



Original Article

# A Study of Customers' Satisfaction with Korean Dramas in Vietnam

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Received 06 September 2019

Revised 20 December 2019; Accepted 26 December 2019

**Abstract:** Along with the spread of the Korean wave (Hallyu) since the 1990s, Korean dramas have become popular worldwide and became a global phenomenon. Entering the Vietnamese market from 1996, Korean dramas have been successful in both attracting audiences' interest and filmmakers' attention. In order to find out the reasons behind the success of Korean films this paper explored the factors affecting Vietnamese customers' satisfaction with Korean TV dramas. Based on the research of factors affecting customer satisfaction by different authors such as Philip Kotler, Oliver, McColl and Truong, the authors have built up a model to explore audience satisfaction with TV drama using 4 factors: actor (regarding popularity and appearance), script, music, and cultural images. To empirically test the hypotheses, 226 responses have been collected through an online questionnaire from November - December 2018 and tested by various statistical analyses, such as factor analysis, regression analysis, and ANOVA.

The findings have indicated that script, music, cultural images have a correlation with Vietnamese viewers' satisfaction with Korean dramas while actors do not affect the overall satisfaction. Based on the findings, the authors provide implications and offer suggestions to Vietnamese filmmakers on improving customer satisfaction, thereby contributing to the development of TV drama production in Vietnam.

*Keywords:* Korean drama, Korean wave (Hallyu), TV series, customer satisfaction, Vietnam.

## 1. Introduction

In the 1960s, South Korea was one of the poorest countries in the world and was virtually unknown in the global film industry. However, thanks to the strong will and appropriate

development policies, South Korea today is known to the world as not only one of the most developed economies but also the leading nation in exporting culture. The Korean wave (Hallyu), referring to the rise in the global popularity of South Korean culture since the 1990s, mainly driven by the widespread of K-dramas and K-pop, have become a popular phenomenon over the world. The best known K-dramas (Television series made in South

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<https://doi.org/10.25073/2588-1108/vnueab.4302>

Korea) such as “Winter Sonata”, “Jewel in the Palace”<sup>1</sup>, or “Boys over Flowers” have pioneered the Hallyu and achieved unprecedented worldwide recognition [1].

The interest in Korean culture has developed so rapidly in Asia that Korean films and television series have become a staple for viewers in the region.

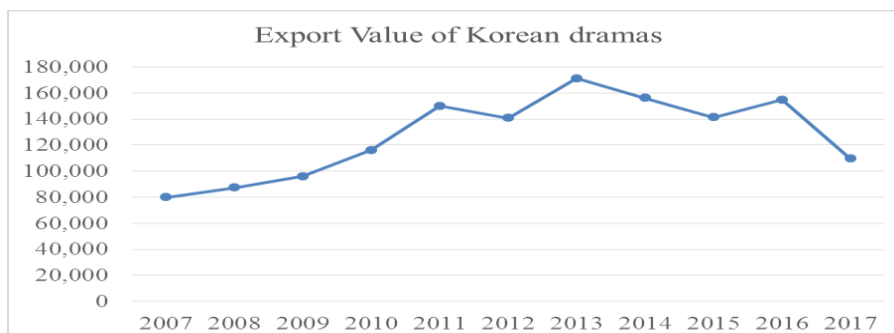


Figure 1. Export value of Korean dramas to the world (2007-2017).

Unit: 1,000 USD

Source: Compiled from the broadcasting industry survey report 2008-2018, Korea communications commission & ministry of science and KT [2].

Over a decade, Korean drama exports have grown sharply from US \$ 79,951.1 in 2003 to US \$ 109,449 in 2013. This rapid growth is the result of the Korean phenomenon, or more accurately, the Korean government’s policy of cultural development and cultural export. In particular, the film industry is put at a key position. This is the foundation for the appearance of many talented directors as well

as excellent film works. As a result, Korean films in general and dramas in particular quickly established their firm position, conquering both domestic and foreign markets.

The wave of Korean dramas has entered in East Asia with a focus on Japan and China then spread throughout Asia. After a decade, the Korean dramas have never seemed to lose its influence in this area.

