

Online watching behavior: A case study of K-drama audiences in Taiwan

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ABSTRACT

Through rapid technological developments, audiences have gradually shifted from consuming media from television to online, especially for series that do not originate from viewers' home regions, such as K-dramas in Taiwan. In this study, Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT) is employed as an approach to understanding why and how people actively seek out specific media to satisfy specific needs, assuming that audience members are not passive consumers of media. An in-depth questionnaire is distributed to collect data. The study found that watching Korean dramas is recommended by relatives and friends. Before 2012, TV was the main viewing outlet before the rise of Internet-based platforms. Three popular online platforms are Netflix, iQiyi, and LINE TV. Most people watch Korean dramas for 3-6 hours per week, predominantly at night. The most attractive factors of Korean dramas are the script's theme, the acting skills of the actors, the good-looking actors, the shooting technique, and the excellent production. This study believes that Taiwan's film, television, and stage plays can learn from Korean dramas: innovating themes and improving content.

Keywords: Online, watching behavior, audience behavior, K-drama, Taiwanese audiences

Introduction

With rapid changes in technology, audiences have gradually shifted from consuming media via television to online, especially for series that do not originate from viewers' home regions, just as with Korean dramas (K-dramas) in Taiwan. Behind this phenomenon, beyond technological forces, it also involves the wrestling of culture, economy, social life, and politics (McQuail, 2009). This research attempts to discuss the online watching behavior of K-drama audiences in Taiwan and explore contemporary social and cultural perspectives of digital consumption.

Background: The rise of Hallyu

South Korean cultural industries have attracted worldwide attention since the presidency of Kim Dae-jung. In July 1997, the Asian financial crisis led to heavy losses in manufacturing, prompting fiscal policies and investments to turn toward the entertainment sector; and cultural policy and administration towards a market-oriented outlook. Kim Dae-jung rose to power in 1998, clearly defining Korean cultural industries as the root industry of the 21st century. The South Korean Ministry of Culture requested a substantial budget increase that same year to carry out the first of several five-year plans to build up domestic cultural industries, allowing the nationwide establishment of 300 cultural industry departments in colleges and universities (Onishi, 2005).

In 1999, the Basic Law for *Cultural Industries' Promotion* was enacted, which defined cultural industries as businesses related to the planning, development, producing, production, distribution, and consumption of cultural commodities; and that the budget of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism must constitute 1% of the general national budget. In 2001, the announcement of *Content Korea Vision 21* marked a significant shift in the scope of what cultural industry policy should be doing for the future (Kao, 2012). Digitalization and media convergence was recognized to be necessary. The government saw potential sources of cultural industries and radical expansion to the content market. "Content" was initially related to digital information on the Internet and later referred to any "high-value goods." In order to make the cultural content industry flourish, it should have close connections with the IT industry, still comprising essential features of the cultural industry. Korea Creative Content Agency (KOCCA) was established in May 2009 as the governmental agency to oversee and coordinate the promotion of Korean content industries. KOCCA was formed by integrating five related organizations, including the Korean Broadcasting Institute, the Korea Culture & Content Agency, and the Korea Game Agency (Saeji, 2021).

"Hallyu" (Korean Wave) has become a target scenario for Asian countries to study (Parc and Moon, 2013). Hallyu is a phenomenon particular to Asia, referring to the current impact of products specifically from South Korean popular culture (films, music, games, fashion) on the world (Dator and Seo 2004). The "Korean Wave" is a national and international phenomenon, defined by Lee (2008) as "a highly complex and multilayered formation that is composed of real, imagined, and hybrid cultural practices, a diverse range of lived experiences, and sets of powerful discourses which exist at national, trans-local, and trans-national levels." In the early 2000s, Hallyu industries proliferated. The government subsidized a few international concerts and paid the costs of exporting some television shows in an attempt to open up new markets (Saeji, 2021).

K-dramas in Taiwan

The reason for promoting the cultural or content industries of the South Korean government is financial. Economic factors influence the transformation of cultural policy.

