

## A Phenomenological Study on the Effects of Korean TV Dramas on Chinese Millennials' Perceived Images of Korea as a Potential Tourist Destination

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**Citation:** Grace Chan SH, Su LJ, Ada Lee LY (2018) A Phenomenological Study on the Effects of Korean TV Dramas on Chinese Millennials' Perceived Images of Korea as a Potential Tourist Destination. *Tourism Hospit Ope Acc: THOA-115*. DOI: 10.29011/THOA-115. 100015

**Received Date:** 04 July, 2018; **Accepted Date:** 23 July, 2018; **Published Date:** 30 July, 2018

### Abstract

Over the past decades, Korean Television (TV) dramas have become one of the most powerful tools in promoting film tourism. For example, the romantic comedy 'My Love from the Star' demonstrated success around worldwide. Korean television has been further exported to 18 different countries, including Singapore, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan, Thailand and even the United States. Korean TV dramas have also attracted a huge following in China, where they have gained more than 3 billion views online. TV dramas have affected Korean society and culture and also contributed to its economy. As the most influential form of artistic dissemination in contemporary Korean society, TV dramas play an outstanding role in building contemporary cultural reality. Korean TV dramas are attractive to Chinese millennials, consequently boosting inbound tourism in Korea.

The purpose of this study is to assess the influence of Korean TV dramas on Chinese millennials' perceived images of Korea as a potential tourist destination. Applying a qualitative methodology, this study conducted in-depth interviews with 30 Chinese millennials. The data were analysed using grounded theory. The study examined how Chinese millennials perceive Korea as a tourist destination, explored the effects of Korean TV drama series, identified Korean TV dramas that affected the choice of a potential tourist destination, and provided suggestions for marketers to develop strategies in promoting film tourism in Korea. Results and discussion are provided in specific sections of the paper.

**Keywords:** Chinese Millennials; Korean TV Dramas; Perceived Destination Images; Potential Tourist Destination

### Introduction

Many scholars have acknowledged that films and dramas act as powerful tools to stimulate tourism demand [1,2]. Although studies have provided a picture of film tourism, the impact of mass media on tourism phenomena and the links between the components of mass media and tourism perception and destination choices have not been explored. In film tourism, Television (TV) is one of the most popular and influential vehicles for attracting people's attention among diverse visual media alternatives. At present, people nearly watch TV every day, and among other TV programmes, popular TV drama series have become one of the

most addictive providers of gossips and discussions that encourage viewers to ponder the stories and motives of the actors with family, friends and neighbours. Thus, TV dramas play an important role in the viewers' daily lives. The locations where TV dramas are filmed also influence local tourism, which means that TV dramas have certain effects on a tourist destination's image.

Korean TV dramas have become more than just TV shows. They have become examples of cultural hybridisation and globalisation (Ryoo, 2009). Korean TV dramas have achieved popularity in China for several reasons. First, local orders have attracted a wide group of millennials. Furthermore, the dramas present romantic storylines and showcase interesting sceneries, which create a motivation to visit a certain place. Finally, coming up with storylines that include characters with whom audiences can

develop strong dispositions can also contribute to a growing number of Chinese millennial audience. Ryoo (2009) attributed the initial rise in popularity of Korean TV dramas to their wide exportation across Asian countries. Although Korean films have adopted the 'Hollywood style' and added their characteristics to the typical Chinese culture, Korean TV dramas still embrace the paradox of adherence to family values and experiencing individualism in a changing world (Chuang & Lee, 2013). Korea wants to keep Korean TV dramas popular with neighbouring nations [3-6]. They also use dramas to influence a larger number of young audiences by demonstrating attractive sceneries and actors to develop positive destination images. Successful broadcasting of TV dramas has also brought about a variety of effects. First, millennials want to imitate their idols' ways of dressing up. Second, the cognitive gap between Korean and Chinese cultures enhances the understanding of Korean culture (Li, 2005). Third, after watching Korean dramas, many viewers would like to try Korean food or travel to Korea, thus improving businesses in the country. According to data from the Korea Tourism Organization (KTO) (2005), after some TV dramas have finished airing, the number of visitors in Korea has continually increased [7]. Korean TV dramas have also resulted in a rapid growth of Chinese millennials' interest in Korean culture and increased the number of trips to Korea [7].