Table 1. The situation of exporting Korean dramas in Asia in 2017  
Unit: 1,000 USD

Country	Episodes	Export Value	Average price/series	Ratio (%)
Japan	93,763	45,540	0.49	36.60
Taiwan	4,445	21,672	4.88	17.42
Vietnam	2,532	4,425.0	1.75	3.56
China	268	3,786	14.13	3.04
Thailand	1,998	2,224	1.11	1.79
Campuchia	560	474	0.85	0.38
Myanmar	2,740	1,270	0.46	1.02
The world	137,774	124,410	0.90	100

Source: Compiled from 2018 television industry survey, Korea broadcasting institute.

<sup>1</sup> A 2003 Korean drama first aired on MBC and one of the 10<sup>th</sup> highest rated Korean dramas of all time, known in Vietnam as “Nàng Dae Jang Geum”.

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1. Customer satisfaction

Kotler (2000) defines satisfaction as “a person’s feelings of pleasure or disappointment resulting from comparing a product’s perceived performance (or outcome) in relation to his or her expectations” [3].

According to Hansemark and Albinsson (2004), “satisfaction is an overall customer attitude towards a service provider, or an emotional reaction to the difference between what customers anticipate and what they receive, regarding the fulfillment of some need, goal or desire” [4].

Expectations here can be understood as what customers want and anticipate. It is based on personal needs, shopping experiences, feedback from relatives, friends, colleagues or advertised information from the sellers.

Based on the above definition, it can be understood that customer satisfaction is a three-stage process: (1) First, when the demand arises, customers form thoughts of how the demand is met to solve existing problems and form expectations about the quality that products/services can bring to them. (2) After that, the process of buying and using products/services would contribute to customers’ beliefs about the real effectiveness of the goods. (3) Finally, customer satisfaction is the result of comparing what they expected before purchasing goods with what they received after use.

In summary, a customer’s level of satisfaction depends on the difference between the received results and his/her expectations. This is classified into three (3) levels. If the actual result is lower than expected, the customer is not satisfied. If the actual result is commensurate with the expectations, the customer is satisfied. If the actual result is beyond expectations, the customer is very satisfied.

Customer satisfaction plays a vital role in the success of any business. The more competitive the environment is, the more

constantly business owners should strive to bring great customers’ experience in order to maintain a strong and healthy customer-supplier bonding. Customer satisfaction, therefore, is the key to purchase intentions and customer loyalty, because satisfaction creates customer loyalty. Oliver’s study (1980) stated that a high level of customer satisfaction leads to greater loyalty. Satisfaction also promotes positive word of mouth as highly satisfied customers are likely to recommend products/ services or share about the positive experience they have with the people they know [5]. Furthermore, satisfaction reduces the cost for businesses. Reichheld and Teal (2001) argues that assessing satisfaction is an effective tool to achieve strategic goals, such as customer retention which directly affects profit [6]. This should be taken into account because the cost to retain existing customers is less than the cost to acquire new customers. At the same time, businesses also spend less to serve an existing customer than a new one. Overall, satisfaction can improve business efficiency as satisfied customers are willing to purchase products at higher prices, and thus increase profits. Price is an important factor in the profit equation and is directly related to profitability [7]. If the price is not much higher than the average market price, customer satisfaction will bring a competitive advantage to the business.

### 2.2. Determinants of customer satisfaction with television drama

Television drama is a special product because it combines both tangible and intangible elements; therefore, the influencing factors of customer satisfaction are not only limited to the drama itself but they also involve external elements such as the drama service providers or the viewing environment. For example, unstable Internet connection, incorrect subtitles, local voice-overs or too many advertisements during broadcast time can sometimes have a substantial negative effect on customer satisfaction.

However, within the scope of this research, we decided to investigate only internal factors

that directly influence the quality of a drama. Based on previous researches on films and dramas, together with our own arguments, the audience satisfaction with a drama can be influenced by the following factors:

#### 2.2.1. Actors

##### Appearance

McColl and Truong (2013) claim that charisma and flawless looks have a positive influence on the audience [8]. Hogarth (2013) points out that the fact that Korean stars have good looks, nice costumes, and makeup styles in the film makes the audience feel attracted [9]. The actors are the representatives of the whole drama where they transform into imaginary characters to express the characters' personalities and emotions. Among a huge number of TV dramas, looks/visuals can become a unique selling point in the audience's drama selection process. In addition to content, the number of people who watch dramas due to handsome actors or fashionable trends is significant. Actors or the characters they play in a TV series are likely to become a fashion icon for audiences, especially women.