Korean dramas were brought to Taiwan for the same reason: the economy. After Taiwan passed the *Cable Radio and Television Act* in 1983, in response to the demand for programs for many cable channels, Taiwan began to purchase TV dramas from South Korea. Videoland Television Network introduced K-dramas sporadically, one after another. From 1983 to 1999, more than 10 Korean dramas were broadcast on TV stations. It was the beginning of K-drama in Taiwan. Through the center of the Chinese-speaking world: Taiwan, the Korean Wave began to spread to Singapore, Hong Kong, China, and other places. In 1999, Gala Television Corporation began broadcasting Korean dramas as strip programs. Among those series, "Fireworks" and "Autumn in My Heart" set off a new trend in Taiwan in 2000. Since then, various TV stations have introduced many Korean dramas. In addition, the popularity of Japanese series decreased while their price increased. Once low-priced Korean dramas became a hot commodity for production companies and TV stations, the prices to import Korean dramas grew higher and higher. Today's Korean dramas have not only become a precise market segmentation of TV drama programs in Taiwan but also one of the program types with a high watching population in the TV market (Lin, 2001; Liao, 2016)

The force of technology

Most recent audiences have watched K-dramas through the Internet. According to a survey by the National Communications Commission (NCC) in 2020, 85% of respondents had watched television programs or videos through TV, mobile phones, or computers during the previous week. Among the devices that viewers use while watching those programs, smartphones (38.97%) accounted for the highest percentage (National Communications Commission, 2021). With the popularity of mobile Internet, the ratio of access in Taiwan was nearly 90% (89.2%) in 2015 (Eastern Online, 2015). Watching videos has always been one of the main ways for people to kill time or relieve stress. Due to the advancement of audio and video streaming services and the development of vehicles, people can watch digital programs anytime, anywhere they can connect to the Internet (Invosdata, 2016).

The convenience of technology does change watching behavior. As McQuail (2009) mentioned, those main changes linked to the rise of new media: digitalization and convergence of all aspects of media; increased interactivity and network connectivity; mobility and de-localization of sending and receiving; adaption of publication and audience roles; the appearance of diverse new forms of media gateway; and fragmentation and blurring of the "media institution" (p. 141). However, due to the influence of various cultures, most audiences still prioritize choosing domestic drama series. The reason for choosing foreign TV programs is often because domestic productions cannot satisfy their audiences (Chen, 2014). Additionally, mass communication is more complex than before (McQuail, 2009). This study attempts to understand fundamental issues related to watching behavior, especially online watching behavior of Taiwanese K-drama audiences, including motivation, behavior, and satisfaction, compare different behavior through different media usage, and explain the influence of K-dramas. The main research questions are: What are the reasons for selecting K-dramas? Which platform do audiences use? How do they feel when they watch those dramas? What are the success factors of K-drams? Do K-dramas influence the daily life of Taiwanese audiences? And so on.

Literature review

According to McQuail (1997), audience analysis can be summarized into five types: effects, UGT, literary criticism, literary study, and reception theory. Here, audiences refer to readers, receivers, viewers, and users. McQuail (2009) defined the main theoretical features of "the mass audience" as large numbers of readers, viewers, etc.; widely dispersed; non-interactive and anonymous relation to each other; heterogeneous in consisting of large numbers from all social strata and demographic groups, but also homogeneous in its choice of some

particular object of interest; not organized or self-acting; an object of management or manipulation by the media (p.58-59).

Early effects research believes that media have an immense direct effect on audiences (Eddie, 2009; Borah, 2016). Communication conditions are searching for how to communicate better or the unintended consequences of messages (Ruggiero, 2000). Any information can be encoded in multiple ways, and every message has more than one meaning. Communication is always subject to decisions made within the context and systems employed (Media Studies 101, n.d.). Other media effects research attempts to discover motives and selection patterns of audiences for the new mass media (Ruggiero, 2000).