Lee and Bai (2010) [8] stated that the Korean Wave has created a relationship with visitors' perceptions of Korea as a potential tourist destination. Therefore, positive destination images have enhanced travellers' choices of tourist destinations. In the tourism context, the degree of tourists' loyalty to a destination is reflected in their intentions to revisit the destination and willingness to recommend it to others [9].

The effects of image on a destination choice process have been identified by previous scholars [10-12]. Moreover, a destination image exercises a positive influence on perceived quality and satisfaction and also affects the behavioural intentions of tourists. Court and Lupton (1997) [13] found that the image of a destination under study positively affects visitors' intentions. Therefore, the destination image of a tourist is a significant factor for its popularity and identification of various image attributes that might provide important information in developing promotion strategies [14]. The number of foreign visitors to South Korea has steadily climbed in the past decade because of Korean TV dramas. In 2013, the number of foreign visitors in South Korea exceeded 12 million, compared with 5 million in 2000 and 10 million in 2012 (KTO, 2013). According to the Korea Culture and Tourism Institute, the number of Chinese tourists visiting South Korea showed a 52.5% year-on-year increase in 2013, with an average growth rate of 34% in the past five years (KTO, 2013). In 2016, outbound tourist visits by Chinese nationals reached 122 million, which was 4.3% larger than the rate in the previous year (CNTA, 2016). Expenditures on outbound tourism amounted to 109.8 billion USD, an increase

of 5.1% from the previous year's figure (CNTA, 2016). Due to the rapid growth of domestic leisure tourism, the depreciation of Chinese currency and the comprehensive development of trans-border electronic commerce and other factors, the outbound tourist market has entered a stage of relatively stable development. In 2017, outbound tourist visits are expected to reach 127 million (CNTA, 2016). Moreover, in the first half of 2017, outbound tourist visits by Chinese nationals reached 62.03 million, an increase of 5.1% compared with the same period of the previous year [15].

According to one of China's top (CNTA, 2017) mainland Chinese tourists made a record of 4.53 billion domestic and overseas trips in 2017, and the number is equivalent to three times China's population of 1.38 billion, which places them at the top of the world's list in tourism volume. The Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (2018) [16] also forecasted that the number of outbound tourists from China and emerging economies will grow at a much faster pace than the number of travellers from developed countries in 2018.

In 2016, mainland Chinese millennials aged 20 to 24 made up 6.83% of the total population and those aged 25 to 29 accounted for 9.21% of the total population. Thus, Chinese millennials occupy almost 16% of the total population. Tourism is a major attraction to Chinese millennials (CNTA, 2017). Previous studies [9,17,18] have identified that positive destination images create satisfaction and lead to repeat visits. However, limited studies have mentioned the effects of Korean TV dramas on millennials' perceived images of Korea as a potential destination. Owing to the large number of outbound millennial visitors from China, examining the effects of Korean TV dramas on their perceived images of Korea as a potential destination choice is worthwhile.

## Problem Statement

'My Love from the Star' is a romantic comedy Korean TV drama about an alien named Do Min-jun (played by Kim Soo-hyun) and a top actress Cheon Song-ji (played by Jun Ji-hyun). This TV show is a success in Korea, and has been exported to 18 different countries, including Singapore, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan, Thailand and even the United States. It has also attracted a large following in China, where it has garnered some 3 billion views online, even though it has never been broadcasted on the country's major TV networks. Thus, it has a huge impact on the perceived destination images of Korea among Chinese people.

