

KOREAN BRAND AMBASSADORS AND NATIONALISM



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A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Arts in Korean Studies
Inter-Department of Korean Studies
Graduate School
Chulalongkorn University
Academic Year 2018
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การศึกษาชุดตราสินค้าเกาหลีและชาตินิยม



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วิทยานิพนธ์นี้เป็นส่วนหนึ่งของการศึกษาตามหลักสูตรปริญญาศิลปศาสตรมหาบัณฑิต

สาขาวิชาเกาหลีศึกษา สหสาขาวิชาเกาหลีศึกษา

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(KOREAN BRAND AMBASSADORS AND NATIONALISM) อ.ที่ปรึกษาหลัก : ดร.

ทรายแก้ว ทิพากร

งานวิจัยฉบับนี้ มีจุดประสงค์เพื่อศึกษา วิธีการเลือกทูตตราสินค้าของประเทศเกาหลี (แบรนด์แอมบาสเดอร์ Brand Ambassadors) ของสินค้าประเภทต่างๆ ว่ามีวิธีการเลือกขึ้น อยู่ วิธีการแสดงออก ถึง ความรักชาติ (Nationalism) หรือ ไม่ โดยผลการวิจัยได้สรุปออกมาว่า ความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างทูตตราสินค้าเกาหลีในการแสดงออกถึงความรักชาตินั้น ยังคงมีอยู่ในการเลือกใช้ทูตตราสินค้าเกาหลีในสินค้าบางประเภท ที่บริษัทต้องการขายสินค้านั้นๆในประเทศ (Domestic market) เช่น ผลิตภัณฑ์ท้องถิ่นอย่างเหล้าโซจู (Soju) การใช้ทูตตราสินค้าที่เหมาะสมกับตัวสินค้าจึงเป็นเรื่องที่มีความสำคัญเป็นอย่างมาก ส่วนการส่งออกถึงความรักชาตินั้น ไม่ได้มีความสำคัญมากเท่าไรหรอกในเชิงธุรกิจประเภทสินค้าส่งออก (International Market) แต่การแสดงถึงความรักชาติจะทำให้แฟนคลับทั้งในชาติและต่างประเทศชื่นชมในตัวทูตตราสินค้าเกาหลีผู้นั้น จากการสัมภาษณ์โดยเชิงลึกยังได้พบอีกว่า บริษัทในประเทศไทยมักเลือกใช้ทูตตราสินค้าที่มาจากกลุ่มบอยแบนด์หรือเกิร์ลกรุ๊ป ที่มีสมาชิกเป็นคนไทยอีกด้วย ส่วนในต่างประเทศบริษัทส่วนใหญ่เลือกใช้ทูตตราสินค้าที่มีความสามารถในการสื่อสารภาษาอังกฤษเพื่อช่วยบริษัทขยายฐานแฟนสินค้าของบริษัท และแฟนคลับของตัวเอง

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ลายมือชื่อนิสิต

ลายมือชื่อ อ.ที่ปรึกษาหลัก

5987517820 : MAJOR KOREAN STUDIES

KEYWORD: KOREAN NATIONALISM, KOREAN BRAND AMBASSADORS, NATIONALIST
 Pacharawan Pathmanand : KOREAN BRAND AMBASSADORS AND
 NATIONALISM. Advisor: Saikaew Thipakorn, Ph.D.

The purpose of this study is to examine the expression of Nationalism that it is the main reason brands chosen the Korean Brand Ambassadors. The result of the study on the topic of Korean Brand Ambassadors and Korean nationalism explained that Korean domestic market needs a nationalist as a Brand Ambassadors to sell cultural products such as SoJu (Korean Beverage). Furthermore, in case of selling products in International market, being a nationalist is not the key for brands to have chosen the Brand Ambassador. However, if the Brand Ambassadors chose to represent himself or herself as a nationalist, they can gain more fans from within the country and also get the admiration from international fans.



Field of Study: Korean Studies

Student's Signature

Academic Year: 2018

Advisor's Signature

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First of all, I would like to express my appreciation and gratitude to my Thesis advisor, Prof. Saikew Thipakorn, Ph.D., for her consideration, kindness, encouragement and helpful guidance in every step of my thesis.