##### Reputation

Some studies have shown the influence of celebrities on consumers' attitude and behavior. According to Lee (2015), the personal attractiveness and reputation of Korean stars get many Asian consumers in front of the television; as a result, their reputation is proved to affect satisfaction [10]. Their personal reputation is considered to be able to bring in more viewers because fans often have a positive attitude when it comes to their stars or idols. As a result, satisfaction with the drama would increase because the audience feels connected with their idols.

#### 2.2.2. Script

Yang and Zhong (2016) proved that moral education and plot have an influence on film attractiveness [11]. In particular, mind purification and inspiration belong to the moral education aspect; meanwhile, plot refers to the logic of the film. It can be said that the audience sees the film with both their heart and brain, for that reason, to really improve their satisfaction,

a film must satisfy them both emotionally and rationally. In addition, audience satisfaction is determined primarily through subjective feelings perceived by the heart and soul, rather than external effects.

This proves that most audiences appreciate inspirational life lessons in a film. This can also apply to a drama series. Humane values in a drama are reflected in the ability to reflect slices of life and spread meaningful messages. A TV series that can convey deep meaning, arouse good spiritual values, inspire and motivate self-improvement will surely be relatable, and therefore, has a higher possibility to satisfy viewers.

Additionally, viewers also evaluate a film through the logic of the plot - whether a problem is raised and solved reasonably and persuasively. Especially for a drama, it is the logic that draws viewers from one episode to another and keeps them engaged until the end. Any details which do not make sense or cause confusion can lead to negative reactions from the audience.

Nevertheless, the appeal of a drama also lies in unexpected plot twists. The climax, if successfully exploited, can immensely boost viewer satisfaction level. This can be easily seen when a dramatic scene or episode in a series often has a higher rating than the rest.

#### 2.2.3. Cultural image

The definition of "culture" varies greatly depending on the field of study, however, "culture" in our study includes non-material aspects such as languages, ideas, values and material aspects such as houses, clothing, vehicles, etc.

Cultural values were built into viewers' mind through images of objects, human beings and even advertisements appearing in the film. For example, Mercedes Benz partially reflects German culture through features such as high quality, safety, high technology, and good organization. In the case of drama, audiences have access to the culture of the country of origin and get a feel of the daily life of the local people through the way they think, dress or behave. In addition, how the people in the

drama behave and treat one another provides viewers with access to cultural perspectives on relationships or values appreciated in society. From this, viewers can see the differences and similarities with their own cultures or countries.

Furthermore, watching dramas also encourages viewers to learn about other cultures. The feeling of this new experience makes viewers excited to discover more. According to Bae and Lee (2004), the phrase "Entertainment - Education" refers to the influence of media broadcast on the change in individual behavior as well as on social change [12]. Hasegawa's study (2005) conducted an interview with 58 Japanese audiences and showed that through watching dramas, viewers discovered similarities as well as differences between Japan and Korea [13]. From that, they developed a good impression towards Koreans and South Korea in general. Besides, the psychological distance with Koreans was also narrowed and Japanese viewers even became interested in Korean culture, history, and Japan-Korea relations.

Thus, in addition to cognitive effects, dramas also have an influence on hobbies, lifestyle or even one's viewpoint. If viewers perceive the change to be positive, their overall satisfaction with the drama may increasingly improve.

#### 2.2.4. Music

Music can serve several purposes that are either supportive of the emotional side of the TV series or help enhance the storytelling. It is not only helpful but essential for any producer to keep the music in mind when planning and shooting a drama. Thanks to soundtracks, emotional states and lives of the characters become more lively, realistic and deeply connecting for the viewers.

According to Ball, author of *The Music Instinct* (2012), soundtracks can produce the same reaction in us whether the music is good or bad [14]. "Film composers know that and use it to shortcut the logical part of our brain and get straight to the emotional centres". Kracauer (1960) points out the if there was no music, the scenes would lose its vitality [15].

