

A Quantitative Analysis of Japanese Images of Korea: Perceptual Changes Brought about by TV Drama Viewing

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Abstract

This study examines the effect of Korean TV drama viewing on changing the attitude of Japanese viewers toward Korea and Koreans and clarifies the factors that caused the attitudinal changes on the part of the drama viewers. 285 respondents, ranging in age from their teens to 70's participated in the survey research conducted from October through November 2004. Correlational analysis indicates that empathic viewing of the *Winter Love Song* shows a relatively strong correlation to acquired affinity for Korea and Korean people ($r=.525$, $p<.001$). Also, it indicates empathic viewing of the *Winter Love Song* correlates with improved image of Korea ($r=.526$, $p<.001$). The result of the multiple regression analysis shows that empathic viewing of *Winter Love Song*, viewing the empathy-arousing drama, "Have we really loved (our lives)?" using the Internet; age; other drama/movie viewing, and friendship with Koreans predict acquired affinity for Korea ($F=32.277$, $p<.001$, $R^2=.515$). Also, empathic viewing of the *Winter Love Song*; viewing "Have we really loved (our lives)?" and fewer traveling experiences to Korea register significant effects for improving Korean image ($F=17.590$, $p<.001$, $R^2=.367$). As for arousing interest in the Japan-Korea historical relationship, viewing "Have we really loved (our lives)?" using the Internet and friendship with Koreans show significant effects ($F=11.237$, $p<.001$, $R^2=.270$). On the whole, the study indicates the strong effect of the empathic viewing of the drama for changing the viewer's attitude toward pro-Korean.

Introduction

The year 2004 turned out to be a memorable one concerning Japan-Korea intercultural communication, because it was a year in which many Japanese people, especially women, suddenly found their long lost neighbor very appealing and fascinating, as Korean dramas and actors as well as other things Korean such as cuisine, popular music, and language, became the target of their infatuation. This sudden surge of interest was brought about by a Korean drama, 'Winter Love Song', or *Huyuno Sonata*, which was aired four times in 2003 and 2004 in Japan.

Winter Love Song was originally made and broadcast by the Korean Broadcasting Service in 2002, was exported to many Asian countries such as Taiwan, Vietnam, Indonesia, and Malaysia, and received a warm welcome. But no one expected it to enjoy so much success in Japan. In fact, in Japan it is estimated to have raised a total of 200 billion yen, or \$2 billion, in sales (ChosenNippo, 2004). Winter Love Song was the first Korean TV drama which was aired nationwide in Japan. Interview research conducted with 58 Japanese viewers shows that through the drama viewing, they discovered similarities as well as differences between Japan and Korea, and came to feel affinity for Korean people (Hasegawa, 2005a). Also, small scale survey

research shows that their psychological distance toward Korean people was significantly reduced ($p < .001$, $df = 79$) after having watched the drama (Hasegawa, 2005b).

While previous research has found a significant effect of 'Winter Love Song' on changing viewers' perceptions toward Korea and Korean people, exactly what caused the change and what kind of factors were involved in this perceptual change were not closely examined. Thus, the purpose of this research is to clarify the causal relationship between the factors related to drama viewing and perceptual change brought about by it, and identify what factors caused attitudinal changes on the part of the drama viewers toward Korea and Koreans.

Previous Research

Although there has been abundant research on the effects of mass media on people's perception (Gerbner, G., & Gross, L., 1976; Gerbner, G., Gross, L., Morgan, M., & Signorielli, N., 1980; Gilroy, P., 1993; Matabane, P. W., 1988; Morgan, M., 1982; Morley, D., 1986) the effects of conventional soap operas made solely for entertainment purposes has been seldom pursued. Also, as Harris et al. (2004) point out, most of the research on the media focus on its negative effects and there has been very little research done on the positive effects of the media upon viewers.

