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Cultural Trait Vs. Personality Trait: Predicting the Appeal of Korean Entertainment among Asian Viewers in Singapore, Taiwan, and Hong Kong

Jinhee Kim, Hye Kyung Kim, Sojung Kim, and Shu-Fang Lin

This research explores transnational consumption of Korean entertainment among Asian viewers. To explain the appeal of Korean entertainment, this research focuses on mixed response of two opposing states (e.g., laughing and crying) that are induced, and examines the theoretical framework of personality trait (need for affect) vs. cultural trait (naïve dialecticism). Results from a survey (n = 745) reveal that mixed response mediates the positive association between naïve dialecticism (not need for affect) and the appeal. Findings are discussed regarding a cultural trait that predicts Asian viewers' gratification from experiencing culturally fit emotions that fulfill central cultural (vs. personal) goals.

Korean entertainment (K-entertainment) has been popular across the globe since the late 1990s, particularly in Asian countries, which is referred to as the *Korean Wave*. Notably, K-drama was the second most popular Korean cultural product in a recent survey conducted in Asian countries ($N = 4,200$) after Korean cuisine (Korean Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism & Korean Foundation for International Culture Exchange, 2017). Previous research has predominantly focused on U.S. or European media content as an exemplar of popular

Jinhee Kim (Ph.D., Pennsylvania State University) is an associate professor in the Division of Humanities and Social Sciences at Pohang University of Science and Technology, South Korea. Her research interests include media and emotion, the appeal of entertainment media, and cross-cultural mediated communication.

Hye Kyung Kim (Ph.D., Cornell University) is an assistant professor in the Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information at Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. Her research interests include uses and effects of persuasive messages and emerging media technologies in relation to health promotion.

Sojung Kim (Ph.D., University of Texas at Austin) is an assistant professor in the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication at Kyungpook National University, South Korea. Her research interests include advertising, consumer behavior in digital media, and crisis communication.

Shu-Fang Lin (Ph.D., The Ohio State University) is a professor in the Department of Communication at National Chung Cheng University, Taiwan. Her research interests include cognitive and emotional effects of entertainment media.

entertainment; however, few studies attempted to explain the appeal of other types of entertainment messages, particularly those based on Asian cultural origin. This research attempts to fill this gap by providing theoretical reasons for the appeal of K-entertainment among Asian viewers that help extend the scope of entertainment research.

Some previous studies explained the appeal by focusing on portrayals of Confucian values featured (e.g., family, sacrifice, and respect for the elderly) that may increase cultural proximity (e.g., Jung, 2009) and on attractive/professional/young characters along with modernized background that may fulfill the viewers' desire for economic success (e.g., Shim, 2006). However, apart from these content characteristics, no research has addressed viewers' subjective experiences, particularly mixed response while viewing K-entertainment. Examining this type of mixed responses may offer theoretical insights into a better understanding of the mechanisms that lead to distinct entertainment gratifications.

K-entertainment as a cultural product is characterized by great mixed responses of two opposing affective states. For instance, viewers often feel sad and cry while watching comedies; they may also feel amused and laugh while watching serious dramas. A simultaneous experience of positive and negative affect in audience behavior has also garnered Western scholars' attention (e.g., Larsen, McGraw, & Cacioppo, 2001). Accordingly, personality traits, particularly need for affect (NFA) in pursuit of strong positive and negative affect, were often predictors that explain the appeal of mixed response (Bartsch, Appel, & Storch, 2010; Maio & Esses, 2001).

Although NFA is a useful conceptual tool, prior research on mixed response has neglected the cultural dimensions of understanding nuanced entertainment gratifications. To explain the appeal of mixed response in Asian cultures, this research introduces naïve dialecticism (ND) as a cultural trait, shared among Asian populations, that represents unique beliefs embracing contradiction, unexpected change, and holism (Peng & Nisbett, 1999; Spencer-Rodgers, Williams, & Peng, 2010). By addressing the role of ND, this research extends the current understanding of why Asians are attracted to K-entertainment content that prompts mixed response.

NFA and ND as related traits may predict entertainment gratification derived from mixed responses. However, we further argue that the underlying theoretical mechanisms of these two traits can be understood distinctly in the context of Asian viewers' K-entertainment consumption: NFA fulfills personal goals, whereas ND fulfills cultural goals. Specifically, we predict that ND, rather than NFA, would more aptly explain the appeal of K-entertainment among Asian viewers because mixed responses may provide the viewers with culturally fit emotional experiences (De Leersnyder, Kim, & Mesquita, 2015; Tamir, Schwartz, Oishi, & Kim, 2017) that realize the central cultural (vs. personal) goals of harmony, balance, and moderation. We expect that the current research may address the importance of cultural influences that shape viewers' unique gratification derived from transnational entertainment consumption. This research can also offer practical guidance on the development of entertainment messages that induce multiple opposing emotions,

particularly targeting Asians, who comprise approximately 60% of the world population.