Cohen (1999) identified eight functions of film music: contributing to the narrative's continuity, the emotional meaning of events, induction of mood, creation, activation of memory, maintenance of arousal, global attention, associated sense of reality, and finally, aesthetic experience [16].

In many cases, the music becomes the characters' second voice, effectively replacing lines. This is especially true to any TV series due to their long story with more dramatic twists and emotional highlights. Without music, romantic scenes would be dry while action scenes may become less dramatic, and therefore, easily fade away. Indeed, both visual and sound elements can exist independently, but their combination is indisputably harmonious. A drama series appears more beautiful, more emotional, and more multi-dimensional thanks to the music. On the other hand, the music becomes more vivid and symbolic thanks to the visual illustration of the drama. Music itself has the ability to awaken viewers' senses, allowing the brain to reproduce impressive scenes.

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1. Research model and hypothesis

Based on the analysis above, the research model was as follows:

According to the model, we made the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis H1: The perception of actors is positively related to customer satisfaction with dramas.

Hypothesis H2: The perception of script is positively related to customer satisfaction with dramas.

Hypothesis H3: The perception of music is positively related to customer satisfaction with dramas.

Hypothesis H4: The perception of cultural images is positively related to customer satisfaction with dramas.

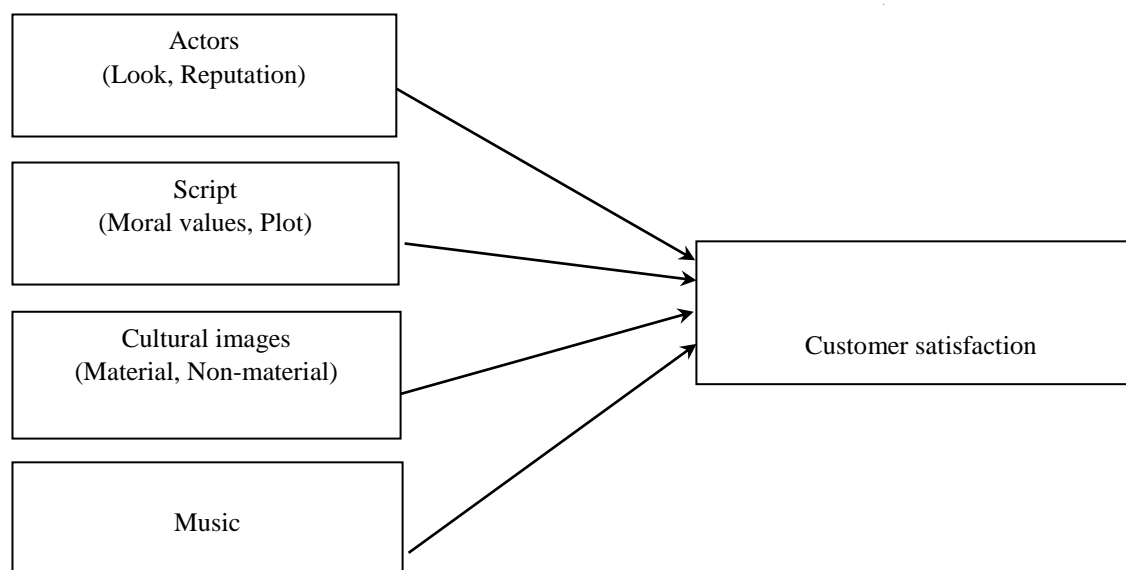


Figure 1. Model of customer consumer satisfaction with dramas.

### 3.2. Measurement instruments

Based on the research model, we designed a detailed questionnaire with 35 questions, divided into 3 parts:

Part I (5 questions): Basic information about survey participants: gender, age, educational level, occupation and place of residence.

Part II (6 questions): Information about habits and interests in watching Korean dramas such as frequency, time, channels, reasons for liking/disliking Korean dramas.