There has been a substantial amount of research conducted on factors reducing stereotypes and prejudice. Allport's contact hypothesis (Allport, 1954), which proposes prejudice reduction via intergroup contact, has been highly prominent and influential. The research and experiments using the contact hypothesis as the key concept have clarified the conditions that are conducive to bringing about attitudinal changes; these are equal status between the groups, cooperative intergroup interactions, opportunities for personal acquaintance between outgroup members, and supportive egalitarian norms (Gaertner et al., 1996). However, this vein of research has seldom considered how indirect contact such as through TV or movie viewing might lead to attitudinal changes.

Hypothesis

As stated above, there is insufficient research on the effects of soap operas on attitudinal changes toward people with different cultural backgrounds. Thus, this study utilizes the findings of previous research on intercultural education that deals with prejudice or stereotype reduction.

! Generally, it is assumed that contact with outgroup individuals would provide people with varied, stereotype-disconfirming information that they may generalize into more favorable intergroup representations (Cook, 1985; Johnston & Hewstone, 1992; Pettigrew, 1986). However, in normal circumstances, there are cognitive barriers that impede such an attitudinal change from happening easily (Vescio et al., 2003). In an effort to find the factors that would change people's stereotypes and thus facilitate better intergroup attitudes, Batson et al. (1997), Pettigrew (1997), and Vescio et al. (2003) note the importance of perspective taking that promotes empathy arousal. According to Batson et al. (1997), empathy accounted for almost all of the variance in the association between perspective taking and intergroup attitudes. The results of their research suggest the possibility that empathy for the outgroup is the key factor that would facilitate attitudinal changes. Based on these findings derived from laboratory settings, this study attempts to examine whether empathy arousal experienced by TV drama viewing would have any effect on changing attitudes toward outgroup members and their country. Specifically, the effect of affective viewing of Korean dramas by people living in Japan is the target of this study. The author used a questionnaire specifically developed for this study, to investigate the factors that cause attitudinal changes toward Korea and Koreans.

Method

Procedure

The questionnaire inquired about the details of people's Korean drama viewing, the history of their friendship with Korean people, and their images of Korea and Korean people; these were distributed through the Internet, conventional mail and by hand from October through November in 2004. The names and addresses used to distribute the questionnaire were obtained through the Internet postings and personal contact. Also, 100 questionnaires were distributed at Narita Airport, where thousands of fans came to welcome the leading actor of the drama, and at a university open forum on intercultural communication held in Kumamoto in the southern part of Japan. In total, 441 questionnaires were mailed and distributed via e-mail and by hand and 325 (73.7%) of them were completed and returned. Among them, questionnaires with missing data and those filled out by non-viewers were omitted from the study. Thus, in total, 285 questionnaires were analyzed for this study. The respondents ranged in age from their teens to 70's, though the majority (80%) of the respondents are in their 30's through 50's. In all, 18(6.3%) were male and 267(93.7%) were female.

Measures

The questionnaire consists of three parts. The first part consists of face-related questions and questions that probe their Korean drama viewing conduct, the second deals with their images of Korea and Korean people, and the third inquires about their impressions of Winter Love Song (hereafter "WLS") and the psychological distance toward Korea and Korean people. Items asking about viewers' impressions of WLS, and their psychological distance from Korea and Korean people were on a 7-point scale from 1= strongly disagree to 7= strongly agree. Since the purpose of this paper is to identify the factors that contribute to viewers' attitudinal changes, the questionnaire section dealing with images of Korea and Korean people was not included in this analysis.

The analysis was conducted in two stages. First, in order to investigate the dimensions of the questions and use them as the scale for later analysis, factor analysis (maximum likelihood method) was applied to all the questions that deal with the psychological distance toward Korea and Korean people. Then, using the scales devised, correlational analysis and regression analysis were conducted. The following is the result of the factor analysis.

