

## HOW GENERATION Z IN MANADO PERSPECTIVE ON PRODUCT PLACEMENT ON KOREAN DRAMA

### PERSPEKTIF GENERASI Z DI MANADO TERHADAP PRODUCT PLACEMENT PADA DRAMA KOREA

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**Abstract:** This study aims to explore the perspectives of generation Z in Manado regarding product placement in Korean drama. This research applies qualitative approach, using surveys and in-dept interview with generation Z in Manado. The research study's sample consists of 20 participants of generation Z who are born between 1997 to 2012 that lived in Manado, who have been watched Korean drama at least two dramas a month. The findings of the research using the interview approach yielded six indicators of product placement that affect the perspective of generation Z in Manado on product placement on Korean drama. Awareness, interest, plot placement, personal, perceived value, and brand image.

**Keyword:** Product Placement, Awareness Interest, Plot Placement, Personal, Perceived Value, Brand Image

**Abstrak:** Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi perspektif generasi Z di Manado mengenai product placement dalam drama Korea. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode survei dan wawancara mendalam terhadap generasi Z di Manado. Sampel penelitian ini terdiri dari 20 partisipan generasi Z yang lahir antara tahun 1997 hingga 2012 yang tinggal di Manado, yang pernah menonton drama Korea minimal dua kali dalam sebulan. Temuan dari penelitian yang menggunakan pendekatan wawancara ini menghasilkan enam indikator product placement yang mempengaruhi cara pandang generasi Z di Manado terhadap product placement drama Korea. Kesadaran, ketertarikan, penempatan plot, personal, nilai yang dirasakan, dan citra merek.

**Kata Kunci:** Penempatan Produk, Kesadaran, Ketertarikan, Penempatan Plot, Personal, Nilai Yang Dirasakan, Citra Merek

## INTRODUCTION

### Research Background

The current Korean Wave is an influential phenomenon today. Korean Wave or Hallyu describe the appeal of Korean entertainment and culture abroad. Korean Wave includes an extensive range of genres, including music, dramas, movies, cuisine, literature, cosmetics, and even language. According to the Korean.net Culture and Arts website, the hallyu phenomena first emerged in the mid-1990s following the establishment of diplomatic relations between Korea and China in 1992. Hallyu itself is a Chinese term which means "Korean Wave". After that, Korean pop music, known as K-Pop and Korean TV dramas or K-Dramas, was immediately popular among the Chinese people. Until now the Korean Wave is getting more and more influential and attracts many fans from all over the world. Since first appearing in the global market in the mid-2000s, the Korean Wave has attracted a large number of fans from Southeast Asia and continues to spread to Europe and almost all over the world.

Product placement in Korean dramas represents a multifaceted and evolving marketing strategy. Product placement in Korean dramas is a sophisticated and dynamic marketing strategy that leverages the emotional and cultural influence of K-dramas. However, careful planning, cultural sensitivity, and balanced approach are essential to ensuring the success and sustainability of product placement in K-dramas. As the landscape of media and marketing continues to evolve, innovative strategies and ethical consideration will play a crucial role in shaping the

future of product placement in this influential entertainment medium. However, maintaining a balance between commercial interests and storytelling integrity remains crucial for the continued success of this marketing approach.

Although encouraging consumers to purchase the featured product is the ultimate goal of product placement, there are numerous other factors that contribute to achieving this objective. Product placement, according to Kamleitner and Jyote (2013), is the “purposeful incorporation of brands into editorial content”. The numerous objectives of product placement in the entertainment sector are outlined by Williams et al. (2011). Increasing brand awareness, consumer memory, and recall are some of the objectives, along with “achieving prominent audience exposure, visibility, attention, and interest. The promotion of consumers’ attitudes regarding the practice of brand placement and the various product placement vehicles. Modifying consumers’ attitudes or overall evaluation of the brand; opinions and brand placements and establishing immediate awareness in the media vehicle and at the moment of purchase”.