Part III (24 questions): There were 15 quantitative questions related to 4 factors affecting customer satisfaction and 3 questions about overall satisfaction level with Korean dramas. Questions were designed according to the Likert scale with 5 levels:

- 1: Strongly disagree
- 2: Disagree
- 3: Neutral
- 4: Agree
- 5: Strongly agree

In addition to 18 quantitative questions, there were 6 multiple choice questions about favorite actors and favorite dramas based on 3 aspects: script, cultural images, and music. We

selected multiple choices based on the attraction and popularity of Korean dramas in Vietnam, thereby getting a better insight into the taste of Vietnamese consumers.

The survey was conducted from November 2018 to December 2018 by sharing an online Google form questionnaire on the authors' personal Facebook of more than 50,000 followers and several drama-related Facebook pages.

We collected a total of 226 samples, all of which were valid. The collected data was analyzed through the Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS 20.0) to test the scale and the relevance of the theoretical model. Specifically, we evaluated the reliability of the scale through Cronbach's Alpha, EFA, Pearson correlation coefficient and regression analysis.

The determinants of consumer satisfaction with drama were as follows:

- Actor: measured by 4 observed variables from A1 to A4
- Script: measured by 4 observed variables from S1 to S4
- Music: measured by 3 observed variables from M1 to M3

- Cultural image: measured by 4 observed variables from C1 to C4

These scales would be verified through Cronbach's Alpha coefficient to remove irrelevant variables. The variable whose corrected item-total correlation is less than 0.3 will be eliminated. The scale is selected when

Cronbach's Alpha is greater than 0.6 (Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994).

### 3.3. Sampling and data analysis

The research sample could be described as following:

Table 3. Sample's characteristics by criteria

Age		Gender		Education level		Occupation		Place	
< 21	$\frac{57}{(25.2\%)}$	Male	$\frac{18}{(8.0\%)}$	High school	$\frac{3}{(1.3\%)}$	Businessman	$\frac{3}{(1.3\%)}$	Bac Giang	$\frac{2}{(0.9\%)}$
21-30	$\frac{119}{(52.7\%)}$	Female	$\frac{207}{(91.6\%)}$	University/ College	$\frac{185}{(81.9\%)}$	Teacher/ Professor	$\frac{2}{(0.9\%)}$	Da Nang	$\frac{4}{(1.8\%)}$
31-40	$\frac{25}{(11.1\%)}$	Other	$\frac{1}{(0.4\%)}$	Graduate school	$\frac{38}{(16.8\%)}$	Student	$\frac{115}{(50.9\%)}$	Ha Noi	$\frac{193}{(85.4\%)}$
41-50	$\frac{8}{(3.5\%)}$					Freelancer	$\frac{13}{(5.8\%)}$	Ho Chi Minh	$\frac{13}{(5.8\%)}$
51-60	$\frac{17}{(7.5\%)}$					Office worker	$\frac{92}{(40.7\%)}$	Lao Cai	$\frac{1}{(0.4\%)}$
						Homemaker	$\frac{1}{(0.4\%)}$	Seoul (Korea)	$\frac{10}{(4.4\%)}$
								Soc Trang	$\frac{1}{(0.4\%)}$
								Thai Binh	$\frac{1}{(0.4\%)}$
								Vinh Phuc	$\frac{1}{(0.4\%)}$
Total							226 (100%)		

Out of 226 respondents, 91.6% were female and only 0.4% were male. Regarding the age, 25.2% were under 21; 57.7% were between the ages of 21-30; 11.1% were in the 31-40 age group; 3.5% were in the age group 41-50, and about 7.5% were more than 51 years old. Regarding education level, the majority were University/College students and Graduate school students, accounting for 81.9% and 16.8%, respectively; and high school students followed with only 1.3%. In terms of occupation, 50.9% of the survey participants were students while 40.7%

were office workers. Meanwhile, the percentages of freelancers, businessmen, teachers, homemakers were 5.8%, 1.3%, 0.9% and 0.4%, respectively. Regarding living places, people living in Hanoi accounted for the highest proportion with 85.4%. The rest was distributed into other options with a considerably low ratio. In summary, the representative sample for Vietnamese consumers was female with a relatively high educational level, aged from 18-30 years old, living in Hanoi, and most were students and office workers.