The resulting factor matrix was subject to a varimax rotated solution. (The factor dimensions are summarized in Table 1.) The result revealed 3 factors. The first factor (eigenvalue =4.84), which accounted for 30.25% of the variance, included 8 items that ask how they relate to Korea and Korean language, after having watched Korean dramas such as WLS. This factor was thus labeled "acquired affinity for Korea". The second factor (eigenvalue=3.03), which consists of 3 items that deal with aroused interest in the Japan-Korea historical relationship and Korean culture, accounted for 18.93% of the variance. This was labeled "aroused interest in the Japan-Korea historical relationship." The third factor (eigenvalue= 2.42), which accounts for 15.15% of the variance, was labeled "improved Korean image," since items included in this factor proved how their image of Korea and Korean people became more favorable after watching Korean dramas.

Table 1

Factor Analysis of questions, Varimax Rotation (N=285)

Items	Dim1	Dim2	Dim3
Factor 1 –Acquired affinity for Korea			
Wants to make Korean friends	.83	.30	.05
Wants to learn Korean language	.81	.28	.11
Likes the sound of Korean language	.71	.35	.09
Wants to go to Korea	.70	.23	.20
Wants to understand Korea and Koreans	.66	.40	.32
Likes Korea	.64	.38	.39
Feels closer to Korea	.60	.20	.35
Feels Koreans enjoy warm interpersonal Relations	.52	.38	.29
Factor 2 – Aroused interest in the Japan-Korea historical relationship			
Interested in Korean history	.31	.85	.16
Interested in Japan-Korea historical relations	.24	.84	.08
Interested in Korean culture	.45	.65	.13
Factor 3 – Improved Korean image			
Image of Korea improved	.45	.23	.83
Image of Korean people improved	.44	.23	.83
Knew little about Korea	.28	.22	.52

Scales

According to the results of the factor analysis, the following 3 scales were devised and used in the subsequent analyses.

Acquired Affinity for Korea: This consists of 7 questions that show more than .600 of factor loading for factor 1. These are: (after watching Korean dramas) I came to be interested in making Korean friends, learning Korean language, visiting Korea; I came to like the sounds of Korean language; I came to feel I must understand Korea and Koreans; I came to like Korea, and feel closer to Korea. A composite score was created by averaging all 7 scores. The reliability of the scale, assessed by Cronbach's alpha, was .921.

Aroused Interest in the Japan-Korea Historical Relationship: This score was made by averaging the scores of 3 questions from factor 2. These include: (after watching Korean dramas) I came to have interest in Korean history, I came to have interest in the Japan-Korea historical relations, and I came to have interest in Korean culture. Cronbach's alpha for this scale was .887.

Improved Korean Image: This score was made by averaging the scores of 2 questions that show more than .600 of factor loading for factor 3. The questions included are: My image of Korea became more favorable after watching Korean dramas, and my image of Korean people became more favorable after watching Korean dramas. Cronbach's alpha for this scale was .970.

Also, the following factors were used as the predictors in the subsequent analyses:

Empathic Viewing of WLS: A composite empathic viewing of WLS score was created by averaging all 13 scores that probe how empathically they view WLS. The questionnaire items included are: I was infatuated by WLS, WLS is a drama I really like, I was strongly moved by

WLS, I was enthralled by WLS, WLS was interesting, I like the leading actor, I like the leading actress, I felt warm at my heart watching WLS, I empathized with the leading actor, I empathized with the leading actress, I cried while watching WLS, I like the music of WLS, and I've kept watching WLS for several hours. The reliability of the scale, assessed by Cronbach's alpha was .948.

Friendship with Koreans: Korean friendship was measured with one item that asked about their friends or acquaintances of Korean origin. Those with no friends nor acquaintances were coded 1, those with only Korean acquaintances were coded 2, those with only one friend were coded 3, those with 2 or 3 friends were coded 4, and those with 4 or more friends were coded 5.

Travel Experience to Korea: Experience of having been to Korea was measured with one item that asked about people's travel experience to Korea. Those with no travel experience to Korea were coded 1, those with only one experience were coded 2, those with experiences of two or three times were coded 3, those with experiences of four or five times were coded 4, and those with experiences of more than 6 times were coded 5.