I also would like to thank my thesis examination committee for their encouragement and amazing advice to complete my thesis. Also, I would like to thank Korean studies program coordinator, Miss Nongluck Boonthiem, for her helpful advice and supports.

Most importantly, I would like to thank my dad, my mom, my brothers and also my sister who gave me so much love and support for this thesis without their support it would be impossible to finish it.

Lastly, I would like to thank Korean studies program for planting the seed of knowledge in me and other classmates.



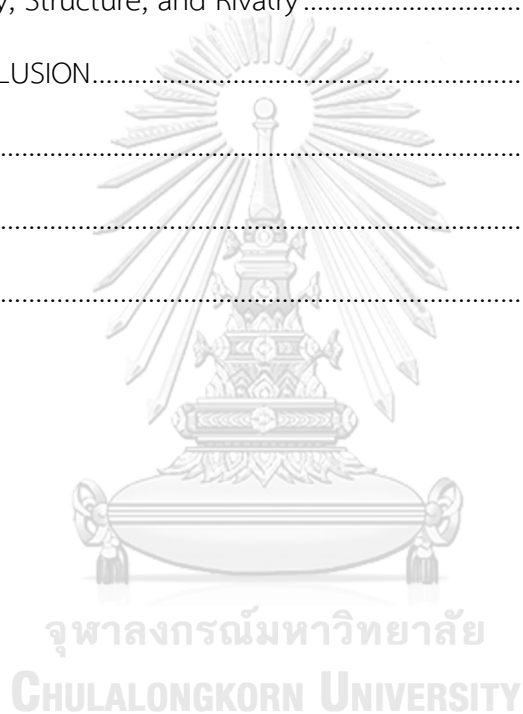
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In the global entertainment industry and media trends today, South Korea has become one of the major leaders in the world. In the past decade, this country has exported famous young artists into the entertainment market. Furthermore, their presence has not only created a positive impression in the Asian market, but also in Hollywood. As a consequence, South Korea is one of the only countries in the world that has dedicated its goal to become the world's leader in exporting popular culture.

In examining the history of South Korea in the last two decades, the country experienced some difficulties. It was struggling to keep its existence in the world and people were starving to death due to the war that separated Korea into North and South. This was due to the fact that South Korea and North Korea faced movements of different political ideologies from the United States of America (USA) and the Soviet Union in which both the USA and Soviet Union wanted to expand their political beliefs.

Historically, the term “nationalism” is the modern concept form of ideology to promote the interests of a particular nation. The concept aims to maintain

sovereignty over the homeland. The term is further connected to the concept of self-determination that people will have rights and equality opportunities (Kohn).

Along with national identity, nationalism is oriented towards the development of social characteristics; such as, culture, language, religion, beliefs, politics, etc.

Nationalism is therefore linked to patriotism, which seeks to preserve the “Way of pride in national achievements”. Nationalism was addressed back in 1844 however, the concept is older. The term later became important among various countries in the 19th century, but by 1914, it had become a weapon of humankind to use against one another (History).

For the case of South Korea, the use of the nationalist movement refers to the protection of the ancient culture and national identity from foreign countries. The colonial period in Korea is one of the major reasons that the people protected and fostered their national identity. Thus, the early form of the Korean nationalist movement was to oppose any foreign influences.

From all of the difficulties and circumstances, Koreans have always chosen to represent the nation first. There were several uprisings and movements, which happened, in the colonial period. Koreans opposed the Japanese, Americans and sometimes also the Chinese. Consequently, there were many nationalists throughout Korean history who maintained the national identity. The pride of the nation after

the war was very important for its people; to feel free and to be able to experience real freedom was very much a priority for South Korea.

The beginning of the massive Korean Wave or in the very popular term “Hallyu”, which the term came from Chinese, is used to refer to the phenomenal growth of Korean culture and popular culture. The phenomenon of Korean Pop culture happened around the mid-1990s, with several countries in Asia slowly absorbing it, including China, Japan, and Thailand (Jin, Fall 2012).

The peak of the Korean pop or K-pop industry started in the late 1990s to the mid-2000s. By this time, the Korean pop music industry had experienced double-digit growth rates (edward1849, 2011).

Many K-pop idols were also being chosen to be the representative of famous brand name products. Initially, "presenter" was the term used to describe Korean idols as brand presenters. However, the term “brand ambassador” became the new concept of marketing for many companies. After the successful era of Korean products, many companies, both domestically and internationally, have chosen Korean celebrities as the presenters or brand ambassadors of their products and services.