On the other hand, literary criticism, a text-centeredness, shares a common concern with the intrinsic properties of literary language and meaning and the importance of developing systematic methods of critical analysis (Takahashi, 2002; Eddie, 2009). Critical analysis is a branch of modern literary studies concerned with how readers receive literary works. It generally refers to reader-response criticism, but it is associated more particularly with the reception aesthetics. Reception theory is generally considered as audience reception in communications models. It emphasizes each reader's reception or interpretation of making meaning from a literary text and also a "new revisionism" of early effects studies (Takahashi, 2002; Eddie, 2009).

This study applies UGT as a significant theory to analyze the online watching behavior of K-drama audiences in Taiwan. The origins of UGT can be traced back to the 1940s when scholars initially studied why specific media and content appealed to different people. The theory was expanded in the 1970s to include what kinds of gratifications consumers actually obtained. The theory is often credited to Jay Blumler and Elihu Katz's work in 1974 (Vinney, 2019; Vinney, 2022). Ruggiero (2000) argued that the rise of new media makes UGT more crucial than ever helpful in explaining why people adopt new mediums.

UGT is an audience-centered approach to understanding why and how people actively seek out specific media to satisfy specific gratifications. It assumes that audience members are not passive consumers of media and focuses on the media consumer rather than the media itself or the messages the media conveys (Ruggiero, 2000; Vinney, 2022). Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch (1974) list basic assumptions which provide a framework for understanding the correlation between media and audiences: (1) audiences are actively selecting from different media; (2) audience media selection is goal-directed; (3) the media and other potential sources compete for audience attention; (4) personal, social, and contextual worlds mediate audience activity; and (5) the uses people make of media and the effects media have on people are interconnected (p.8). Media use is motivated and goal-oriented. Audiences select media based on their expectations and are driven by individual social and psychological factors.

Rosengern (1974) describes a model of the UGT that listed several components: basic needs interact with individual characteristics (psychological setup, social position, and life history and society (including media structure) to produce perceived problems and perceived solutions to them. The problems and expected solutions are molded into motives for communication and lead to media and other behavior (Papacharissi, n.d. p.138).

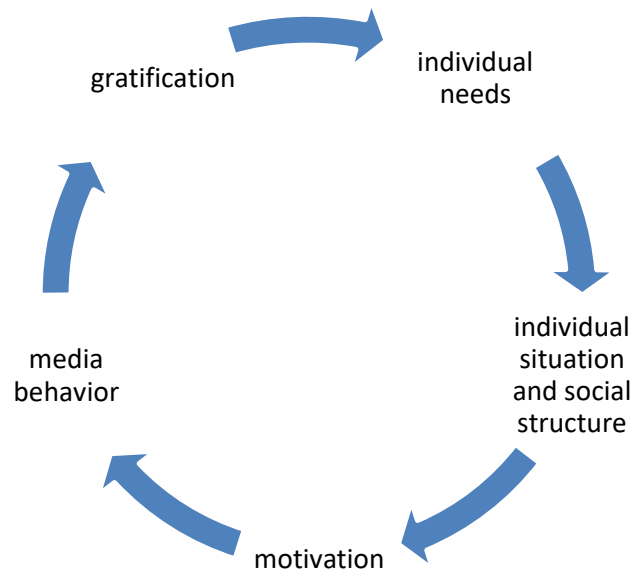


Figure 1 Rosengern's (1974) UGT model

Five social and psychological individual needs include (1) cognitive needs, or the need to acquire information and knowledge or improve understanding; (2) affective needs, or the need to have aesthetic or emotional experiences; (3) integrative needs, or the need to strengthen confidence, status, or credibility; (4) social integrative needs, or the need to strengthen relationships with friends and family; (5) tension-release needs, or the need to relax and escape by lessening one's awareness of the self (Katz, Gurevitch, and Haas, 1973). Social structure refers to "social facts" such as education, income, gender, place of residence, family life cycle, etc. (McQuail, 1997). Media behavior refers to media use habits, consisting of individual needs and mass media structure. Mass media structure refers to the channels, choices, and content available at a specific time.