Mixed Response that Explains Asian Viewers' Gratification from K-Entertainment

Media researchers have proposed different gratifications that viewers obtain from entertainment consumption. Early work focused on enjoyment, but recent research from Oliver and Bartsch (2010) encompasses appreciation. According to the authors, appreciation is a state in which viewers are inspired, feel moved, and are motivated to elaborate on the message and to seek truth; in particular, mixed response has been associated with appreciation (Oliver & Bartsch, 2010). For example, drama genres may induce sadness by featuring the death of a loved one; however, these messages also evoke positive affect (e.g., hope, courage) and questions of human poignancy. Appreciation is often compared with enjoyment that emphasizes viewers' pleasure- and amusement-seeking motivation, including liking, sensory delight, and suspense (Vorderer, Klimmt, & Ritterfeld, 2004). The two-factor model of enjoyment vs. appreciation (Vorderer & Reinecke, 2015) can explain favorable experiences related to a wide range of entertainment content.

Previous research often regards suspense—the process of thrill, fear, and relief that poses emotional challenge (Bartsch & Hartmann, 2017; Vorderer et al., 2004)—as belonging to enjoyment because suspense concerns hedonistic needs, such as escape from boredom (Bryant & Zillmann, 1984). However, suspense is not always associated with enjoyment, and is unexpectedly often associated with appreciation (Oliver & Bartsch, 2010). Indeed, recent relevant work has treated the concepts of enjoyment and suspense differently (e.g., Bartsch & Hartmann, 2017).

Mixed response may be associated with suspense gratification based on excitation-transfer theory (Zillmann, 1971, 2006). Specifically, arousal induced by negative affect from the first scene may be transferred into the subsequent arousal induced by positive affect from the second scene (or vice versa), and these combined arousals may amplify the overall suspense experience. Relatedly, disposition theory (Raney, 2003) specifies that viewers may be distressed by witnessing their liked protagonists in a great danger and may hope for good outcomes for the protagonists and bad outcomes for their disliked opponents; the viewers may also feel relieved when the protagonists restore justice.

Although mixed response may predict appreciation and suspense as entertainment gratification, this research further hypothesizes that mixed response will also predict enjoyment gratification among Asian viewers who consume K-entertainment. Asians tend to believe that pure, prolonged positive affect is undesirable and unhealthy (Leu, Wang, & Koo, 2011). Regarding the relationship between positive and negative affect, Asians also tend to believe that the two are

not opposing/contradictory — but rather inseparable/complementary — with a blurred distinction between them (Uchida & Kitayama, 2009).

Previous research often operationalized mixed response as (a) the co-existence of positive (e.g., happy) and negative (e.g., sad) affect (Oliver, Hartmann, & Woolley, 2012), (b) ambivalent affect (e.g., an index of items, such as surprise, interesting, and being moved) (Bartsch et al., 2010), or (c) unique physical response relevant to meaningful affect (e.g., an index of items, such as lump in a throat, tears crying, and goose bumps) (Oliver et al., 2012). We operationalize mixed response as the co-occurrence of opposing states by including mixed physical response (e.g., laughing and crying) along with the response listed in (a). Thus, our operationalization of mixed response is different from previous operationalizations and is relevant to testing the context of contradiction of the two opposing affective and physical elements as well as the unexpected changes between them.

H1: Higher mixed response will be associated with greater enjoyment, appreciation, and suspense through exposure to K-entertainment.

In the next section, we introduce NFA and ND, which are two enduring, long-lived, and stable traits that are associated with sensitivity to emotion-eliciting entertainment content, which may result in intensified experience of mixed emotions.

NFA as a Personality Trait

NFA represents an individual's needs (a) to approach messages that elicit strong emotions or (b) to seek the experience of strong positive and negative emotions by viewing affect-laden messages (Bartsch et al., 2010; Maio & Esses, 2001). NFA also reflects individual's beliefs that strong emotions are beneficial to shape subsequent judgment, that understanding one's emotions and those of others is important, and that experiencing emotions from uncertain and unstructured contexts is tolerable. Although the original conception of NFA includes the avoidance dimension, we do not address it because it can be interpreted as either suppression or avoidance of emotional experience (Bartsch et al., 2010).

NFA has often been explored in the context of selective exposure. For example, the association between NFA and willingness to view happiness-inducing or sadness-inducing films over non-emotional films was positive (Maio & Esses, 2001). This result suggests that NFA is a need to approach media content that is laden with positive or negative emotions. Relatedly, Oliver and Raney (2011) reported positive associations between NFA and each of the two motivations underlying entertainment consumption: hedonic motivations that represent a search for pleasure and excitement, and eudaimonic motivations that represent a search for meaningfulness and personal growth. These results imply that NFA may be a key variable that prompts motivations to approach entertainment content that induces positive, negative, and further mixed states.