In recent years, the huge change of globalization has spread all over the world. The relationship between each country has been driven forward by a

business's perspectives. As such, Korean companies have led the world market and successfully promoted their products.

Brand ambassadors are a major accomplishment and the nation's pride together with electronics and cars. Many times, Korean idols have been chosen by brands, Korean or international, to be the representatives of the brand, to give their personal brand endorsement, or as brand ambassadors. Most of the time, brand ambassadors would start to show the nation's spirit by appearing in an awards show or special events by wearing traditional Korean clothing or giving interviews in Korean even though they often know English and are able to speak it fluently (Tai, 2018).

Many of them are also born and raised in different countries, mostly English-speaking countries. However, they always tend to show their national heritage and ethnicity first.

The question is "Is this the way to distribute "Koreanness to the world?" It can be clearly seen that K-pop carries the pride of a nation, and that it has a role in the nationalist sentiment, as several Korean idols have appeared in different movements. Hence, can it be said whether they are true nationalists or could it be because of how corporations want them to look? (Hyo-sik).

Overall, Korean brand ambassadors do not really demonstrate true nationalist sentiment in the way they present themselves in the industry. However, the

entertainment industry does show a sense of patriotism through the use of Korean brand ambassadors in some aspects.

Therefore, this research investigated whether despite the rapid economic growth and development of globalization in South Korea, economic nationalism was still prevalent in some current areas through the use of Korean brand ambassadors.

1.1. Research Objectives



- To explore Korean nationalism.
- To explain the relationships between Korean brand ambassadors and Korean nationalism in South Korean society.

1.2. Hypothesis



- The expression of nationalism is the main reason to be chosen as a brand ambassador.

1.3. Analysis Method

This research used qualitative methodology to answer the hypothesis.

The Porter Diamond Theory of National Advantage was used to explain the competitive advantage of each nation and examine each market for the future use of Korean brand ambassadors. This theory comprises four attributes:

- A.) Factor endowment
- B.) Demand condition
- C.) Related and supporting industries
- D.) Firm strategy, structure, and rivalry

After gathering information from the literature review in Chapter 2, the researcher created questions for an in-depth interview with key informants to find the solution for the research question: The expression of nationalism is the main reason to be chosen as a brand ambassador.

The research flowchart for this chapter is as follows:



Data Collection

1) Documentary research

In order to investigate the topic of Korean brand ambassadors more in-depth, the researcher collected documentary data from both primary and secondary sources. The data collection included online news and journal articles, previous research, interviews, books, statistics, and documentaries. The previous research was related to Korean nationalism and Korean brand ambassadors.

There were also several research studies about celebrity branding, celebrity endorsement, and nationalism in each area of each market.

2) Observation

The researcher's previous life experience as an exchange student in South Korea from January to June 2017, and participation in K-pop events in Thailand were provided as examples of direct observation.

In addition, the researcher had informal conversations with K-pop fans, as well as joined in social media activities including Facebook fan pages, YouTube and Instagram, and the online observation of Thai Korean brand ambassador fans and online purchases of Korean products.

Most importantly, the key informants who participated in the in-depth interviews for different topics on this research were the key for finding the answers,

which were used to understand more about the nature of the relationship of nationalism in each area of the different markets including the domestic market, international market and potential future market.

3) Key informants' interviews

The key informants' interview included participants from different areas comprising expertise in different fields including media and entertainment agencies in Thailand, South Korean media agencies and e-commerce companies.

In this research, the interview questions were distributed to four key informants who were experts in different areas of the market. The duration of the in-depth interview was approximately two hours for each participant.

For this research, a pseudonym was used for each interviewee's name and the company's name was not mentioned; for example, "interviewee" replaced an interviewee named "Miss Pacharawan Pathmanand".

The examples below are questions that the researcher used in the interview:

- Do you think that being a nationalist is the primary reason the brands chose a brand ambassador?

- Do you think that the Korean market needs to use a Korean as a brand ambassador to sell a certain type of product?

The key informants for the in-depth interviews in this research included four different experts from varied fields that had supported diverse aspects on the issue of Korean nationalism in the selection of brand ambassadors. The first interviewee was from a Thai media agency, two interviewees were from Korean media agencies, and one participant was from an e-commerce company called Konvy, which mainly sold imported cosmetics in the Thai market.