Other Drama Related Questions: Respondents reported how many times they have watched WLS, and how many other Korean dramas and movies they have watched. As for the number of times watching WLS, the scale used was from 1 (only 1 from 5 stories out of 20) to 7 (more than 100 stories, which means more than 5 times). The scale used for viewing other Korean dramas and movies is from 1 (no dramas with less than 5 movies) to 5 (more than 10 Korean dramas). Their use of the Internet concerning Korean dramas was coded from 1 (no experience) to 4 (checked the Korean website everyday).

Experience of Watching "Have We Really Loved (Our Lives)?": Respondents who watched other dramas reported the drama titles by checking the titles given in the questionnaire. Among the dramas the respondents viewed, the drama titled "Have we really loved (our lives)?", or *Aino Gunzo* in Japanese, (hereafter "HWRL") was chosen and entered as a predictor since this drama was often cited on the Internet BBS as having the most empathy arousing story lines. The scale used was from 1 (have not watched it at all or have watched it less than 10 stories) to 3 (have watched all 44 stories).

Demographics: Respondents reported their gender and generation. They are dummy coded as 1 (male) and 2 (female) and 1 (from 10 to 19) to 7 (more than 70) respectively.

Results

Because some of the variables were assumed to be related, bivariate correlations among all the variables were computed. Also, the means and standard deviations of the variables are shown in Table 2 on the next page. Empathic viewing of WLS shows relatively strong correlation with acquired affinity for Korea and improved image of Korea. However, as other drama related predictors such as number of times watching WLS, quantity of other drama/movie viewing and watching HWRL also show rather strong association, more scrutiny of the data is needed.

Next, in order to examine the effect of the variables in predicting "acquired affinity for Korea", "improved Korean image", and "aroused interest in the Japan-Korea historical relationship", simultaneous multiple regression analyses were carried out (see Table 3). The model for acquired affinity for Korea was highly significant, and accounted for 51.5% of the variance. Empathic viewing of WLS, watching HWRL, using the Internet, age, quantity of other drama/movie viewing, and friendship with Koreans register significant effects on acquired affinity for Korea. Among these five predictors, empathic viewing of WLS was the primary predictor (beta= .304) followed by watching HWRL (beta= .248).

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics and Correlations among Variables

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1.												
2.	.662**											
3.	.659**	.485**										
4.	.525**	.287**	.526**									
5.	.187**	.208**	-.034	.003								
6.	.098	.079	-.080	-.014	.331**							
7.	.528**	.313**	.377**	.710**	.101	-.004						
8.	.553**	.374**	.378**	.493**	.074	.112	.618**					
9.	.531**	.394**	.301**	.470**	.175**	.070	.599**	.577**				
10.	.527**	.387**	.418**	.378**	.054	.081	.457**	.659**	.436**			
11.	.181**	.050	.146*	.219**	.017	.035	.234**	.218**	.216**	.143*		
12.	-.042	.038	.074	.261**	-.130*	-.009	.178**	.124*	.058	.106	.098	
M	5.42	5.10	5.71	5.78	1.56	1.38	5.36	2.94	1.59	1.79	1.94	4.07
SD	1.25	1.31	1.18	1.27	1.00	.77	1.70	1.38	1.72	.94	.24	1.21

*P<.01. **P<.001.