The hit show 'My Love from the Star' also boosted South Korea's tourism sector. According to the KTO, the number of Chinese tourists in Korea increased by 42% to 6.1 million in 2014 [19]. Among these tourists, many have flocked to various filming locations of Korean TV dramas. An example is Petite France village in Gapyeong, which is located near Seoul. Many tourists, both Chinese and non-Chinese, have flocked to this location where

one of the most iconic scenes in the drama was filmed. Therefore, investigating the Chinese millennials' perception towards Korea as a potential destination after they saw the drama is worthwhile.

The Chinese government plays an important role in the tourism industry. As a result of political tensions between China and South Korea, the number of Chinese tourists visiting the latter sharply declined in 2017, which is the main reason why the country's tourism deficit has hit a record high. Last year, the number of Chinese tourists in South Korea was 4.1693.53 million, a decrease of 48.3% from the previous year (KTO, 2017) [20]. Since March 2017, the number of Chinese tourists to South Korea had dropped sharply and then rebounded in March 2018. According to the Ministry of Justice, the number of Chinese travellers in South Korea was 428,000 as of March 2018, representing an increase of 16.5% from a month earlier and an increase of 13% from a year ago. Thus, if the problem between Korea and China will not be addressed, then the number of Korean inbound tourists will be affected. Previous studies only examined the perception of locals towards a destination and seldom used the viewpoint of millennials, particularly in a large market such as China. Therefore, the present study aims to fill these gaps. This study can benefit Korean inbound tourism and outbound travel businesses in China.

### Significance of the Study

According to the literature review, at least 15 academic papers on the effects of film tourism have been published [7]. Many scholars have suggested how to create a positive image of tourism destinations. Although many papers have investigated the Korean Wave, which affects tourist flows, few studies have investigated how Chinese millennials perceive Korea after seeing a Korean movie and seldom have they explored the viewpoints of millennials regarding a potential tourist destination. This study aims to explore the following objectives:

- (1) To examine how Chinese millennials perceive Korea as a tourist destination;
- (2) To explore the impacts of Korean TV drama series;
- (3) To examine Korean TV dramas, which affect travellers' choice of a potential tourist destination; and
- (4) To provide suggestions for marketers to develop strategies in promoting film tourism for Korea.

### Literature Review

#### Why Millennials?

Millennials are often described as the "social" generation because they are the founders of the social media movement and are constantly connected to their online groups via their computers and mobile devices. Millennials prefer to live in dense, diverse

urban villages where social interaction is just outside their front doors. Members of this generation value authenticity and creativity, and they buy local goods made by members of their communities. They care about their families, friends and philanthropic causes. However, they are also coming of age in the direst economic climate since the Great Depression, thereby making their families, communities and social networks even more valuable as they band together [21].

#### Key Findings about Millennials

- a) Diverse, expressive and optimistic: Millennials are characterised by more than just their age. As a group, they are more racially and ethnically diverse than any previous generation.
- b) They value self-expression and artistic pursuits. They have been hard hit by recent economic turbulence, but their high education levels and optimism foretell their future success.
- c) Deal shoppers who desire authenticity: Given their small paycheques, millennials are savvy shoppers who are always on the lookout for a good deal. Millennials put a premium on authentic, handmade, locally produced goods, and they are willing to pay more for products from companies with social impact programs. Getting a good deal is a priority, but they would not compromise on quality. They want to feel good about what they buy.
- d) Connected and want a personal touch: Technology defines millennials. They sleep close to their mobile phones and post status updates in most instances, even inside bathrooms. When interacting with companies via social media, millennials value authenticity, and they want to experience a personal, direct interaction with a brand. In return, they endorse their preferred brands.

Nielsen (2014) defined the generations from the past century and millennials as follows:

Millennials		
Generation Y (1977-1995)	<i>Younger millennials</i>	18-27 years old
	<i>Older millennials</i>	28-36 years old
Generation Z (1995-Present)		

**Table 1:** Definitions of Millennials [21].

Millennials are clustered into younger (18-27) and older (28-36) groupings based on age, unless otherwise indicated. Younger millennials are more likely composed of students or college graduates and may be living at their parents' home, whereas the older group is more established in their careers and starting families. Millennials want to express themselves and form a unique identity.