NFA has also been explored as a need to seek the experience of strong positive and negative emotions while viewing emotion-laden content that is given or manipulated. For example, Bartsch et al. (2010) showed that high levels of NFA were associated with strong negative (e.g., sad, angry, fearful) and further ambivalent (e.g., surprised, being moved, interested) affective responses from viewing horror and serious drama. Furthermore, NFA was also associated with appreciation (*not* enjoyment), when viewers evaluated their emotions experienced (i.e., meta-emotion) while viewing these negatively valenced films. Interestingly, the ambivalent affect was associated with negative (*not* positive) affect and with enjoyment/appreciation positively. The authors suggested that ambivalent affect may be experienced by reappraising negative affect positively rather than by activating positive and negative affect concurrently. Similarly, Appel and Richter (2010) showed that high levels of NFA facilitated absorption experience into emotional narratives, which, in turn, enhanced persuasion outcomes by heightening beliefs that are relevant to the information presented in the narratives.

Collectively, K-entertainment should provide gratifying experiences for Asian viewers with high NFA because they are more receptive to experiencing a wide range of emotions, appraising negative emotions experienced positively, and be open to uncertainty than viewers with low NFA.

H2: Higher NFA will be associated with greater enjoyment, appreciation, and suspense through exposure to K-entertainment.

ND as a Cultural Trait

ND prevalent in Asian cultures reflects individuals' unique perception of change and contradiction (Spencer-Rodgers et al., 2010). First, regarding change, Asians tend to believe that reality keeps changing reversely or cyclically (vs. linearly). The future is impossible to predict because numerous elements in the world are complexly interrelated. A negative state may turn into a positive state (and vice versa) and these oppositional changes may continue endlessly (Ji, Nisbett, & Su, 2001). Second, regarding contradiction, Asians tend to believe that reality is full of contradiction. The simultaneous and sequential co-existence of any two opposing elements may signify harmony, balance, and moderation rather than conflict, contradiction, and antagonism (Peng & Nisbett, 1999). Resolution of the two opposing elements is not necessary, and the truth is located somewhere in the middle. Finally, these beliefs about change and contradiction characterize Asians' holistic thinking (Nisbett, Peng, Choi, & Norenzayan, 2001). Any two opposing elements (e.g., yin and yang) that compose the whole are closely inter-connected, and all, not just some, elements are needed to construct the universe.

We may apply these three principles of ND to the consumption of entertainment media. First, Asians may feel comfortable with unexpected changes from positivity to negativity (and vice versa), and may even prefer these changes; however, no previous research has directly tested this claim in the domain of emotional experience. Second,

Asians also tend to experience the co-occurrence of positive affect and negative affect frequently and to prefer this mixed state (Kim, Seo, Yu, & Neuendorf, 2014; Kitayama, Markus, & Kurokawa, 2000; Miyamoto, Uchida, & Ellsworth, 2010). Intriguingly, Asians experience mixed emotions even in positive events (e.g., receiving a good grade) because they may cause social disruption (e.g., fear of upsetting others) or because a bad event may follow a good event (Miyamoto & Ma, 2011). Thus, in Asian cultures, positivity and negativity are interrelated inextricably. The need for both elements constituting the whole may explain the appeal of K-entertainment content that often induces a mixed response.

ND has been examined primarily in cross-cultural research contexts, and related findings have consistently shown that ND is significantly higher among Asians than among European Americans (Spencer-Rodgers & Peng, 2018); however, individuals within a culture can also exhibit elements of multiple cultures. Thus, the level of ND may not be uniform among Asians, and within-culture differences in ND should also be considered beyond simple Western vs. non-Western comparisons (Craig & Douglas, 2006). We predict that viewers with high NFA would 1) evaluate the mixed emotional experience of consuming K-entertainment as pleasurable and delightful, 2) view positive affect and negative affect as mutually dependent states that can co-exist meaningfully, and 3) tolerate increased uncertainty that results from unexpected changes.

H3: Higher ND will be associated with greater enjoyment, appreciation, and suspense through exposure to K-entertainment.

Culturally Fit Affect that Leads to Viewers' Gratification

This study further models the relationships among the two traits (NFA/ND), mixed response, and the three gratifications to shed light on the cultural (vs. personal) goals that can be fulfilled by entertainment consumption. We differentiate the two related traits as personality (NFA) vs. culture (ND). Personality traits are defined as "characteristic patterns of thought, emotion, and behavior," of an individual (Funder, 2001, p. 198), whereas cultural traits are defined as characteristic patterns in thought, emotion, and behavior of a culture. Culture represents socially transmitted ideas or knowledge structures about the world, including norms, values, or beliefs that are *shared* by members in a given cultural group (Chiu & Hong, 2007).