Generation Z, commonly referred to as Gen Z, includes individuals born roughly between 1997 and 2012. This generation is the first to grow up with the internet and digital technology from young age, profoundly shaping their behaviors, preferences, and values. Generation Z has grown up with the internet and digital technology, making them highly adept at navigating online environments. They are accustomed to having information often using YouTube, Google, and other online resources for learning. They value visual content and prefer platforms like TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube for information and entertainment. This generation values diversity, inclusivity, and social justice. They are more likely to support brands that demonstrate commitment to these values. Streaming services like Netflix, Viu, and Disney+ are more popular for generation Z than traditional TV, they are often skeptical of traditional advertising but can be highly receptive to well-integrated product placement, especially in digital and social media contexts, they prefer short-form, engaging content that can be consumed quickly, explaining the popularity of TikTok and Instagram Stories. Generation Z reshaping the consumer landscape with their digital-first mindset, value-driven purchasing habits, and demand for authenticity and inclusivity. Brands that can adapt to these preferences and engage Gen Z through innovative, transparent, and interactive approaches.

People who watched Korean dramas often sees the actors and actresses wear a branded product like clothes and makeup, eating in a restaurant and also others product such as home furnishing, kitchen furniture and also car they used. All of these things are a part of product placement. Product placement is the practice of featuring a product or brand within a TV show or movies, often in a way that is integrated into the storyline or setting. This type of advertising is highly effective because it blends seamlessly into the content, making it less intrusive than other ads. Product placement had its beginning in the nineteenth century.

The goal of product placement is to increase brand awareness, improve brand image, and ultimately drive sales, but to do this, need to have a clear understanding of the role product placement in advertising. This study aims to investigate the perspectives of Generation Z in Manado regarding product placement in Korean dramas, a popular form of entertainment that has increasingly captured the attention of young audiences worldwide, including Indonesia. With the rise of streaming platforms and digital media, Korean drama has become cultural phenomenon, and embedded use of product placement within these dramas has emerged as an innovative marketing strategy.

### **Research Objective**

To analyze how product placement affect generation Z perspective on Korean drama.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Marketing**

Kotler and Keller (2012) assert that marketing’s goals are to identify and meet society and human requirements. The research, production, and distribution of values to fulfill the needs of a target market while turning a profit are all aspects of marketing. Unmet demands and desires are identified by the marketing sector. It defines, measures, and qualifies the scope of the designated market as well as the potential for profit. It determines the market categories that the company can best serve, then designs and markets the most suitable products and services for the targeted audience.

### **Product Placement**

Product placement in Korean dramas has been a popular marketing strategy for both domestic and international brands. It is believed to be an effective tool for attracting audience. Throughout the broadcast, product placements are used, addressed, or discussed in a way that will positively influence viewers’ opinions of the promoted brand. In

program sponsorship, branded entertainment, or product, package, signage, or other trademark items is put into and used contextually in a film, television, or other media vehicle for commercial objectives.

### Empirical Studies

Guennemann and Cho (2014) (2014) measured awareness, familiarity, image, and purchase intention of brands placed in various media types. In particular, this study measures 1) how brand awareness from product placement affects brand image, 2) how brand familiarity from product placement affects brand image, 3) how brand image affects purchase intention, and 4) the effects of brand awareness and familiarity based on different media types. This study applied a survey to collect data and used quantitative analyses to test hypotheses. The study provides managerial implications for the effectiveness of product placements by media types.

Khan et al. (2016) aimed to find relation between Product Placement, Consumer Perception towards ethics of Product Placement, Consumer Recognition with Program Celebrity that leads to Consumer Purchase Intention. Methodology/Sampling The study is based on 600 consumers who take part in the study and Quantitative Research methods are used to analyze the results. SPSS 20.0 is used for the purpose of data analysis in this study. The results showed that there is a positive relationship between these variables Product Placement, Consumer Perception towards ethics of Product Placement, Consumer Recognition with Program Celebrity that leads to Consumer Purchase Intention and Consumer Purchase Intention.