Motivation is closely related to satisfaction. In the communication process, the most important thing is to satisfy the audience's needs. When motivation and satisfaction can be matched, the audience will react positively. The watching motives of TV dramas in Taiwan are summarized as follows: entertainment, relaxation, getting information, learning new things, exciting content, spending time with family and friends, eliminating loneliness, living habits, having favorite actors, sound production, social purpose, and looking for excitement (Kuang, 1986). McQuail classifies gratification provided by the media as follows: entertainment (escape, relaxing, filling time, emotional release, sexual arousal, etc.), integration and social interaction (gaining insight into circumstances of others, identifying with others, finding a basis for conversation, having a substitute for real-life companionship, helping carry out social roles, etc.), personal identity (finding reinforcement for personal values, models of behavior, gaining insight into one's self, etc.) and information (finding out about relevant events, seeking advice on practical matters, satisfying curiosity, learning, and self-education, gaining a sense of security through knowledge, etc.) (McQuail, 1987, p.73; Eddie, 2009, p.12-13).

Sundar and Linperos (2013) suggest four categories of gratifications that are features specific to new media. These four categories include (1) Modality-based gratifications: Modality refers to the different methods of presentation (e.g., audio or pictures) of media content, appealing to different aspects of the human perceptual system (e.g., hearing, seeing). New media content is delivered in a variety of modalities. Using these different modalities can satisfy the need for realism, novelty, or in some cases, virtual reality. (2) Agency-based gratifications: the agency affordance of the Internet allows people to be agents or sources of

information, giving people the ability and power to create and share information and content. This can satisfy needs such as agency enhancement, community building, and the ability to tailor content to one's specific desires. (3) Interactivity-based gratifications: Interactivity is the affordance that allows the user to make real-time changes to the content in the medium. The content is no longer static. Users can interact with and impact content in real-time. This satisfies needs such as responsiveness and more choice as well as control. (4) Navigability-based gratifications: navigability affords user movement through the medium, and navigation offered by different interfaces can significantly impact users' experiences. Positive new media navigation experiences satisfy needs such as browsing and guidance through navigation (or scaffolding) (Sundar and Linperos, 2013; Vinney, 2022).

Generally speaking, UGT is often criticized as "cannot define audience needs" and for exaggerating viewers' freedom of media choice and interpretation. That lack of access may mean certain people cannot choose the best media to satisfy their needs. Mass media often reinforce mainstream and dominant perspectives, and readers are hardly immune to "preferred reading" (Liu, 1997). Rosengren's five components: individual needs, individual situation and social structure, motivation, media behavior, and gratifications, are used to analyze the online watching behavior of Taiwanese K-drama audiences.

Methodology

This study attempts to find online watching behavior while Taiwanese audiences appreciate K-dramas. It needs information such as the feelings, experiences, and opinions of a consumer or member of the target audience. The research adopts a qualitative approach. Qualitative research is a process of naturalistic inquiry that seeks an in-depth understanding of social phenomena within their natural setting (University of Utah College of Nursing, n. d.). It focuses on the "why" questions and non-numerical data (e.g., text, video, or audio) rather than logical and statistical procedures. It can be used to gather in-depth insights into a problem or generate new ideas for research. This area includes case studies, historical analysis, discourse analysis, ethnography, grounded theory, action research, and phenomenology. When conducting this type of research, one understands a customer's mindset to see which areas are most appealing and which lack importance (Bhandari, 2020).

Data collection methods include interviews, focus groups, observation, etc. Face-to-face or telephone interviews can provide a lot of audience insight and information. An interview involves interaction between a single respondent and the moderator and is structured and conducted by trained interviewers who use a standardized protocol for recording participants' responses (Jennings, 2005). When conducting interviews, asking open-ended questions can result in detailed responses. The advantages of face-to-face/telephone interviews are the ability to control interactions, to ensure that the targeted participant is the respondent, to ask complex questions, and to use probe mechanisms. Disadvantages are associated with the cost of training interviewers, placing them in the field, and the time they spend (Jennings, 2005).