We claim that ND, rather than NFA, better explains the appeal of K-entertainment among Asian viewers. According to the theoretical framework of cultural regulation of emotion (Mesquita, Leersnyder, & Albert, 2014), we regulate our emotional experiences to be aligned with dominant cultural goals, because doing so results in rewarding outcomes that fulfill those goals, and ultimately promotes psychological well-being. Specifically, members of a culture regulate their emotions in accordance with culturally fit emotions that "enable people to navigate the intricacies of their social environments in a coordinated fashion" (Mesquita, Boiger, & De Leersnyder, 2016, p. 31; see also Tamir et al., 2017). We argue that mixed

responses serve as culturally fit emotional experiences for Asian viewers, enabling them to fulfill their central cultural mandates, and thus derive desired gratification from K-entertainment.

Previous research showed that experiencing negative emotions and mixed emotions may have beneficial outcomes in Asian cultures. For example, experiencing socially engaging negative emotions (e.g., guilt) that may promote relatedness with other family members predicted Koreans' well-being (De Leersnyder et al., 2015). Similarly, experiencing both positive and negative affect at a moderate frequency was associated with fewer physical symptoms (e.g., headache, profuse sweating) in Japan (Miyamoto & Ryff, 2011). The mixed emotions may be beneficial because they are culturally desirable and thus help Japanese achieve cultural goals of balance and harmonious integration.

Indeed, Tsai, Knutson, and Fung (2006) claimed that the affect to which individuals strive tends to be shaped more by culture (operationalized as interpersonal goals of influence vs. adjustment) than by affective personality (operationalized as extraversion and neuroticism). Consequently, K-entertainment as a cultural product may attract Asian viewers with high ND (vs. NFA) because K-entertainment allows them to experience culturally fit emotions, and thus to realize central cultural mandates of harmony, balance, and moderation.

To test this idea, we conceptualize NFA/ND as needs to seek the experience of strong positive and negative emotions while viewing K-entertainment. Viewers with high NFA/ND are more likely than viewers with low NFA/ND to get involved with emotion-laden entertainment content, are sensitive to emotional cues conveyed in the content, and intensify emotional response from viewing the content. Thus, these traits may prompt a mixed viewer response. Subsequently, these strong mixed responses induced will be associated with great enjoyment, appreciation, and suspense when consuming K-entertainment. However, the mediation effect involving ND will be stronger than that of NFA because mixed response is a culturally-fit emotional state that is congruent with ND for Asian viewers.

H4: Mixed response will mediate the positive association between ND and each of the three gratifications and, to a lesser degree, the positive association between NFA and each of the three gratifications.

Methods

Overview

Online surveys were conducted in Taiwan, Singapore, and Hong Kong that share, to some degree, similar cultural traits based on the Chinese legacy. A professional survey company, Qualtrics, was commissioned to collect data. The company and its partners recruited the target participants from online panels, administered surveys, and monitored survey responses. Questionnaires were prepared in English and in

Chinese. The English version was developed by the first author, and one of the co-authors who is bilingual in English and Chinese translated the English version to Chinese. To validate this translation, a translator who is also bilingual in English and Chinese back-translated the Chinese version to English (Brislin, 1970). After negotiating discrepancies between translation and back-translation, a final Chinese version was completed by the co-author. The English version was used in Singapore, and the Chinese version was used in Taiwan and Hong Kong.

Participants and Procedures

Online panel members aged over 18 were invited via emails, and 627, 473, and 405 members in Singapore, Taiwan, and Hong Kong, respectively, attempted to participate by clicking the survey link. Only those who hold either citizenship or permanent residency in each country were permitted to participate in the study. Additionally, participants should have watched at least two K-dramas and three episodes of each drama during the previous 12 months to ensure that they are familiar with K-dramas and can recall their recent K-drama experiences specifically.

Participants who had passed these screening questions were asked to name one K-drama title that they had watched most recently (Oliver & Bartsch, 2010 for a similar procedure). Subsequently, keeping in mind the title named, participants rated retrospectively their emotional experiences and gratification. The final sample included 745 participants with 37.17 average age ($SD = 10.59$): 248 in Singapore (58.5% females), 248 in Taiwan (57.7% females), and 249 in Hong Kong (55.8% females). Approximately 63.5% of participants worked in professional, administrative, and clerical areas; about 70.5% of them were either two-year or four-year college graduates.

Participants watched K-dramas through the channels of TV (74.8%), Internet streaming service (69.8%), or free download (46.8%). During the previous 12 months, the average frequency of watching K-drama measured using a scale ranging from 1 (*Not at All*) to 7 (*All the Time*) was high ($M = 5.13$, $SD = 1.31$). The number of K-dramas that participants had watched full episodes during the same period was 6.61 ($SD = 8.13$). Participants had been watching K-drama for about 6.18 years ($SD = 4.36$).