A) Thai media agency

The first selected key informant was an entertainment agency in Thailand. The researcher chooses this informant because the Thai media agency market is huge in the Southeast Asia market compared to other countries and could answer the questions on the topic, as Thai advertising companies seemed to always work with Korean idols as brand ambassadors.

The key informant had been working with a renowned Thai entertainment agency for several years and provided some interesting information for this research about how each company decides what is best for the brand in terms of selecting brand ambassadors.

B) South Korean media agencies

The two key informants were employed with South Korean media agencies based in Seoul, South Korea and in the United States of America. Because there were two different participants, the researcher was able to obtain opinions on differing topics and gather new information about the topic.

C) E-commerce company

The e-commerce company that the researcher chose to conduct the interview with is a cosmetic e-commerce company that allows Thai clients to buy imported skincare, haircare and cosmetic products from different brands from around the world, especially products from Asian countries; such as, Japan, South Korea, etc.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Case Studies of Past Celebrity Endorsement

The concept of celebrity endorsement is a very well-established marketing strategy. The concept was first used in the late 19th century and applied to product marketing or traditional branding. However, the concept has been used widespread to not only include just selling products for brands, but also as a marketing strategy for non-profit organizations that promote health communication. The current strategy of advertisement incorporates celebrity branding (Johannes Knoll, 2017).

The majority of studies about celebrity endorsement have been conducted on customers' behavior, and whether using various types of celebrities changes the behavior and attitudes. However, despite the large number of studies on this topic, no further in-depth review had been conducted since the one by Erdogan (1999) and the meta-analysis by Amos, Holmes, and Strutton (2008). Erdogan's review particularly focused on attractiveness models but not very little on other aspects relating to this issue (Amos, 2008).

Amos, Holmes, and Strutton's study (2008) only noted that advertisements featuring celebrities generated a large positive impact than those that did not use a

celebrity. The study also showed the advantages of companies that used celebrities as the company's brand endorser.

2.1.1 Literature review

Lucouw (2014) informed that the use of a brand ambassador in marketing campaigns has great advantages and benefits. The selection of a brand ambassador needs to be decided carefully in order to obtain the perfect image. Although brand ambassadors might not be the representative of the entire brand, selecting the right brand ambassadors would have a more important impact on the decision-making process than the brand itself (Lucouw, 2014).

What is a brand endorser (celebrity branding)? The majority of reviewed articles did not define celebrity endorsement. However, McCracken's (1989) definition of the term is "Any individual who enjoys public recognition". Today, celebrities' endorsement is mostly based on somewhat an agreement between the companies or organizations. It can be implied that a person who enjoys a public appearance for the purpose of a promotion of the company is celebrity endorsement (Erdogan, 2010).

Mostly, the studies have focused on the usage of celebrities in advertising. From many studies, celebrity endorsement is common among Asian markets and companies even though the concept originally came from Western companies, but the main users for celebrity endorsement are Asians. With regards to global celebrity

endorsement, South Korea has a total of 61%, China has 25% while Europe and the USA shared less than 15% (Praset, 2008).

In addition, there were several previous research studies based on celebrity endorsement usage. One interesting study was conducted by Sejung Marina Choi, Wei-Na Lee, and Hee-Jung Kim (2005), which compared the differences between the USA and South Korea with respect to a celebrity's characteristics, type of product endorsed and the content of the advertisement.

Belch and Belch (2015) also offered an insight on the use of celebrity endorsers in USA magazine advertisements, which found that celebrities were used in only around 10% of all magazines (George E. Belch, 2015).

Kamins (1988) pointed out that an advertisement with a celebrity as a spokesperson performed better on brand attitude. The researcher stated that brands with celebrity endorsers could positively affect consumer responses better than brands with non-celebrities (Kamins, 1988).

Moreover, Mishra et al. (1996) mentioned that word of mouth was a reliable source in making the purchase decisions for everybody.

Dyson and Turco (1998) explained that customers choose goods and services endorsed by celebrities instead of brands with no endorsements.

Additionally, Klopper and North (2011) stated that the field and scope of marketing has undergone humorous change over the years as "Everything can be branded including humans."