They love music (specifically rap, hip hop, alternative and reggae) and fine arts. The 25-34 age groups downloads more music (approximately 30 songs in the past six months) than all other generations and are also fond of streaming music. Furthermore, they are influenced by celebrity endorsements and respond favourably to advertisements that feature famous personalities, relatable characters or strong visual elements tied to their expressive, creative nature. This age group is particularly receptive to endorsements by music artists they like. In addition, 24% of young millennials and 26% of older millennials will try a product if they sponsor an event for a music artist they like [21]. The key points of the current study include why millennials are influenced by movie stars and idols, such as pop music singers, and how these factors stimulate their travel motivations. After seeing a movie or their favourite stars on a TV drama, millennials may perceive Korea as a potential tourist destination.

### **Korean Wave and Film Tourism**

In recent years, Korean pop culture has gained much recognition across many Asian countries through mass media entertainment forms such as dramas, movies and songs. This trend is known as 'Hallyu', which literally means Korean Wave in English. In 1999, the word Hallyu was introduced by Chinese mass media for the first time and has been used to indicate the overwhelming popularity of Korean pop culture in Asian countries. Currently, the new generation of consumers is classified as the 'Korean tribes', who are aggressively adopting and emulating Korean lifestyles in fashion, food and consumption patterns, collecting Korean culture items, learning the Korean language and making pilgrim voyages to Korea [22].

The Korean Wave has affected intra-regional tourism, mainly from Singapore, Malaysia, Japan and China, as well as the United States. The KTO reported that approximately 3 million Hallyu-inspired tourists had visited Korea as of November 2004, which was 37% higher than the number in the previous year [22]. In particular, the induced flow of Chinese tourists has been rapidly increasing. Riley, Baker and Van Doren (1998) [23] demonstrated movie icons as a movie's symbolic meaning or featured event, physical characteristics and historical or cultural traits viewed in cinema according to their study. Therefore, movies are used as a powerful tool to demonstrate a destination image and favourability on the destination image of a film location. Although film tourism and film-induced tourism are used interchangeably, a distinction between them has been found [24]. Film tourism is defined as visit to a site that is or has been used for or is associated with filming (Buchmann, Moore & Fisher, 2010), whereas film-induced tourism is tourism influenced by both TV and cinema that attracts and motivates people to travel to a film location [24,25]. In other words, film-induced tourism does motivate visits to and tourist activities at film locations (Croy & Heitmann, 2011), but film tourism is only

an incidental experience of visitors in film shooting locations [24]. Popular TV dramas are highly effective tools and attract tourist to a destination while boosting the economic impacts [26,27] and reinforcing positive image of a destination [28,29]. In these issues, the present study focuses on independent factors, such as news and word-of-mouth (WOM) about certain information, which leads to the creation of an image of Korea. Furthermore, celebrity endorsements shape tourism demand. However, some research found that social influences in terms of cultural familiarity, for example, only eating Korean food due to the influence of Korean media and using Korean electronics and cell phones, do not significantly influence Korean media consumption.

Kim and Richardson (2003) [2] adopted experimental design method and found that people who are exposed to Korean movies report more favourability on the destination image of a film location than those not exposed to the location. This finding indicates that destination images affect the promotion of a potential tourist destination (Gunn, 1972, Jenkins, 1999). Those who have seen a Korean movie or drama are more familiar with the city and have a high level of empathy towards a location [2]. In conclusion, movies or TV dramas through its filming locations or actors can be the best method to attract tourists to perceive a positive destination image.