Table 4. Cronbach's Alpha output

No.	Variable	Scale mean if item deleted	Scale variance if item deleted	Corrected item-total correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if item deleted
Actor (Cronbach's Alpha = 0,682)					
1	A1	10,97	5,030	0,532	0,591
	A2	11,02	4,991	0,506	0,600
	A3	12,21	4,397	0,466	0,615
	A4	11,78	3,986	0,423	0,668
Script (Cronbach's Alpha = 0,847)					
2	S1	10,26	5,696	0,721	0,792
	S2	10,45	5,413	0,711	0,794
	S3	10,44	5,679	0,672	0,811
	S4	10,38	5,322	0,644	0,827
Music (Cronbach's Alpha = 0,763)					
3	M1	8,15	2,827	0,633	0,647
	M2	8,14	2,887	0,624	0,658
	M3	8,28	2,398	0,555	0,753
Cultural image (Cronbach's Alpha = 0,848)					
4	C1	11,73	5,178	0,715	0,800
	C2	12,00	4,680	0,717	0,794
	C3	12,27	4,849	0,692	0,805
	C4	11,91	4,801	0,636	0,832
Overall satisfaction (Cronbach's Alpha = 0,9)					
5	OS1	7,92	3,740	0,760	0,893
	OS2	7,69	3,191	0,830	0,832
	OS3	7,75	3,183	0,822	0,839

In the first analysis, Cronbach's Alpha coefficients of all scales were greater than 0.6. Also, the corrected item-total correlation coefficients of all observed variables were greater than 0.3. Therefore, all observed variables were accepted and used for further analysis. This output of Cronbach's Alpha test showed that all 18 observed variables were satisfactory to be tested in the Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA).

### 3.4. Analyzing exploratory factor

As shown in Table 5, all criteria were satisfied when compared to the conditions, which proved that the data used for factor analysis was perfectly relevant.

It can be seen that all 15 observed variables had factor loading greater than 0.5 and were divided into 4 components as the initial scales.

Table 5. EFA output for the independent variables

Criterion	Result	In comparison with the condition
Sig. in Bartlett test	0,000	$0,000 < 0,05$
KMO coefficient	0,849	$0,5 < 0,849 < 1$
Cumulative of Variance	66,277%	$66,277\% > 50\%$
Eigenvalues	1,184	$1,184 > 1$



Table 6. Rotated component matrix

Component	Variable	Component			
		1	2	3	4
Script	S3	.788			
	S1	.783			
	S4	.760			
	S2	.750			
Culture images	C3		.803		
	C2		.791		
	C1		.743		
	C4		.687		
Drama music	M1			.773	
	M3			.759	
	M2			.756	
Actors	A1				.740
	A3				.718
	A2				.701
	A4				.611

Table 7. EFA for the dependent variable

Criterion	Result	In comparison with the condition
Sig. in Bartlett test	0,000	0,000 < 0,05
KMO coefficient	0,742	0,5 < 0,742 < 1
Cumulative of Variance	83,381%	83,381% > 50%
Eigenvalues	2,501	2,501 > 1

According to the above table, all of the coefficients satisfied conditions in the EFA. After the EFA, 4 factors that would continue to be tested in the model were Actors (A), Script (S), Music (M) and Cultural images (C). The value of each component was the average of its observed variables (Table 8).

Pearson correlation coefficient between “Overall satisfaction” and “Actors”, “Script”,

“Music”, “Cultural images” was 0.427, 0.634; 0.591; 0.606, respectively. In addition, the sig values were equal to 0, less than 0.05. Therefore, all pairs of variables were correlated, and Pearson coefficients were statistically significant.

### 3.5. Testing research hypotheses

Testing the relevance of the model (Table 9):

Table 8. Correlation output

		Actors	Script	Music	Cultural images	Overall satisfaction
Actors	Pearson Correlation	1	0,382**	0,397**	0,408**	0,427**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000
Script	Pearson Correlation	0,382**	1	0,406**	0,564**	0,634**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,000		0,000	0,000	0,000

Music	Pearson Correlation	0,397**	0,406**	1	0,492**	0,591**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,000	0,000		0,000	0,000
Cultural images	Pearson Correlation	0,408**	0,564**	0,492**	1	0,606**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,000	0,000	0,000		0,000
Overall satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	0,427**	0,634**	0,591**	0,606**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000	

Table 9. Model summary

Model	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	0,758	0,574	0,566	0,58999	2,110

R<sup>2</sup> coefficient reflects dependent variables' variation explained by independent variables. In this study, the adjusted R<sup>2</sup> coefficient was used to assess more closely the relevance of the multivariate linear regression model. The result revealed that the adjusted R<sup>2</sup> coefficient was

56.6%, which meant 56.6% of the variation of the "Satisfaction" variable was explained by the independent variables; the remaining 43.4% was due to errors, including measurement errors and the effect of other variables outside the model.