Bergkvist and Qiang Zhou (2014) explained that it is a challenge for celebrity prevalence research to explore this area beyond pure descriptive research. This is because this type of research is considered not to be making any contribution to the world of advertising literature. Therefore, future research studies could aim to test theories or increase theoretical views (Lars Bergkvist, 2014).

Sridevi explained the results of his research were based on fast-moving customer goods (FMCG) that celebrity advertisement has a positive impact on purchasing. The brands that used celebrity advertisement were likely to be more successful and have a better brand image than others (J.Sridevi, 2014).

2.2 The Use of Brand Ambassadors

Wang and Hariandja explained in their research results that the bakery company from South Korea, "Tous Les Jours" used the famous Korean idol "Kim Hyun Joon" as the brand ambassador to promote a new bakery in the Indonesia market. The results showed that the good attractive image of a brand ambassador played a major role in the customers' decision in purchasing the product (bakery). In general, the sales of a product might not prove to be successful, but with the

positive image of the brand along with the good image of the brand ambassador, this can create fast purchasing decisions from customers (Evo Sampetua Hariandja, 2016).

Furthermore, Bassey's research focused on the phenomenon of Germany's nation branding and its relationship with the nation's image. This is a prime case study of effective country branding (Bassey, 2012).

In the past, Germany had to deal with an identity issue as well as both internal and external conflict. Based on Bassey's research, he believes that the nation branding of Germany had a positive effect on the global perspective of the country; however, some aspects could not be solved through so-called marketing campaigns. The positive impact of Germany's public diplomacy strategies created beneficial purposes by encouraging the country's tourism, foreign direct investments, exports, and image.

The research examined the current practice of modern day international relations, which included the use of social media and global economy that had had the biggest role in the nation's identity. The paper explained how nation branding ignited a new form of German nationalism while the country moved away from the old social form to a broader demographic representative of modern-day German society.

Volcic and Andrejevic also described the concept of nation branding as a form of governance by means of market imperatives. The research examined

Slovenia's nation branding and nationalism, as well as the practitioners who were involved in the nation's respective branding both directly and indirectly. The study included 12 in-depth interviews (Zala Volcic, 2011).

The case of Slovenia was issued in 2007, just prior to the country becoming a member of the European Union (EU). As a consequence, the Ministry of Economic Development and Technology established the new branding campaign for the country. Initially, there was no nation branding, but after some years, Slovenia presented the slogan called "I feel Slovenia" with the word love being included in the slogan to show the natural sense and feeling that Slovenes have and share to the public. The government and private sector promoted the slogan to be used in the country (Belšak, 2015).

Anovax Research Consultants for Strategic Marketing explained China's nationalism and marketing in a very interesting way. The company said that the local Chinese brand of nationalism is a very powerful tool that can be used strategically and tactically. The local electronics brand, Aigo provides a prime example as the brand's name itself means "love your country", and one of the company's campaigns used Zhang Hanyu, a renowned Chinese actor as a brand icon and also brand ambassador. Therefore, using the patriotic chord may help brands to connect with customers (Annovax, 2015).

In comparison to the previous research that was political-cultural related, this current choice of study focused more on understanding how South Korean brands attempted to present their products to various markets by using different kinds of Korean brand ambassadors.

The current research included two different topics and issues about Korean nationalism and the use of Korean brand ambassadors in South Korean society. This research consisted of different in-depth interviews from experts in various fields comprising South Korean advertising agencies, a Thai agency and also an e-commerce company.

2.3 South Korea Case Studies from Previous Studies

After, the liberation and establishment of the Republic of Korea, the Korean government was still maintained. Likewise, Korean nationalism was actively promoted in the 1960s and 1970s; thus, the wave of nationalism has been prevalent in South Korea for quite a long period of time.

The study of nationalism also influenced many scholars and researchers; there are several books, which give importance to this topic including:

- A. Nations and Nationalism by Gellner (1983);
- B. Imagined Community by Anderson (1983).
- C. The Ethnic Origins of Nations by Smith (1986).

All three books considered different approaches on the topic of nationalism; however, the authors put emphasis on asking themselves "Why should people view themselves as belonging to nations?; How was the sense of nationalism produced and reproduced?"