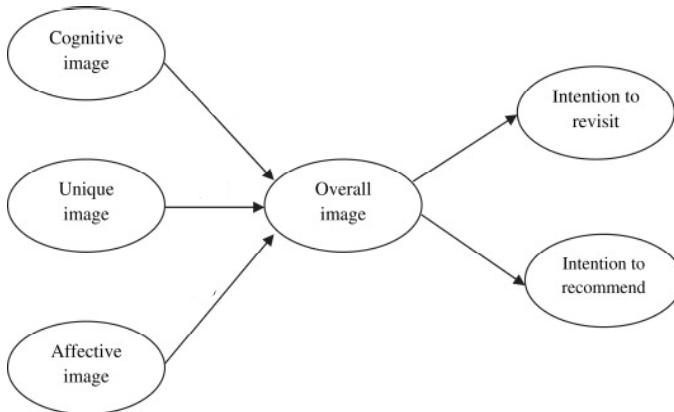
### **Destination Image**

Destination image is an individual's mental representation of knowledge, feelings and overall perceptions of a particular destination [30]. According to Court and Lupton (1997), a positive image of a destination positively affects travellers' intentions to revisit that location in the future. In the tourism context, satisfaction with travel experiences contributes to destination loyalty [17,18,31]. The degree of tourists' loyalty to a destination is reflected in their intentions to revisit the destination and in their willingness to recommend [18]. If tourists have positive experiences of service products, then other resources in the tourism destination could capture repeat visits, as well as positive WOM effects to friends.

Most people understand that the destination image affects tourists' subjective perceptions, consequent behaviours and destination choices [32-34]. An image influences tourist in the process of choosing a destination, subsequent evaluations of a trip and their future intentions.

According to studies (Crompton & Ankromah, 1993; Gartner, 1989) [10,11], destinations with more positive images will more likely be included in the decision-making process. Furthermore, destination image affects the behavioural intentions of tourists. Chi and Qu (2008) [9] stated that tourists tend to rely more on the image for satisfaction evaluation and destination choice decisions.

In destination marketing, induced image formation agents, such as promotional materials, have become significant in promoting a destination due to the intangibility of travel products [35]. However, autonomous image formation agents with no intention to promote a destination are considered to be more influential on image formation in that they have higher credibility and the ability to reach wider audiences more than induced formation agents [36,37]. Most research on autonomous agents focus on the strong negative influence of news media, such as political issues, violence, terrorist activities and natural disasters. However, limited research has been devoted to examine the impact of pop culture as an autonomous image formation agent, whether negative or positive [38].



**Figure 1:** Conceptual model of the study.

In the tourism literature, the overall image of a destination is influenced by cognitive and affective evaluations [39-43]. Cognitive evaluation refers to beliefs and knowledge about an object, whereas affective evaluation refers to feelings about an object [36,39,44,45]. However, the majority of image studies treat destination image as a cognitive evaluation. Only a few studies have employed cognitive and affective components in understanding the overall image of a destination [32,42]. Uniqueness provides a compelling reason why travellers should select a particular destination over alternatives. The unique image of a destination is critical in establishing the overall image in consumers' minds. A strong, unique image would increase the favourability of the overall image towards a destination.

The intention to revisit has been extensively studied in the tourism research for its signal of customer loyalty. In the marketing discipline, the concept of customer retention has been widely emphasised because attracting new customers is more expensive than retaining existing customers [46]. Previous studies supported the view that overall image is one of the most important factors that elicit the intention to revisit the same destination [47]. A person with a perceived positive image is more likely to recommend a

destination [48]. Thus, a visitor with a positive overall image, as a total impression of cognitive, affective and unique images, would be more likely to revisit a destination and recommend it to other.

## Methodology

This study adopts a descriptive approach with qualitative research design. Purposive sampling is also used in this study. Chinese millennials are selected as target interviewees. Open-ended questions in Chinese and English are presented, and the data are analysed using the grounded theory framework. Chinese back to back translation was adopted to ensure complete understanding when setting the question in the early stage. The sample size for in-depth interviews was 30 millennials.

The interviews last for approximately one hour. The interviews are recorded and fully transcribed. In-depth interviews started from early March to end of May 2018. Samplings adopted snowball samplings. The interviews conducted in good restaurants or in the library of a university campus.