Measures

Mixed Affective Response. Participants rated their affective responses after viewing the K-drama named. The responses were measured using 28 items adapted from Barrett and Russell (1999), and Kim et al. (2014) on a scale ranging from 1 (*Not at All*) to 7 (*Very Much*).

The scree plot from an exploratory factor analysis using principal axis factoring and Promax rotation ($\kappa = 4$) suggested two factors that explained 44.67% of the total variance. After dropping items that had cross-loadings or low loadings across the factors, final items pertaining to each of the two factors were averaged to create an index. The first factor

consisted of 11 positive-affect items (*happy, excited, joyful, pleasant, funny, elated, content, amused, hilarious, relaxed, and lively*; $M = 4.75, SD = 1.08, \alpha = .93$) and the second factor consisted of nine negative-affect items (*gloomy, low, depressed, stressed, upset, tense, downhearted, melancholy, and sad*; $M = 2.96, SD = 1.14, \alpha = .90$).

To estimate mixed affective response, we obtained the minimum value (MIN) of positive affect and negative affect ($M = 2.87, SD = 1.07$). MIN is a widely used criterion to calculate the co-existence of the two opposing affects (e.g., Miyamoto et al., 2010; Oliver et al., 2012). According to the logic of MIN, if individuals report relatively high scores for *both* positive affect and negative affect, then MIN is high. In contrast, if individuals report a relatively low score for either of them, then MIN is low.

Mixed Physical Response. Participants also rated their physical responses after viewing the K-drama named. The responses were measured using eight items adapted from Algoe and Haidt (2009) and Silvers and Haidt (2008), on a scale ranging from 1 (*Not at All*) to 7 (*Very Much*). The same factor analysis suggested two factors that explain 54.53% of the total variance. The two items that had cross-loading across the factors (i.e., *warmth in chest, high energy*) were dropped. The first factor consisted of two positive physical response items "light and bouncy" and "laughter" ($M = 4.48, SD = 1.41$, Spearman-Brown coefficient = .78) and the second factor consisted of four negative physical response items: "tears crying," "lump in throat," "muscles tensed," and "increased heart rate" ($M = 3.61, SD = 1.30, \alpha = .80$). The MIN of the two physical responses was also calculated to estimate mixed physical response ($M = 3.37, SD = 1.28$).

Mixed affective response and physical response were combined as *mixed responses* ($M = 3.14, SD = 1.03$, Spearman-Brown coefficient = .73) for subsequent analysis, although their discrepant results were reported (Footnotes).

Enjoyment, Appreciation, and Suspense from Viewing K-Drama. Participants rated the degree to which they experienced enjoyment, appreciation, and suspense while watching the K-drama named, using 13 items adapted from Oliver and Bartsch (2010). An initial exploratory factor analysis revealed two factors because of a high correlation between the measurement items of "enjoyment" and "appreciation" ($r = .72, p < .001$). However, given that these two concepts are qualitatively and conceptually distinct, we treated each of them as a distinct factor. Accordingly, we requested three factors and they explained 61.45% of the total variance. Items pertaining to enjoyment (e.g., "I had a good time while watching this K-drama;" $M = 5.33, SD = 1.07, \alpha = .82$), appreciation (e.g., "This K-drama left me with a lasting impression;" $M = 4.95, SD = 1.14, \alpha = .88$), and suspense (e.g., "This K-drama was suspenseful;" $M = 4.54, SD = 1.32, \alpha = .80$) were averaged to create an index.

Naïve Dialecticism. ND was measured using 11 items adapted from Choi, Koo, and Choi (2007), and others (Miyamoto & Ma, 2011; Spencer-Rodgers, Srivastava, et al., 2010) on a scale ranging from 1 (*Strongly Disagree*) to 7 (*Strongly Agree*). Sample items were "It is more desirable to take the middle ground than go to

extremes” and “I believe a bad thing tends to follow a good thing.” These items were averaged to create an index ($M = 4.51, SD = .82, \alpha = .78$). The scree plot from an exploratory factor analysis suggested one factor.

Need for Affect. NFA was measured using NFA short scale from Appel, Gnambs, and Maio (2012) on a scale ranging from 1 (*Strongly Disagree*) to 7 (*Strongly Agree*). Sample items were “I feel that I need to experience strong emotions regularly” and “It is important for me to be in touch with my feelings.” These five items were averaged to create an index ($M = 4.94, SD = .87, \alpha = .69$).¹

Results

To test our hypotheses, we combined the data from the three countries, although we reported discrepant results in the three countries (Footnotes). Zero-order correlations of six focal variables were shown (Table 1).

Main Effects of Mixed Response, NFA, and ND

To predict the appeal of K-drama as a function of mixed response and the two traits, three multiple hierarchal regression analyses pertaining to each of the three outcomes were conducted (Table 2). For each analysis, demographic variables and the characteristics of the K-drama named (Step 1), the two traits (Step 2), and mixed response from the K-drama (Step 3) were entered as predictors.