The other standard method to collect data for qualitative research is hosting a focus group. This research needs to understand a group of people's information, ideas, and knowledge. A focus group is a research method that brings a small group of people to answer questions in a moderated setting. The group is chosen due to predefined demographic traits, and the questions are designed to shed light on a topic of interest (George, 2021). Ensuring each participant's interaction is vital when bringing people together to participate in a focus group. Most focus group hosts offer some compensation for participation, such as a free product, gift card, voucher, coupon, or even cash (Bhandari, 2020).

This research started with four in-depth interviews of K-drama fans as a pilot test in Aug-Oct 2019. Two experts reviewed the interview questions for content validity. Interviewees

ranged from 20 to 55 years old, one male and three females. Questions were related to reasons for watching K-dramas, channels/platforms used, hours, frequency, dates, fees, with whom K-dramas are watched, which episode or character is most liked, and impacts after watching K-dramas. After adopting the experts' suggestions and summarizing respondents' answers, the focus group's final questions were completed. The focus group was planned to conduct in March 2020. Due to COVID-19, gatherings were not allowed at the time of the study, so it became open-ended questionnaires sent through Facebook, LINE, PTT, etc. Respondents needed to watch K-drama for at least ten years. Questionnaires were sent to approximately 600 people from June until August 2020. A total of 52 responses were valid.

Findings and Discussion

Of the 52 respondents, 25% live in Taipei City, 21.15% in New Taipei City, and 11.54% in Tainan City. 63.46% were 20-24 years old, 13.46% were 24-29 years old, 5.77% were 35-39, and 5.77% were 50-53. All genders are female. "Student" is the predominant occupation at 34.61%. The first K-drama watched by most people is "Dae Jang-geum" (13.46%), followed by "Full House," "You are Beautiful," and "Boys over Flowers" (7.69%). "Dr. Romantic" (11.53%) is the most favorite K-drama among those respondents; the most favorite character is Do Hyun (Ji Sung) of "Kill Me Heal Me" (11.53%).

Respondents mentioned that watching K-dramas is recommended by relatives and friends. Before 2012, TV was the main viewing outlet before the rise of Internet-based platforms. Three popular online platforms are Netflix, iQiyi, and LINE TV. 48.07% of respondents will continue or are willing to pay fees for using a platform now and in the future. The reasons are that they are used to paying, the quality is good, the translation is correct, and there are no advertisements. The proportion of people who do not pay for a viewing platform is 25%. Those respondents do not want to spend too much money on online entertainment.

76.92% will explore the plot, characters, etc., before watching but emphasize that they will not research in-depth and do not want to be spoiled. The least favorite things to occur while watching are too many ads (25%), unstable Internet (17.30%), and ambiguous endings (11.53%). Most people watch Korean dramas for 3-6 hours per week, predominantly at night. 80.77% of viewers do not watch K-dramas with their family members. The reasons are: enjoying watching K-dramas alone, different watching types, not living with family members, and using different viewing platforms. Audiences that watch K-dramas with their family are willing to share their feelings with them. The favorite genre is romantic comedy (25%), followed by suspense (19.23%). Among those who responded, 30.67% also watched Taiwanese, Japanese, Chinese, and Hong Kong dramas. The most attractive factors of Korean dramas are the script's theme, the acting skills of the actors, the good-looking actors, the shooting technique, and the excellent production.

After watching a K-drama, the respondents: think about themselves, rethink the plot; do not want the show to end; feel empty; re-watch their favorite episode many times. 19.23% will write their comments on social media to share with others, 50% of respondents like to discuss with their peers and friends, 23.07% discuss with family members, and 23.07% do not discuss. According to the respondents' experience, a considerable change in K-dramas throughout the past ten years is that the subject matter and content are more diverse (63.46%). 48.07% of respondents think their taste has changed after ten years.

When watching K-dramas, nearly 50% of respondents will not have cultural barriers (48.07%). However, some of the respondents do feel cultural shock. For example: "There is clear class distinction in Korean society." "They use honorific form in their daily life; It's too polite for me...I am not saying Taiwanese are rude, but we are more like a normal people."