Jin and Villegas (2007) aimed to understand the effect that individual characteristics have on consumer advertising processing under high- and low-interactivity circumstances on the Web. Tests on the relationship between individual differences and advertising responses form the basis of this empirical study on the Web. The results indicated that consumers have a higher tendency to avoid or experience ambivalence about Internet advertisements under low-interactivity circumstances, and attitudinal ambivalence lead to avoidance when responding to advertisements on the Internet. Personality variables are the main factors in consumer decision-making behaviors and Internet characteristics, such as levels of interactivity, can greatly influence the effectiveness of advertising in online environments. Advertising credibility could influence people's consumer attitudes, beliefs, or behaviors over time on the Web.

## RESEARCH METHOD

### Research Approach

Johnston and Vanderstoep (2009) approach is the design of procedures and plans that start from the hypothesis stage that continues to collect data, analysis and conclusion. Indeed, the research approach has been classified into two approaches, namely analysis and data collection. This research is using qualitative research method. Qualitative approach is an approach that creates a picture of the events studied descriptively and narratively. Kothari (2004), qualitative research is especially important in behavioral science, which aims to understand the underlying reasons of human behavior. The objective of the qualitative research methodology is the subjective assessment of attitudes, views, and behavior.

### Population, Sample, and Sampling Technique

The population in this research is generation Z in Manado who watched Korean drama at least two Korean drama a month. The sample size of this research is 20 respondents to interview. And the sample method that can be used for this research is Purposive Sampling.

### Data Collection Method

Primary data collection was employed to gather the data through interviews with the informants. In qualitative research, data collection approach includes in-depth interview, document analysis, observation, and audiovisual materials analysis (Creswell, 2012).

### Operational Definition and Measurement of Research Variables

**Table 1. Definition of Research Variables**

Variable	Definition	Indicators
Product Placement	Marketing strategies that used by marketers in which characters in fictional play, movie,	1. Awareness 2. Interest 3. Plot Placement



Data Analysis Method

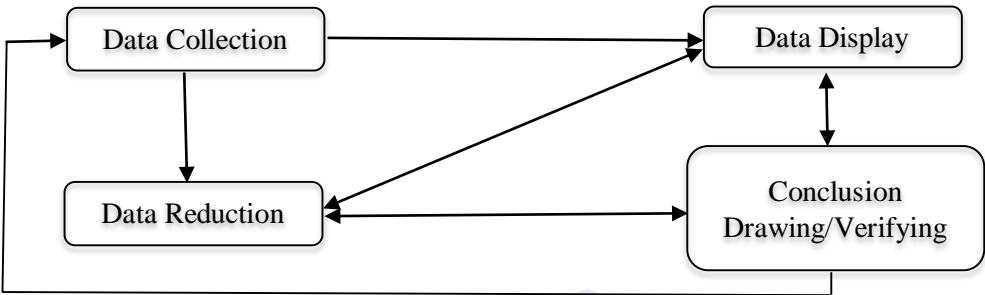


Figure 1. Data Analysis Method  
Source: Miles and Huberman (1994)

According to Miles and Huberman (1994) stated that in qualitative data analysis, actions are carried out interactively and in a continuously until the data is saturated. Hair et al. (2007) state that there are several steps in qualitative data analysis, such as:

1. Data Collection. It is the process where the researcher find information or data from any kind of source such as books, internet website and gather deeper information from the informant.
2. Data Reduction. Involves selecting, simplifying and transforming the data to make it more manageable and understandable.
3. Data Display. Helps qualitative researches to organize information and view it in a way that enables them to identify linkages and develop explanations that relate their findings to existing theories
4. Drawing and Verifying Conclusion. Drawing conclusion involves deciding what the identified themes and patterns and how they help to answer the research question. Verification involves checking and rechecking the data ensure the initial conclusions are realistic, supportable and valid.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result  
Interview Result

The result contains explanation in detail about the information that has been gained from the informants through in-depth content analysis. In this research, there are 20 respondents that has become the research object. This research takes generation Z born in 1997-2004 (IDN Times, 2024) who has purchasing power in Manado who watched Korean dramas; time of watching Korean dramas at least 2 Korean drama in 1 month thus creating a better sampling for this research.