Variables: 1. Acquired affinity for Korea, 2. Aroused interest in the Japan-Korea historical relationship, 3. Improved image of Korea, 4. Empathic viewing of WLS, 5. Friendship with Koreans, 6. Travel experience to Korea, 7. Number of Times watching WLS, 8. Other drama/movie viewing, 9. Internet use, 10. Watching HWRL, 11. Gender, 12. Age

Table 3 Multiple Regression Analysis Predicting Acquired Affinity for Korea

Predictor	β	\rightarrow	Significance
Empathic viewing of WLS	.304	4.934	.001
Friendship with Koreans	.114	2.475	.05
Travel experience to Korea	.010	.226	ns
Number of Times watching WLS	.027	.388	ns
Other drama/movie viewing	.136	2.065	.05
Internet use	.179	3.172	.01
Watching HWRL	.248	4.419	.001
Gender	.020	.462	ns
Age	-.167	-3.772	.001

R²= .515, F(9,283)= 32.277, P<.001

The model for “improved Korean image” was highly significant, and accounted for 37.2% of the variance. Empathic viewing of WLS, watching HWRL, and fewer travel experiences to Korea register significant effects on improving Korean image, with empathic viewing of WLS being the strongest predictor(beta= .501).

Table 4 Multiple Regression Analysis Predicting Improved Korean Image

Predictor	β	\rightarrow	Significance
Empathic viewing of WLS	.501	7.100	.001
Friendship with Koreans	.002	.037	ns
Travel experience to Korea	-.110	-2.119	.05

Number of Times watching WLS	-.125	-1.561	ns
Other drama/movie viewing	.050	.660	ns
Internet use	.012	.182	ns
Watching HWRL	.274	4.246	.001
Gender	.028	.552	ns
Age	-.074	-1.464	ns

$R^2 = .367$, $F(9,282) = 17.590$, $P < .001$

The model for aroused interest in the Japan-Korea historical relationship was highly significant, and accounted for 27.0% of the variance. Watching HWRL, Internet use, and friendship with Koreans register significant effects on arousing interest in the Japan-Korea historical relationship. Among these three predictors, watching HWRL and using the Internet were the primary predictors ($\beta = .228$ and $.220$ respectively).

Table 5: Multiple Regression Analysis Predicting Aroused Interest in the Japan-Korea Historical Relationship

Predictor	β	\rightarrow	Significance
Empathic viewing of WLS	.107	1.416	ns
Friendship with Koreans	.182	3.227	.001
Travel experience to Korea	-.028	-.500	ns
Number of Times watching WLS	-.051	-.593	ns
Other drama/movie viewing	.097	1.197	ns
Internet use	.220	3.173	.01
Watching HWRL	.228	3.305	.001
Gender	-.062	-1.159	ns
Age	.000	-.006	ns

$R^2 = .270$, $F(9,283) = 11.237$, $P < .001$

Discussion

The results show that through drama viewing, the participants came to feel affinity for Koreans, acquired a more favorable image of Korea and Korean people, and even came to experience aroused interest in the culture and history of Korea and in Japan-Korea relations. As for the acquired affinity for Koreans, empathic viewing of WLS, watching HWRL, using the Internet, age, quantity of other drama/movie viewing, and friendship with Koreans were found to contribute to the regression equation that predicted 51.5% of the variance, with empathic viewing of WLS being the strongest predictor.

This confirms the hypothesis that empathic viewing of the Korean drama would have the effect of making viewers' attitudes more pro-Korean. Other interesting findings are that Internet use, viewer age, quantity of Korean drama/movie viewing, and friendship with Koreans also contributed to the regression equation, while gender and viewing times of WLS did not. In other words, younger people, people who use the Internet often to gather information on the Korean drama, people with more hours of Korean drama/movie exposure and people with Korean friends were more prone to experience attitudinal changes. Also, as for the effect of WLS, the results suggest that longer exposure or repeated viewing of the same drama had little effect in making the

viewers' attitudes more pro-Korean.

Concerning the model for "improved Korean image", empathic viewing of WLS, viewing of HWRL, and having fewer travel experiences to Korea had significant effects, while the respondent's age, gender, Internet use, friendship with Koreans, viewing times of WLS, and quantity of other drama/movie viewing show no significant effects on the model. This result again confirms the strong effect of empathic viewing of the drama in relation to attitudinal changes. Also, the result suggests that a person's image of Korea changed regardless of age, gender, history of Korean friendship, and quantity of the drama/movie viewing. This fact contradicts the assumption that the people who become Korean drama fans are those who were pro-Korea to begin with. The result may imply that what is important in changing a viewer's image of Korea is not the quantity but the qualities of the drama.