Results showed that young (vs. old) viewers predicted all three outcomes positively and significantly. No gender difference was found except for the appreciation outcome. Viewing K-dramas frequently and most of the episodes of the K-drama named predicted all three outcomes positively and significantly. Finally, viewing the drama named a while ago (vs. recently) predicted greater enjoyment. Relevant to the hypotheses, mixed response (H1) from viewing the K-drama also predicted all three outcomes positively and significantly.² Likewise, both NFA (H2) and ND (H3)

Table 1
Zero-Order Correlations among Focal Variables

	1	2	3	4	5
1. Naïve Dialecticism					
2. Need for Affect	.40***				
3. Mixed Response	.25***	.17***			
4. Enjoyment	.18***	.29***	.19***		
5. Appreciation	.23***	.31***	.38***	.72***	
6. Suspense	.16***	.18***	.45***	.42***	.61***

Note. *** $p < .001$

Table 2
Predictors of the Gratifications of K-Entertainment Recently Viewed

	Enjoyment	Appreciation	Suspense
Step 1			
Age	-.10**	-.07*	-.11**
Gender (Female = 1)	.03	.08*	-.02
K-drama use frequency	.33***	.32***	.17***
How recently viewed	.08*	.06	.06
Number of episodes viewed	.15***	.18***	.18***
R^2	.16***	.17***	.09***
Step 2			
Naïve Dialecticism (ND)	.08*	.14***	.11**
Need for Affect (NFA)	.22***	.22***	.11**
ΔR^2	.07***	.09***	.03***
Step 3			
Mixed Response	.08*	.29***	.39***
ΔR^2	.01*	.08***	.13***
F	27.00***	45.94***	31.37***
N	744	744	744

Note. Entries are standardized β . * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

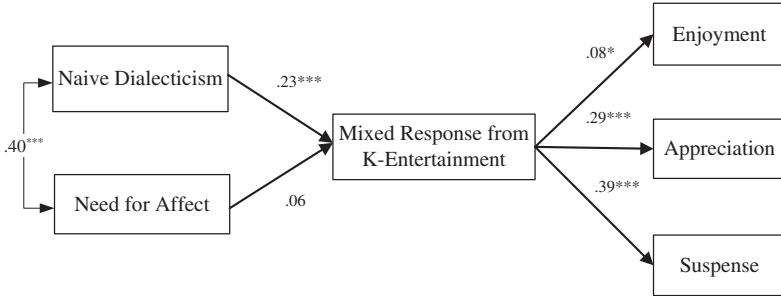
predicted enjoyment, appreciation, and suspense of the K-drama positively and significantly. Thus, H1, H2, and H3 were supported.

Mediation Effects of Mixed Response

H4 predicted that mixed response would mediate the positive relationship between ND as well as, to a lesser degree, NFA and each of the three outcomes. To test this hypothesis, a series of indirect effect analyses pertaining to each of the three outcomes were performed using AMOS 24 (Figure 1). A bootstrapping procedure ($N = 5,000$) and 95% bias-corrected confidence intervals were employed. The five variables in the first step of the regression analyses were controlled in these analyses. First, the path coefficients (Figure 1) showed that ND (not NFA) predicted mixed responses positively and significantly. The subsequent path coefficients also revealed that mixed responses predicted all three outcomes positively and significantly.

Second, specific indirect effects of ND vs. NFA on each of the three outcomes through mixed response were examined (Table 3). Results showed that mixed response³ mediated the relationships between ND and each of the three outcomes positively and significantly.⁴ In contrast, mixed response did not mediate the relationships between NFA and each of the three outcomes significantly. Finally, a series of contrast tests that examined the statistical differences in the strength of indirect effects ND vs. NFA for each of the three outcomes were performed using

Figure 1
Path Coefficients of the Mediation Model of Mixed Response



Note. * $p < .05$, *** $p < .001$. Entries are standardized β . The five control variables and the direct effects were not pictured for a parsimonious presentation. Covariance among error term of the three gratification outcomes: enjoyment and appreciation = .56 ($SE = .04$), $p < .001$; appreciation and suspense = .52 ($SE = .04$), $p < .001$; enjoyment and suspense = .33 ($SE = .04$), $p < .001$.

