (cont.)

Additional Questions for Kimchi Producer
What is your opinion towards the popularity of Kimchi?
How big is the Kimchi market in Thailand? And how would you know that your business will be successful?
What do you think about the marketing strategies of Kimchi towards Thai consumption?

3.3.2 Secondary Data

Secondary data collected by the published academic articles and journals refer to culture, consumer and consumer behavior topics from useful sources such as EBSCOHost, Research gate and collecting supporting data from an official site of Korean Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism (<http://www.mcst.go.kr/english/statistics/statistics.jsp>) which indicate the number of Korean medias consumptions in all industries. Also, having “2021 Hallyu Trend” published by KOFICE as a secondary data in order to understand which industries of Korean Wave gain the highest number of consumption which it shows that K-Drama has the most popularity among others which is also be an assumption that it is the factors that influence Thai behavior to consume Kimchi the most because it spreads through online platforms such as Netflix which is a famously well-known platform across the world. Moreover, some articles of Kimchi have also been used in this research. It shows the originate process and its benefit which is a good resource for better understanding the interviewees and other consumers clearly on how they shift to consume Kimchi.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS ANALYSIS

After we complete the interview, there are many interesting points that have to be discussed in order to point out the factors that significantly impact Thai consumption of Kimchi. This part will analyze the key information by gathering from the findings that could affect consumer behavior of Kimchi consumption in Thailand.

4.1 No Kimchi means no Korean food

Kimchi is known as a salted and fermented vegetable in Korea (Park, Jeong, Lee & William, 2014) where it becomes famously known throughout the world due to its unique taste with local ingredients. It is a Korean side dish which should be had in all meals that also provides several benefits for consumers as well such as anti-aging, anti-cancer effects and antiobesity effects as Kimchi has an antioxidant which will help slow down or prevent these effects. Therefore, Kimchi has originated from the word “Chimchae” in Chinese character but it was called by Korean as “dimchae” and “dimchi” then due to Word of mouth is spreading, it becomes known as Kimchi since then.

According to the interview, all the interviewees said that when thinking about Korean food, Kimchi will be the one that pops up in their minds, followed by other dishes such as tokpokki, ramyeon, jajangmyeon, barbeque and chicken with beer. It is a side dish that when consumed, will open their taste bud and will enjoy the rest of the meal. It gives a sense of freshness due to its craps along with the taste of spicy, sour and salty. Moreover, all of them started consuming Kimchi several years ago when K-Dramas increasingly became popular through Free TV, Netflix, VIU and other channels. They have seen Kimchi in most dining scenes, where they will always focus on the actor, when they're using chopsticks and eat them. When they're watching, they are highly influenced by these scenes a lot and would like to try like what they K-Drama

has portrayed. So, they start and continue to consume Kimchi since then and they just realized when having an interview that they eat Kimchi almost every meal until today and it shows that if there's no Kimchi, the word Korean food will not be complete. It seems like there's a lack of something, Kimchi has already become a part of their food consumption. Therefore, it shows that Korean influence has changed the way Thai consumers behave.

4.2 Like mother like son - Family Experience

Family is considered to be a great influence factor since family will mold how their children's life will be which will relate to a part of family involvement that will provide directions to their kids and influence some ideas by the way they behave and thoughts.

Some interviewees like Khun Dave and Khun Kim who show that they got influenced by their parents. At first, they didn't know about Kimchi and also were not interested in any Korean media. But once their family members persuade them to open their mind and introduce K-Drama and K-pop to them, they begin to be interested in and enjoy Korean culture. They also said that K-Drama is the most influential source that makes them interested in Korean culture. Similarly to Khun Kim, who is a normal guy who turns out to be a business owner and creates their own Kimchi brand. He was introduced by his family and became a fan of Kimchi. Currently, his Kimchi brand can be sold in several market events and also via online applications as he adapts his own homie recipe. This shows that Korean culture has a big impact towards his life and becoming a successful owner.

4.3 The power of attitudes

Attitude refers to how the consumer thinks of and behaves in a different way which contains 3 components; Affect, Behavior and Cognition or "ABC model of attitude" (Ali, 2017) A research indicates that these three components begin when consumers have a feeling upon the object, for this case it would be a Kimchi. Then, the effect will be the factor that leads to the intentions to decide whether they will choose

to consume Kimchi or not. Finally, it leads to how they believe, which is cognition towards Kimchi. It is the combination between knowing, feeling and action. There is no absolute right or wrong in determining their beliefs and leading to how they act; it depends on a consumer's level of motivation with regard to the attitude object.