A set of questions were given to the participants about one week beforehand to allow them to understand the study's area of concern. The in-depth, face-to-face interviews used to collect primary data. Other secondary data collected from government websites, journals and articles. The data summarised and organised according to the themes generated by the document reviews. Summaries of the interviews prepared to highlight the main concepts emerging and set the context for quotes to selected and used as examples in the research report. The audio recording of each interview firstly be transcribed into traditional Chinese and then translated to English. A summary form wrote up after each interview to record the information given to every participant, summarise the interview content and provided a reference point for the next interview. The collected information had numbered and recorded in a summary document. Notes and memos will also be written up from the beginning of the data collection period.

The data analysis and coding conducted in several stages. The codes generated displayed in different categories in themed charts. Domain analysis used to describe and analyse each theme separately. The findings at different levels and to be synthesised, and the coding results at different levels compared to explore differences in opinions and suggestions. The resulting explanations and discussion compared with those emerging from previous research to refine the conceptual framework of the study and determine the impacts of Korean TV dramas on Chinese millennials' perceived destination images of Korea as a potential tourist destination.

## Results and Discussion

Following the concept of 'theoretical saturation' by Strauss and Corbin (1998) [49], we interviewed 30 participants. They

were all Chinese millennials, amongst which 28 were single and 2 were married. Four interviewees were males and 26 were females. Their roles included college students, teachers and office workers. Most of the interviewees commented on their perceived image and future potential visits (see Figure 2).

### **How Chinese Perceive Korea as a Tourist Destination**

Most interviewees perceive Korea as a desirable tourist destination. Five interviewees have travelled to Korea, and 25 have not. The five interviewees who have travelled to Korea thought that Korean people are friendly and the environment in the country is comfortable. Most of them perceive that Korean culture is different from Chinese culture, especially the pop culture. Korean pop culture has gained much recognition through mass media entertainment, such as dramas, movies and songs. The cognitive image of some interviewees, although they have not been to Korea, was affected by Korean entertainment, such as TV movies, songs or music. Most interviewees have listened to K-pop music or saw Korean TV dramas, and they think attracting people to visit Korea is an important factor. Some of the interviewees thought that South Korea and China have a short distance and it takes a 2–3 flight hour. Moreover, travelling to South Korea is very convenient for Chinese millennials. In conclusion, they perceive Korea as a desirable tourist destination.

### **Impact of Korean TV Drama Series**

Drama series have created a huge impact worldwide. The major elements include cultures, such as food preferences, languages and dress codes. Moreover, beautiful sceneries have raised the motivation of travellers. Many interviewees were impressed by the dress codes or grooming of Korean movie stars or idols. They would like to replicate the dress codes or makeup of their idols. They would also love to visit the attraction sites introduced in the movie for photo shooting. Most of the Korean images perceived by the interviewees were influenced by Korean TV dramas.

All the interviewees have heard of Korean TV dramas, including 'My Love from the Star'. This TV drama is popular among Chinese millennials. The fans' obsession does not stop by only viewing the drama itself but also spills over to their eating habits. For example, the lead character Cheon Song-yi, played by Jun Ji-hyun, ate fried chicken and drank beer in the Korean TV drama. This effect caused many Korean restaurants to see an increase in local customers, aside from native Koreans.

Most interviewees said that they would like to eat fried chicken and drink beer after they saw 'My Love from the Star'. Moreover, the showcase of locations in Korean dramas attracts people to visit the country as a tourism destination. They want to go to the same filming locations and capture a photo similar to

the actors in the drama. Most female interviewees want to buy the same Korean cosmetics after knowing that Korean TV stars use them. In conclusion, Korean TV dramas have social and economic impacts.

Therefore, these dramas have a strong cultural impact on millennials. The impacts are affected by the idols, dress codes, makeup and sceneries from a movie. After seeing a movie, they wish they can visit Korea and learn more about its culture.