Table 3
Indirect Effects of ND Vs. NFA on the Gratifications of K-Entertainment through Mixed Response

Indirect Effect Paths	Bootstrapped		95% Bias-Corrected CI	
	Effect (<i>b</i>)	SE	LL	HL
Naïve Dialecticism (ND)				
(1) ND → Mixed Response → Enjoyment	.023*	.01	.003	.052
(2) ND → Mixed Response → Appreciation	.09***	.02	.057	.136
(3) ND → Mixed Response → Suspense	.14***	.03	.089	.201
Need for Affect (NFA)				
(4) NFA → Mixed Response → Enjoyment	.005	.01	-.001	.022
(5) NFA → Mixed Response → Appreciation	.02	.02	-.008	.056
(6) NFA → Mixed Response → Suspense	.03	.03	-.013	.086
Indirect Effect ND minus Indirect Effect NFA				
(1) minus (4)	.02*	.01	.002	.047
(2) minus (5)	.07*	.03	.017	.124
(3) minus (6)	.11*	.04	.027	.188

Note. * $p < .05$, *** $p < .001$

user-defined commands in AMOS 24. Results confirmed that the indirect effects of ND on enjoyment, appreciation, and suspense, respectively, through mixed response were stronger than those of NFA.⁵ Thus, H4 was supported.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to explore whether a) mixed response of the two opposing states can explain the appeal of K-entertainment, and b) a cultural trait (ND), rather than a personality trait (NFA), explains the appeal better among Asian viewers through the framework of culturally fit emotion. Results revealed that mixed response, NFA, and ND predicted enjoyment, appreciation, and suspense of the K-entertainment, respectively. Importantly, mixed response mediated the positive association between ND (*not* NFA) and each of the three gratifying outcomes, suggesting that strong mixed response as a specific mechanism that explains the appeal of K-entertainment among Asian viewers.

Theoretical and Practical Implications

This study has several theoretical implications. It provides a theoretical framework of ND that explains the appeal of K-entertainment characterized by a mixed response — as a means of realizing Asians viewers' central cultural goals — to be differentiated from the theoretical framework of NFA that primarily focuses on achieving personal goals. The results suggested that mixed response reflects culturally fit emotional experience for Asian viewers to experience a good balance between positivity and negativity, to fulfill cultural mandates of realizing harmony and moderation, and to derive gratification.

This research suggests the importance of cultural goals triggered by ND that may govern subsequent K-entertainment consumption, but little is known regarding these goals in the extant literature. Western scholars identified seeking pleasure, excitement, meaningfulness, information utility, and personal control, among others, as personal goals of consuming entertainment messages (Bryant & Vorderer, 2006). While seeking personal control can be a central cultural goal in Western cultures, seeking relationship harmony with close in-group members can be a central cultural goal in Asian cultures (Kitayama, Karasawa, Curhan, Ryff, & Markus, 2010). Future research may expand the extant literature by exploring how these cultural goals can be fulfilled through entertainment consumption.

The findings also suggest that existing entertainment theories may benefit from considering the framework of ND and mixed response. For example, because excitation-transfer theory discusses two separate arousing moments *regardless of their valence*, the effect of ND on suspense through mixed response might indicate a subtype of excitation transfer that implies unique cultural meanings. Likewise,

disposition theory may benefit from considering the changes of viewers' opposing emotional experiences during their exposure to entertainment narratives. Even if viewers may experience *distress* momentarily, this negative emotion may create a motivation for the viewers to keep engaging with the narrative with *hope*, and the viewers may feel *relieved* when the resolution is reached (Nabi & Green, 2015).

This research also addresses important questions regarding the multi-faceted nature of mixed response that can be addressed in future research. An interesting question is whether two blended opposing affects reflect simultaneous mixed response, whereas two juxtaposed opposing affects reflect sequentially experienced mixed response (Nabi & Green, 2015). For example, people feel both happy and sad at the same time, while watching a particular scene in an emotionally powerful Italian film, *Life is Beautiful* (Larsen et al., 2001). In contrast, a popular Korean comedy film, *Miracle in Cell No. 7*, portrays a laugh-inducing scene (e.g., playing a trivial/silly game) immediately after a tear-inducing scene (e.g., heart-wrenching separation of daughter from father). Indeed, our results from the multiple mediation model (Footnote 5) imply that mixed physical (vs. affective) experience may better tap into changes from positivity to negativity (or vice versa). Future work is warranted to better understand the difference between simultaneously and sequentially experienced mixed responses.

This research also offers practical implications for entertainment media industries. Entertainment content producers predominantly concentrate their energy on storylines, content themes, socio-cultural values of interest, attractive actors, production techniques, soundtracks, and the like to create popular content that attracts viewers. These characteristics reflect the substance of the entertainment *content* per se. However, the current findings clearly suggest that to enhance viewers' gratification, the subjective emotional experiences that viewers obtain by consuming the entertainment content – particularly mixed response – must be considered.

Accordingly, the entertainment industry may benefit from considering entertainment narratives' emotional flows that are defined as "the evolution of the emotional experiences during exposure to a media message, which is marked by a series of emotional shifts" (Nabi & Green, 2015, p. 7). Emotional flow may involve one or more affective shifts, including 1) from positive to negative (or vice versa), 2) from positive to positive (e.g., from feeling happy to feeling excited), and 3) from negative to negative (e.g., from feeling sad to feeling angry). Additionally, when distributing messages that induce a mixed response, entertainment distributors should consider the enduring traits of target viewers, such as NFA and ND, to ensure that their entertainment content matches the viewers' desired gratification with regard to the actual experience of mixed responses.