The model for aroused interest in the Japan-Korea history and Korean culture shows that watching HWRL, Internet use, and friendship with Koreans significantly arouse interest, while the respondent's age, gender, travel to Korea, quantity of Korean drama/movie viewing, and empathic viewing and viewing times of WLS did not show any significant effects on the model. It is quite noteworthy that this change was caused by watching HWRL, not by empathic viewing of WLS. Both dramas have as their themes empathy inducing love stories of young couples, with depictions of friends and family members closely involved in their lives. The most notable difference between HWRL and WLS, however, is that the former eloquently depicts the life of lower class people, while the latter depicts middle class life, and make ample use of the beautiful scenery of the Korean countryside, leading viewers into the dreamlike world of the story. In other words, WLS infused the viewers with images of beautiful scenery, which helped change their image of Korea. As for HWRL, it depicts the life of the poor who strive for a better life; thus the viewer had more chances to empathize with 'ordinary' people depicted in the drama, and at the same time to understand Korean cultural values and customs. It can be said that empathy arousing beautiful love scenes induced only an improved image of Korea, while empathy arousing stories with detailed description of people's strife improved the viewer's image of Korea as well as generated interest more in culture and history.

As for the use of the Internet being a predictor for aroused interest in the Japan-Korea history and Korean culture, this might suggest that acquiring more information about the dramas and actors have some effect in raising interest in Korean culture and history. Another contributing factor concerning the Internet use might be the existence of the animosity between the two countries. As the websites or BBS are open to anybody, it often happened that both Koreans who felt bitter about what Japan had done to their people and Japanese who were prejudiced against Koreans resented the Korean drama fans in Japan, and websites on Korean popular culture became a target of their attacks. Actually, some websites had to be temporarily closed due to these attacks. From interviews the author conducted with 58 viewers of WLS, most of the participants with the Internet experience were aware of these attacks. Thus, it may be assumed that those who had experiences of reading the website on Korean dramas and actors had more opportunities than others to learn that there are bitter feelings between Korea and Japan, and there are still many people who are prejudiced against each other. It is somewhat paradoxical that such an incident might have piqued their interest in the historical problem between the two countries.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study, coupled with the results of previous research (Hasegawa, 2005a, 2005b), challenges the common understanding that direct interaction or contact with people with

different cultural backgrounds has the strongest effect in making people less prejudiced and thus in facilitating intercultural communication. From the result, we can conclude that watching Korean dramas had some effect in precipitating Japanese viewer's perceptual changes, even stimulating interest in the longstanding historical problems between Japan and Korea. Sudden attitudinal change such as this could never be achieved with conventional educational techniques, nor with friendships built on an interpersonal level. In spite of the long effort to eliminate ill feelings toward Koreans, or to raise interest in Korea or Korean culture on the part of the intercultural educators, Korea had been seen with disdain or indifference for very long in Japan. However, after the drama enjoyed so much popularity, Korea suddenly came to be viewed with fondness or sometimes infatuation by Japanese fans. Considering this strong educational effect in changing people's attitudes, and the fact that more and more foreign dramas are being imported and exported worldwide, closer attention should be paid to the effects of the dramas by researchers on intercultural education.

There are several limitations to this study that should be kept in mind. The participants were only those who agreed to participate in this study, and also there were only a small number of males among them. This might qualify some of the study's conclusions. Also, the result was based on a questionnaire survey conducted just one time, and thus we cannot make conclusions about the longitudinal effects of the drama viewing. The study of the intercultural drama viewing is still in the beginning phase and there are many factors or variables yet to be disclosed. The author hopes more research in this vein will be conducted in the near future.

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