Table 2. Coding Categorization

Indicators	Awareness	Interest	Plot Placement
Personal	20 informants had heard about product placement before.	All the informants felt that Korean dramas were more interesting to them than other types of dramas.	15 informants felt that product placement contributed to enhancing their viewing experience, for them, the presence of product placement helped them understand the products displayed.
	6 of the informants had learned about product placement through one of the courses in their major in college.	The storyline, genre and cast in Korean dramas are the main factors that make informants interested in Korean dramas.	
Perceived Value	15 informants felt that product placement	There are various things that make products interesting to	5 people felt that product placement did not really

	influenced their perception of product value.	informants, the main thing is the benefits and usefulness of the product, the appearance as well as the packaging of the product and the actors who use the product and how they incorporate the product into the story so that it can look natural with good visualization.	contribute to their viewing experience. For them, product placement is just part of the promotion and it is not the main thing, two of them felt that if product placement is shown occasionally, it is not a problem but if it is too often then it would be very disruptive and it can ruin the essence of the story.
Brand Image	Benefits and quality of a product are the main factors for them in choosing a product to buy. 10 of the informants tend to buy a product when an actor they like promotes the product. 19 informants agreed that product placement improves the image of brand displayed, because by displaying the brands in Korean dramas, the brand can be seen by many people from various countries so that the product can become better known and the products used by the actors can attract attention.	17 out of 20 informants agreed that interest affect them in choosing a product, especially when their favorite actors use the product that is used as a product placement directly, it affects their interest of the product. The other 3 felt that it did not affect them much.	All informants have a good view of the brand used as product placement, according to them brand used is a brand that already has already well-known and not only international brands are used but there are also local brands. There are three informants who feel the brand used is expensive but if look at the benefits of the product then it can be understood.

## Discussion

The result of this study indicate that Product Placement has an impact in generation z in Manado's perspective on Korean drama. Three indicators of product placement which are awareness, interest and plot placement have different impacts on three indicators of product placement, which are personal, perceived value and brand image. Each respondent gave their own reasons on how the 3 indicators can affect their perspective of product placement in Korean drama.

### Awareness and Product Placement

Awareness refers to the extent to which consumers are familiar with a brand, product, or service. It is a critical first step in the consumer decision making process. Awareness often correlates with perceived credibility. From the interviews, all the informants are familiar with product placement, six of the informants learned product placement through academic courses and fourteen others learned about product placement through personal experiences. Informants noted that the visual representation and practical use of products in scenes are compelling for them. Informants feel more aware and interested in products when they see them used in relatable context within the dramas, informants prefer product placement that feel seamless and not forced, enhancing the storytelling rather than detracting from it. As said by informant 2 when the actors demonstrate the products and show the benefits of it for example, in a scene of a drama where the actor who is working is assigned as one of the employees in a company, when the actor feels tired and finally starts to get sleepy the actor makes a coffee drink which is a product placement to make him re-energized and finally continues his work. Informant 19 also said that product placement in Korean dramas is made interestingly and blends into the story for example, during a scene where the actor eats with office colleagues at a restaurant and the camera focuses on the name and place of the restaurant in the drama scene, this makes the product placement clearly visible but still looks natural and blends in with the story.