Limitations and Future Research

Several study limitations are noteworthy. First, participants named titles of K-drama watched most recently. Although this procedure allowed respondents to report their retrospective experiences freely while watching K-dramas, future research may select

popular K-dramas as stimulus materials and replicate our findings in an experimental setting to establish causal relationships. Second, we assessed mixed response retrospectively by averaging memory-based self-reported data that may include erroneous recall, because participants may have preferentially remembered the readily accessible emotional episodes in their mind (Robinson & Clore, 2002). Specifically, respondents may have recalled “peak” and “end” emotional moments within the whole episodes that they had watched, as these particular (peaks/ends) rather than averaged moments have been identified as readily accessible to respondents’ minds (Kahneman, Fredrickson, Schreiber, & Redelmeier, 1993). Future research would benefit from collecting mixed response continuously in real time (Alwitt, 2002) by using innovative measurement tools (e.g., recording facial expressions).

Third, we addressed K-drama genres broadly without exploring possible differential effects of subgenres or happy/sad resolutions of K-dramas on mixed responses. Because previous research suggested that serious drama, rather than comedy, may induce a greater mixed response (Kim et al., 2014), future research should explore the effect of sub-genres of dramas, other genres (e.g., horrors), or resolutions on mixed response. Lastly, because only K-drama viewers were eligible to take part in this study, we had relatively low response rates, although our sample characteristics closely resembled those of K-drama Asian audience (i.e., more females than males, more adults aged over 30 than aged 18–29; Yang, 2012). As we combined the data from three Asian countries to examine the effects of shared cultural traits associated with entertainment gratification, this approach allowed us to better generalize our theoretical claim across these nations. However, we observed some different patterns among these countries, possibly due to the small sample size for or other cultural factors specific to each country. Additional work should address these possibilities with improved response rates and larger sample sizes in each country, in addition to identifying other unique cultural traits relevant to entertainment gratifications.

Future research may expand the current scope and collect data from other Asian countries (e.g., Vietnam) – as well as from South American (e.g., Chile) and Western countries (e.g., France and the U.S.) – to understand the appeal of K-entertainment among a global audience through the utility of ND and NFA. Perhaps NFA, rather than ND, might explain the appeal better in non-Asian countries because mixed response may be more closely related to the fulfillment of personal goals (e.g., understanding strong emotions) in these countries. A cross-cultural research that directly compares Asian viewers with Western viewers who consume K-entertainment may provide better explanations on such speculations.

Conclusion

With the increasing popularity of K-entertainment around the globe (including Western European countries recently), more scholarly attention should be given to understand the appeal of non-Western entertainment because existing theoretical explanations of media entertainment are skewed toward a Western focus. Guided by the notion of culturally fit

emotions, this research demonstrates that cultural traits, beyond personality traits, shared by Asian viewers explain the appeal of K-entertainment characterized by mixed responses. This study thus provides practical directions for the future of the Korean Wave by suggesting distinct explanations of the importance of emotional narratives in K-entertainment across the globe.

Notes

1. Although the reliability was within a minimally acceptable range (Cortina, 1993), it was relatively low. Asian respondents may have responded differently to the scale that was developed and tested with Western samples.
2. Mixed affective (vs. physical) response alone ($\beta = -.06, p = .097$) was not a significant predictor of enjoyment.
3. Relating to footnote 2, mixed affective (vs. physical) response alone did not mediate the positive association between ND and enjoyment ($\beta = -.01, p = .07$).
4. When the data was split by country, the indirect effect on enjoyment was not significant in Singapore and Taiwan, as the positive association between mixed response and enjoyment did not reach significance, $\beta_{\text{Singapore}} = .06, p = .36$; $\beta_{\text{Taiwan}} = .03, p = .59$. In the case of Taiwan, the indirect effects on the three outcomes were not significant, as the positive association between ND and mixed response did not approach significance, $\beta = .11, p = .10$.
5. To examine whether mixed physical (vs. affective) response was a stronger mediator, a multiple mediation model using PROCESS (Model 4) (Hayes, 2018) was tested. Results confirmed that mixed physical (vs. affective) response was a statistically stronger mediator for all three outcomes. The strength of indirect effects differed significantly between the two responses: $b_{\text{enjoyment}} = .14, SE = .03, 95\% \text{ CI } [.090, .215]$; $b_{\text{appreciation}} = .17, SE = .03, \text{ CI } [.106, .240]$; $b_{\text{suspense}} = .06, SE = .03, \text{ CI } [.006, .126]$.

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