Referring from the interview, most of the interviewees have a positive attitude towards Kimchi, some of them said that Kimchi represent the hot girls due to their spiciness and uniqueness. It is a personality that they would like to discover more and more. In addition, some of them see Kimchi as a calm guy which is worth looking for. These attitudes from the interviewees show that they have a different attitude on Kimchi depending on how they view Kimchi but the one that shares the similarity is they still choose to consume Kimchi. It relates to the above model in terms of there's no correct answer to respond whether Kimchi shows a sense of hotty or calmness but they like it and choose to behave in their consumption. Therefore, it shows that Korean culture is having a great impact on them even though they're thinking differently.

4.4 Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM) leads to success

For today Thai society, eWOM is the greatest factor in almost every aspect and it has become widely available in social platforms. People can express their thoughts and feelings towards the products online by writing on review pages or blogs that are visible for all users. It helps to gather all information similar to a database which provides data towards what they're looking for and leads to their consideration before making a decision to buy. When people search for the keyword they want, they will mostly have a positive intention to buy afterwards as they can ensure the quality of the products through several ideas. They can evaluate their feedback and lead them to the intention to consume.

From the Kimchi producer's point of view, they mentioned that eWOM has a greatest impact on their sales performance which shows that it is a factor that influences Thai's behavior towards Kimchi consumption as they didn't promote their brand like other brands such as boost post and create advertisements. The customer knows their brands by chatting with others, finding information on the internet or application and visiting their brand and restaurant. Moreover, since the beginning of

Covid-19, the online platform grows significantly and gains more users over time which also makes their brand become more well-known. At first the “Like-Kimchi” brand by Mr. Brian only had dining restaurants; there's no online application for ordering Kimchi yet. But once an online platform plays a significant role and word spreads, he decides to launch an online order and also receives good results. Both of them also said that they want their customers to revisit their brand by the taste but not by commercial advertising.



CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Conclusion

This study aims to examine how the Korean wave impacted Thai society during the current period as there is a significant increase in Korean consumption such as Music, food and fashion which clearly shows that it is a successful influence to Thai people. Also, this study tries to find which are the most significant factors that influence consumer's purchase intention of Kimchi.

We need to admit that there are several Thai people who tend to watch K-Drama, listen to K-pop music and eating Korean food much more often and it shifts how they behave. The first significant factor that influences Thai people to consume Kimchi is the changing of consumer behavior that have been changed through their Korean media consumption. In several movies and dramas, there will be some Korean identity hiding appropriately which the Korean Government tries to enhance the outsider to see and consume their values and uniqueness. They are using it as a marketing strategy to persuade others to visit their culture which is successful in terms of creating their identity and creating an influential factor towards Thai people. The following factor is family influence which seems to be the greatest influential source for their bond especially for Thai culture that we believe and respect in the word "Family come first". The children tend to follow what their parents believe and behave in the same way they do. So, it is commonly found that they will have the influence to easily consume Kimchi according to their parent's consuming behavior. Another factor is attitude which depends on their perspectives toward Kimchi consumption. It is a power that lead the consumer to think and behave through their thoughts. Also, as Thailand is a collectivist culture that people will follow the majority in order to fit in a group, once one person consumes Kimchi and has a positive opinion, others will easily be influenced by them. Lastly, Ewom which we commonly see in Thai society nowadays when consumers want to purchase something. They will seek for more information to ensure the quality

whether they should buy and try it or not which they can evaluate the gathering information that will lead to the intention to consume.

To conclude, the above mentioned statements are the factors that show how the Korean wave has a significant impact on Thai people and make them choose to consume Korean culture even though Thai culture has their own uniqueness in terms of food but these factors can prove that Thai people tend to change their behavior into Korean food consumption instead.

5.2 Limitation

The study meets some limitations as there is a lack of previous research studies on the topic. When there is a limited resource of past research, there might be a lack of perspectives on how they view this particular topic. However, it can be seen as a valuable chance for the researcher in order to highlight the need for future research in this field. Moreover, this research collected a sample of 5 interviewees in total by having an interview and combining them into two groups; Kimchi consumer and Kimchi producer. However, there are limited resources on searching for Kimchi owners, so the data collection might not provide a variety of opinions from them. It would be more interesting to have adequate sample size to generate a credible research conclusion and having meaningful thoughts in the data.

5.3 Recommendation

According to the origin of Kimchi and its influence towards Thai people, some marketing strategies can be used in order to portray their unique food identity and spread these influences. The Kimchi producers can host the event at their restaurant or join a food event for showing their Kimchi and portray the benefit for Kimchi consumption. They can also give them tasting products so that the consumer will be able to try and if they like their products, they will gain more of the all factor perspectives including Ewom from people who share their thoughts in social media which will enhance others to see and expand its influences. They can also receive some feedback for their improvement such as quality, taste and branding in order to spread more

influences in the better direction. Besides, this strategy will benefit them in terms of consumers' attitudes as the consumer would be more impressed with Kimchi even more and it will make the consumers get closer to the new food culture which can also lead to higher influence, purchase intention and it could lead to loyalty as a result.



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