Nearly 60% of respondents believe that K-dramas would not affect their attitude toward life. However, they would travel to Korea because of K-dramas, buy Korean products, eat Korean food, and think Koreans are friendly or like Korean idols (80.76%). All respondents will continue to watch K-dramas in the future. Respondents believe that Taiwan's film, television, and stage plays can learn from Korean dramas: innovating themes and improving content (50%).

In Taiwan's case, five assumptions of UGT can be presented. First, audiences are active: they search for the dramas they want, select the media, choose the platform, and select times to watch. Second, Taiwanese are goal-oriented related to media selection. They understand that K-dramas are not easy to watch on Taiwanese TV channels; therefore, respondents choose to turn to the Internet. Among many competing platforms, they select a certain one and are willing to pay annual fees because they trust the quality of that platform. Additionally, personal, social, and contextual worlds mediate audience activity; and media use and people are interconnected. Of the respondents, there are no people over 54 years old. Watching K-dramas online have technological barriers to entry. It is not necessarily intuitive to use, and mobile screens are too small for elders. The situation also shows the interconnectedness of media use and the effects of media on people.

Exploring Rosengern's (1974) model, five components are individual needs, individual situation and social structure, motivation, media behavior, and gratifications. The five aforementioned social and psychological individual needs are cognitive, affective, integrative, social integrative, and tension-release. Some respondents expressed that they obtained medical or Korean historical knowledge through K-dramas. Some mentioned that they enjoy the series' clothing and accessories and can be surrounded by romantic emotions. Some plots or characters are too miserable, so the respondents obtain the courage to move on through them. Some respondents watch K-dramas with family members because they want to improve relations with their families. Most respondents expressed that when they watch K-drams, they can escape from work or reality and release their tension. Basic needs interact with individual characteristics and social structure. All respondents were over 20 years old; 76.92% were under 30. 51.92% are working, 3.84% are homemakers, and 7.69% are unemployed. The respondents are of various social statuses and at different points in life. The situation also presents in their education and income.

As mentioned in the literature review, media behavior refers to media use and mass media structure. Channels/platforms and viewing time are addressed. For example, 40.38% of respondents have watched "Shining Inheritance / Brilliant Legacy" (2009). At that time, 61.90% watched this on TV, while only 9.5% watched it through the Internet recently. 90.38% of respondents have watched "My Love from the Star" (2013); of these, 65.97% watched online, 14.89% on TV, 14.89% from MOD (Multimedia on Demand) of Chunghwa Telecom, and 4.25% on mobile phones. 96.15% of respondents have watched "Descendants of the Sun" (2016); 80% online, 10% on TV, and 10% on mobile phones. Media viewing platforms shifted from television to Internet-based sources and then to mobile phones. 32.69% of respondents still watch K-dramas at night, but 19.23% do not have a fixed time; they watch k-drams whenever they are available. The viewing behavior of online audiences is quite similar to that of multi-channel viewers in the past: unplanned viewing, many people do not finish series, less channel/platform loyalty, increased channel/platform switching, viewers multitasking while watching, and increased distraction of viewers (Liu, 1997).

Comparing Kuang (1986), McQuail (1987), and the results of this research (Taiwan 2020), all came to the same conclusion that the core reasons for watching TV programs related to personal motivations, entertainment, information, and social purposes in the past or present. Taiwanese scholars and audiences focus more on production. They enjoy watching starts, special content, and high technology. On the other hand, Taiwanese audiences do not expect to relate to K-dramas personally. After watching those series, they may find reinforcement for

their values and models of behavior, gaining personal insight into themselves. However, that is not their original purpose for watching K-dramas.