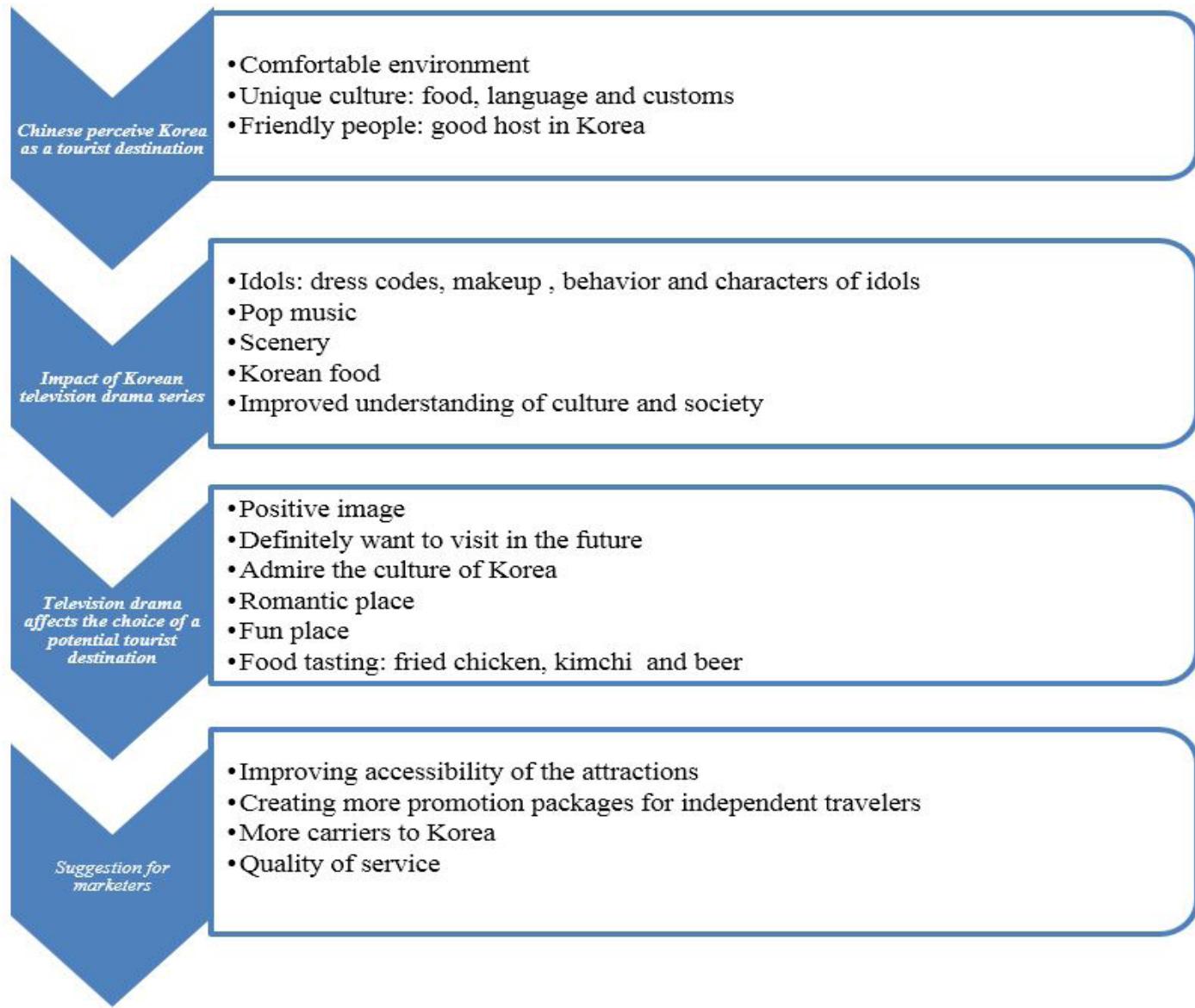
### **Korean TV Drama Affects the Choice of a Potential Tourist Destination**