Table 10. ANOVA

	Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	103,636	4	25,909	74,434	0,000
	Residual	76,926	221	0,348		
	Total	180,562	225			

The F-test used in the variance analysis was to test the hypotheses about the relevance of the overall linear regression model. As results of

ANOVA analysis showed that Sig = 0.000, the regression model of the study was appropriate.

Testing research hypotheses:

Table 11. Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
Constant	-0,495	0,279		-1,777	0,077		
A	0,104	0,066	0,079	1,565	0,119	0,761	1,314
1 S	0,414	0,064	0,353	6,438	0,000	0,642	1,558
M	0,352	0,061	0,306	5,821	0,000	0,698	1,432
C	0,280	0,072	0,224	3,898	0,000	0,582	1,719

The regression coefficients are divided into two kinds: (1) unstandardized estimates and (2) standardized estimates. With the unstandardized regression coefficients (the symbol is B in

SPSS), their value depends on the scale, therefore, it is not used to compare the influence of independent variables on the dependent variable in a model. Standardized

regression coefficients (the symbol is Beta in SPSS) are standardized coefficients that should be used to evaluate the relationship among variables.

The variance inflation factors (VIF) of all variables were less than 2, which confirmed that there was no multicollinearity phenomenon.

The study used a significance level of 5% to test hypotheses in correlation and regression analysis. The regression result showed that the Beta coefficient of the “Actors” variable was 0.079 with a sig value of 1.119 > 0.05. This meant that overall satisfaction with Korean

dramas was not proved to be affected by actors in this study. Meanwhile, the sig value of each of the remaining variable was equal to 0,000 < 0.05, indicating that these variables had an influence on viewer satisfaction with Korean dramas.

Thus, among 4 independent variables included in the initial regression model, there were 3 variables positively related to the dependent variable. Standardized regression equation of the model was as follows:

$$OS = 0,353 S + 0,306 M + 0,224 C$$

Table 12. Result of testing hypotheses

Hypothesis	Result	Beta	Sig
H1: The perception of actors is positively related to customer satisfaction with dramas.	Reject	0,079	0,119
H2: The perception of script is positively related to customer satisfaction with dramas.	Accept	0,353	0,000
H3: The perception of music is positively related to customer satisfaction with dramas.	Accept	0,306	0,000
H4: The perception of cultural images is positively related to customer satisfaction with dramas.	Accept	0,224	0,000

From the hypotheses and data analysis, the final research model was summarized as Figure 2.

To summarize, the study determined 3 factors influencing the satisfaction of Vietnamese consumers with Korean dramas. They are “Script”, “Music” and “Cultural images”. Only the “Actors” variable was eliminated from the model.

In particular, “Script” with the Beta coefficient = 0.353 is the most influential factor in Vietnamese consumers’ satisfaction (Figure 2).

Ceteris paribus, if the perception of the script increases by 1 unit, then the overall satisfaction with the drama increases by 0.353 units. In addition, according to the survey result, Vietnamese viewers agreed that “Reply 1988”<sup>2</sup> was the best script among many Korean dramas.