### Interest and Product Placement

Interest in the context of consumer behavior refers to the level of engagement or curiosity a consumer has towards a product, service, or brand. It is a psychological state that can significantly influence the decision-making process. Interest can be influenced by various factors, including personal preference, marketing efforts and social influences. Interest often leads to an emotional connection with a brand or product. When consumers feel emotionally invested, they are more likely to develop a positive attitude towards the product, which can significantly enhance

purchase intention (Thompson and Malaviya, 2013). Interest drives consumers to seek more information about a product, which can enhance their understanding and appreciation of its value. This information search is a critical step in the decision-making process and can lead to increased purchase intention (Kotler and Keller, 2016). From the interviews, informants express a strong interest in Korean dramas due to their engaging storylines, appealing visuals, and the influence of well-known actors. Most of the informants have note how helpful product placement are at enhancing the overall viewing experience, as they are acknowledged as important components of the dramas due to their clarity and seamless integration. The combination of these factors contributes to the growing popularity of Korean dramas among audiences. Informant 6 said that curiosity and trends among the people are the factors considered by the informant in looking for Korean dramas to watch and because Korean dramas depict more about everyday life and the storyline is easy to understand this makes the informant prefer Korean dramas for other. Informant 20 also said that in most dramas, one of which is dramas in Indonesia, they always mention the brand or promote a product directly with a long dialog in the drama, but in Korean dramas they display the product clearly and show the benefit of the product without exaggeration, making Korean dramas more interesting, it shows that product placement has a major impact on the interest of the informants.

### **Plot Placement and Product Placement**

Plot placement, often referred to as product placement, is a marketing strategy where products or brands are integrated into the narrative of films, television shows, video games, or other media. This technique aims to promote products subtly, allowing them to be featured in a way that feels organic to the storyline rather than as overt advertisements. Products placed within a relevant context can enhance their appeal. For example, if a character in a movie uses a specific brand of smartphone, viewers may associate that brand with the character's desirable traits, leading to increased purchase intention (Russell and Stern, 2006). Plot placement can create emotional connections between consumers and brands. The results of the interviews showed that fifteen of them agree that product placement enhances the viewing experience by making it more engaging and provide insights into products. In contrast, the five others express skepticism about its contribution, citing potential distractions and a lack of relevance to the storyline. As informant 3 said that product placement makes the drama more interesting and the products placed at important story plot points make the products displayed more clearly to be seen. Informants agree that products used by actors will look more attractive than just as the background. Informant 11 has a somewhat different view of this. The informant said overall product placement does not contribute much to the watching experience but it can generate a desire to try the promoted product and products placed in important plot points do not necessarily become more interesting because sometimes the promotion in the middle of an important plot can be distracted. But the informant agrees that if the product is promoted directly by the actor the promoted product will be more appealing. The visibility of products, especially when used directly by actors, is generally seen as more effective in capturing audience interest. The effectiveness of product placement largely depends on its integration into the storyline and the context in which it is presented

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

### **Conclusion**

The current study is attempting to determine how Generation Z in Manado perspective on product placement on Korean drama. The following are the findings reached based on the interview data and the result of the discussion: The research findings indicate that product placement in Korean dramas is an effective marketing strategy that significantly enhances audience awareness and purchase intention. The integration of products into engaging narratives, particularly when featured alongside popular actors, creates a compelling context that resonates with audiences. Informants consistently noted that product placement that are seamlessly woven into the storyline, rather than appearing as overt advertisements, are more likely to capture their attention and pique their interest in the products being showcased. Overall, the effectiveness of product placement in Korean dramas is underscored by its ability to create a connection between the product and the audience experience. By pinning products within relevant narratives and leveraging the influence of popular actors, brands can effectively increase their visibility and desirability among audience.

### **Recommendation**

1. The findings suggest that brands should prioritize creating product placement that are seamlessly integrated into the storyline. This can be achieved by collaborating closely with writers and producers to ensure that product's



- use feels organic and relevant to the characters and plot
2. Continuous monitoring of viewer reactions to product placement is essential. Brands and producers should gather feedback and analyze viewer engagement to refine their strategies and improve the effectiveness of future product placement.
  3. Future research should investigate the long-term effects of product placement on brand loyalty and consumer behavior. Understanding how initial interest leads to sustained purchase behavior will provide more insights for marketers.

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