Most interviewees think that after seeing Korean TV dramas, their impression on Korea will deepen. They will have a better understanding of some social and cultural characteristics of South Korea through the Korean TV dramas. This method is a good way to acquaint people with Korea as a tourist destination. Korean foods are also attractive for Chinese millennials. Some female interviewees perceive Korean TV drama stars as very beautiful, and they want to undergo plastic surgery in Korea. To sum up, watching Korean TV dramas causes a series of social and economic impacts and enhances Korea's image as a potential tourist destination. Most of the impacts are relatively positive for Chinese millennials. Their perceptions are affected by the TV dramas, and they believe Korea is a fun and romantic place to visit. Due to their admiration of Korean culture, they definitely want to visit Korea in the future.

### **Suggestions for Marketers to Develop Strategies in Promoting Film Tourism for Korea**

Most of the interviewees complained that planning a vacation to visit a film site attraction for photo shooting is difficult for them. They think that the film sites have poor accessibility. Thus, marketers need to rethink how to market the attractions adopted from the TV dramas. Many interviewees would like to plan for independent travels; however, because of accessibility issues, they might not be able to visit those sites and attractions. Thus, many travellers would like to sign up for group tours and visit other attractions. Furthermore, some interviewees complained that only a few carriers fly from South Korea to China. Therefore, Korean and Chinese airlines should reach an agreement that can open more air routes. They can provide at least five daily flights to Korea to attract more people to travel to Korea. Provided affordable packages in attracting the Chinese customers. The creation of more promotion packages would be the best idea to promote film tourism in Korea. One of the interviewees mentioned that the service quality was poor, especially in the delivery, and that Korea can improve their service quality for young travellers.

Interviewees commented on their perceived image and potential of the attractions, as shown in Figure 2.



**Figure 2:** Interviewees commented on their perceived image and potential of the attractions.

### Implication for Marketers

Overall, Chinese millennials highlighted that their perceptions of Korea came from TV dramas. The use of popular pop music and favourite celebrities can create a positive image for a destination. At the same time, travellers' visiting intention or decision is based on peer groups, accessibility and service quality of a destination. Thus, marketers need to understand the characteristics and buying behaviours of millennials and deliver the right message to this target group via social media. As this group of people are mostly educated, they are also in high demand in the tourism product

and service quality. Millennials also desire authenticity in their purchases of tourism products; therefore, marketers need to clearly highlight the attractions, so they will be accessible.

Technology is part of the millennial identity. This generation is the first to come of age with cable TV, the Internet and mobile phones. Thus, marketers can use technology and introduce more cultural and community features to this target group. Millennials are more likely to live from paycheque. They want the latest and best products and tend to make impulse purchases, but they must balance these wishes with the size of their wallets. To conclude,

marketers can provide an improved understanding of the right tourism product in accordance with the millennials' preferences. In the expectation/disconfirmation paradigm, consumers can develop expectations about a product (from their perceived image) before purchasing and compare the product's actual performance to the expectations after purchasing to determine satisfaction (or dissatisfaction) with their experience [50]. The study also confirms that the image of Korea adopted by TV dramas successfully stimulates the millennials to visit Korea, which they consider as an attractive tourist destination.

## Limitations and Conclusion

This study found that TV dramas successfully introduce Korean culture and create an impact on Chinese millennials. The positive image may drive millennials to visit Korea in the near future. In the study, the image of sceneries, foods and celebrities would motivate the Chinese millennials' perception of Korea as a potential tourist destination. Most of the TV dramas have taken place in good attractions, stimulating the millennials to visit these attractions. The film tourism also serves as a powerful tool by promoting Korea as a destination. Thus, the positive image would drive inspire customers to visit in the future.

Due to limited time, the result of this study was limited to 30 samples. In the future, the sample size can be extended, and a mixed-method approach can be adopted instead of the qualitative method. Future research may investigate how different genders or age groups perceive Korea as a travel destination. Furthermore, future research can compare young people across the Chinese border and see their perceptions of Korea after watching Korean TV dramas.

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