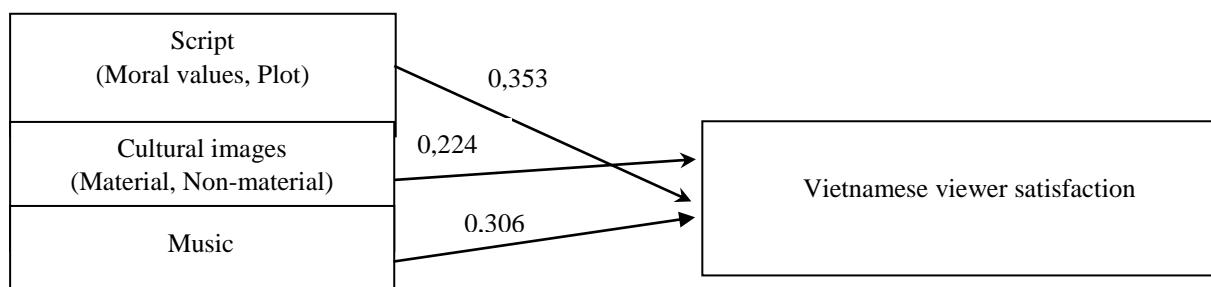


Figure 2. The result of the research model.

<sup>2</sup> A South Korean TV series first broadcasted from November 6<sup>th</sup>, 2015 on tvN. It has become the second highest rated drama in Korean cable TV history until now.

Indeed, during the broadcast of “Reply 1988”, the audience was looking forward to each episode and made a lot of predictions about the ending. An intriguing, touching and flexible script was undeniably one of the key factors that have kept the audience engaged and created a resounding success for the series. With creativity and perseverance, “Reply 1988” filmmakers managed to bring the audience back to the past with nostalgic scenes and old music.

With  $\beta = 0.306$ , the second most important factor is “Music”. *Ceteris paribus*, if the perception of drama music increases by 1 unit, the satisfaction increases by 0.306 units. Besides, the survey data pointed out that the most popular drama music belonged to “Descendants of the Sun”<sup>3</sup>. In fact, according to The Korean Times, the soundtrack of the series swept the top spots in major local music charts such as MelOn, Genie Music, Naver Music, Bugs Music, Monkey3 and Soribada [17]. In addition, The Korea Herald reported that preorders for the soundtrack album surpassed the 10,000 mark on March 18th, 2016, and according to Yonhap News, the original soundtrack eventually sold over 60,000 copies [18]. The soundtrack of “Descendants of the Sun” has complemented the drama perfectly and contributed to its popularity worldwide.

Next, “Cultural images”, whose  $\beta$  was 0.024, is the least influential factor in the overall satisfaction. *Ceteris paribus*, if the perception of cultural images increases by 1 point, the satisfaction with the drama also increases by 0.224 points. The survey result indicated that the audience enjoyed the cultural images in “Jewel in the Palace” most. For example, the drama rekindled public interest in traditional Korean cuisine, both locally and abroad. “Jewel in the Palace” showcases the period detail of Joseon gastronomic culture, giving international prominence to Korean cuisine and culture. As one of the pioneers of

Korean waves, the drama has been exported to over 90 countries and greatly contributed to improving Korea’s image worldwide.

Although in this study, actors (regarding their popularity and appearance) are not proved to affect the satisfaction of Vietnamese viewers. However, this element is undeniably one of the outstanding strengths of K-dramas. The survey data showed that actress Song Hye Kyo<sup>4</sup> and actor Song Joong Ki<sup>5</sup> were loved the most. The success of “Descendants of the Sun” in 2016 is the most obvious evidence for the attraction of the couple, reestablishing both of them as a leader of the Hallyu. Even before “Descendants of the Sun” was aired, the cooperation between Song Hye Kyo and Song Joong Ki had drawn a great deal of attention and had been highly anticipated among citizens. Later, both Song Hye Kyo and Song Joong Ki topped popularity polls in Asia and won Daesang (Grand Prize), the highest award at the 2016 KBS Drama Awards.

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<sup>3</sup> A South Korean soap opera first aired from February 24<sup>th</sup>, 2016 on KBS 2. The series was a major hit worldwide, winning the Grand Prize in television at the 52<sup>nd</sup> Baeksang Arts Awards.

<sup>4</sup> Song Hye Kyo (born in 1981): A top South Korean actress starring in many famous dramas such as “Autumn in My Heart” (2000), “Full House” (2004), “That winter, the Wind Blows” (2013).

<sup>5</sup> Song Joong Ki (born in 1985): A South Korean actor starring in the movie “A Werewolf Boy” (2012) and the hit drama “Descendants of the Sun” which bolstered his status as a top Hallyu star.

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