ABSTRACT

Nowadays Korea is well known by its popular culture, especially entertainment, such as, TV dramas and pop music, idol stars, called as "Korean Wave", and Korean government has considered Korean wave as a tool for soft power which can be used for enhancing exports.

In this context, this study aims to investigate the impact of globally popular culture, Korean wave on the purchase intention of Korean cosmetics (the brand "Skinfood"). Korean wave in this study consists of three variables which are sympathy and empathy induced by Korean dramas, the attractiveness of Korean celebrities. To examine the process of Korean wave's impact, the country image of Korea (affective, cognitive), brand awareness and brand equity of Korean cosmetics were also examined as mediating variables.

The researcher collected primary data from 398 women in Bangkok and Chonburi, Thailand who have experienced Korean wave through a survey questionnaire method. Pearson correlation was used to test the hypotheses.

The results show that the Korean wave has a positive impact on the country image of Korea, and positive country image can bring about the higher purchase intention of Korean cosmetics directly, or indirectly through the mediating effects of brand awareness and brand equity of Korean cosmetics. In other words, Korean wave can be a soft power of Korea which promotes country image and export of Korean products.

These findings of this study can be used as clues for Korean government and related companies for sustainable growth of industries related to Korean wave.