Table 1 Comparing motivations

Motivations/scholars	Kuang, 1986	McQuail, 1987	Taiwan, 2020
entertainment	looking for excitement, relaxation, eliminating loneliness	escape, relaxing, filling time, emotional release, sexual arousal	V
information	learning new things	finding out about relevant events, seeking advice on practical matters, satisfying curiosity, learning, and self-education, and gaining a sense of security through knowledge	V
Social purpose	spending time with family and friends	gaining insight into the circumstances of others, identifying with others, finding a basis for conversation, having a substitute for real-life companionship, helping carry out social roles	V
personal identity		finding reinforcement for personal values, models of behavior, gaining insight into one's self	
production	Content, favorite actors, sound production		V

Motivations are related to gratifications. As mentioned in the literature review of this study, Sundar and Linperos (2013) suggest four categories of new gratifications: modality-based gratifications, agency-based gratifications, interactivity-based gratifications, and navigability-based gratifications. K-dramas always present different and innovative content to attract different audiences. For example, "Descendants of the Sun" (2016) combines romance, war, disaster, medicine, action, and drama. The production cost to 12.98 billion won through filming with an ultra-high-definition (UHD) camera at 4K resolutions. Audiences' modality-based gratifications can be satisfied.

Agency-based gratifications can be satisfied after watching a series of K-drama audiences. If audiences are unsatisfied with a K-drama, only 3.84% of respondents will write negative comments on social media. 25% of respondents will complain to their friends and not recommend relatives or friends to watch it. In this situation, respondents become "agents or sources of information, given people the ability and power to create and share information and

content." This research also found that Taiwanese audiences enjoy navigability-based gratifications from watching K-dramas. Respondents used a computer, MOD, smart TV, or mobile phone to watch. They also utilized Smart View and screen mirroring functionalities to project K-dramas to various devices, such as a monitor, TV, or projector. Indeed, those devices are not limited to only watching K-drams. Interactivity-based gratifications cannot be applied in this case because most K-dramas have already finished shooting, or at least half series have been shot.

Conclusion

Although UGT emphasizes audiences' active and goal-oriented media consumption, their choices are still heavily influenced by politics, technology, and the economy. K-dramas have been broadcast in Taiwan for almost 40 years because of the development of Taiwan's cable TV industries. There were so many channels that they needed programs for 24-hour consistent broadcasting. When market demand increases, but the domestic supply (programs) cannot support it, importing programs from foreign countries is the only way. K-dramas were new for the Taiwanese and relatively inexpensive in the 1980s. Cable stations and production companies found that Taiwanese audiences were used to watching Japanese series so resistance could be reduced. Additionally, similar culture: the thoughts of Confucian and Mencius ideology profoundly influencing Asia, rice being a staple dish, and most people using chopsticks and bowls to eat etc. all increase the acceptance of K-dramas.

However, sound production and government policy are the most crucial factors in creating the Korean Wave. The South Korean government is willing to promote and devote a considerable budget to cultural and creative industries. Their vision is to emphasize the importance of content and enhance content while cultivating talents. That is fundamental to Hallyu. Only if the infrastructure is well established can industries grow strongly.

Finally, technology creates and necessitates a global market, meaning that audiences are from worldwide and competition. As McQuail (2009) emphasized, "It is much less easy to distinguish these various media from each other than it used to be (p. 41)." Four reasons: some media forms are now distributed across various transmission channels, reducing the original uniqueness of form and experience in use. The increasing convergence of technology, rooted in digitalization, can only reinforce this trend. Globalized habits diminish the distinctiveness of particular national variants on media content institutions. Continuing trends towards integrating national and global media corporations have led to the housing of different media under the same roof, encouraging convergence by another route (p. 41). Because of the disappearance of unique media, only content can compete, even though culture and language have little influence on quality. Traditionally, audience ratings measure the proportion of the total available audience tuned into a television channel, radio station, or program at a particular time, hence the assessment of audience size or share (Oxford, 2022). Focusing on the online equivalent, Cost Through Rate (CTR) or view rates is the metric of choice instead of audience ratings. This is not purely a change in terminology but also in audiences, producers, and distributors' forms, behaviors, and attitudes.

In conclusion, this study addresses the online watching behavior of K-drama audiences in Taiwan. It also attempts to provide policy suggestions for the government to develop Taiwan's creative sectors actively. It is believed that Taiwan's cultural and creative industries, especially film, television, and stage plays, can learn from Korean dramas: innovating themes and improving content.

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