South Korea as Korea faced various experiences in the last century. It was annexed as a part of Japan during the colonial period of 1910-1945. After the Korean War in the early 1950s, the country was divided into North and South. While the country was forced to be under the control of different superpowers, South and North Korea could manage to maintain their identity. Thus, the feeling and history of being subdued by foreign powers was the cause of nationalism (Press, 2018).

However, with regards to Korean pop idols, they have become world celebrities, as the use of idols as brand ambassadors has skyrocketed since the first wave of Hallyu in the 1990s. Consequently, brand ambassadors began to show their uniqueness of showing the love for their nation and to sell their own trademarks.

The term "brand ambassador" is also sometimes called a "corporate ambassador", who is the individual who does some promotion to raise a brand's image or awareness. Brand ambassadors are also known to be very well-mannered and have a positive mind to be able to communicate with different target audiences. In today's marketing world, the popular use of brand ambassadors can be found in every area of the market (Brain, 2015).

In addition, today, the term has expanded to more than just a presenter or celebrity branding. According to many studies, a brand ambassador is someone who is well-known among certain groups, so they have become the main selling strategy for most companies. The brand ambassador's job is to be the human communication tool for a brand.

2.4 Problem Statement



Many researchers and studies have focused on the value of brand ambassadors and only how the concept can improve the organization (Anderson and Ekman). However, for this current study, the researcher explored the use of Korean idols as Korean brand ambassadors through the selection of different companies. In the beginning, “Presenter” was the term used to describe Korean idols as brand presenters. Then later on, Korean companies commonly used the marketing concept of brand ambassador (Ekman, 2009).

As the current researcher has seen the popularity of Korean brand ambassadors in the Southeast Asian market through many products from television commercials, billboards as well as in the global market, this study explored the admiration of Korean brand ambassadors. Additionally, in the world where anti sentiment is still hidden in many areas of the global market, how do South Korean brands select the brand ambassador and what criteria do they use. Is using a Korean

brand ambassador the reason for South Korea to spread Koreanness to the world?. These are the questions that the current researcher would like to know the answer.

The majority of past studies were aimed toward being political-cultural related while this current research focused more on understanding the way each brand had attempted to present the products to the market by using brand ambassadors to help to spread Koreanness to the world.

This current research included two different topics and issues about Korean nationalism and the use of brand ambassadors in South Korean society. Moreover, this study consisted of different in-depth interviews from experts in various fields comprising Korean advertising agencies, a Thai agency and also an e-commerce company that had sold products in the past years to mainly South Koreans.

South Korea as Korea faced various experiences in the last century followed by the annexation of the colonial period in 1910-1945 and the separation of the North and South. This was a major issue for South and North Korea to maintain their national identity even though they were forced to be under control of different superpowers.

Nationalism in South Korea in this era is a challenge for brands, not only in the domestic markets but also internationally. Thus, Korean pop idols have become world celebrities, as the use of idols as brand ambassadors has skyrocketed since the first wave of Hallyu in the 1990s. Consequently, brand ambassadors began to show

their uniqueness of showing the love for their nation and to sell their own trademarks.

The nationalism concept in South Korea's society that Korea as a nation has a long history of 5,000 years. Koreans believe that they are the descendants of Dragun (the mythical founder of the Korean nation). Moreover, Koreans have identified themselves as immutable or primordial through the concept of Korean blood (Shin et al.,1999). This concept of nationalism or national identity still exists in modern-day Korean society. Even though the belief of "Dragun" is still popular today, this concept is impossible for the Korean nation to have such a long history (Gwan, 1994).

Nationalism in Korea was also formulated mainly from the cause of Japanese imperialists (Yoon 2002, p. 80). As such, the descendants of Dragun were established to be the Korean national identity. President Park Chung Hee continued the concept, especially in the 1960s and 1970s. In every school in the 1970s, the people thought that the "Charter of National Education" began with "*We have been born into this land and charged with the historic mission of regenerating the nation.*" The Korean government was obligated by the Pledge of Allegiance every day and also stood before the national flag through the 1980s.

During the colonial period, the Korean pure blood referred to the belief that the Korean people were a pure race descended from a single ancestor. First invoked during the colonial period, the idea made Koreans keep developing a sense of ethnic

homogeneity and national pride. Shin Chaeho's book "Joseon Sanggosa" in the 1920s, proclaimed that all Koreans were from the same root based on the Goguryeo Kingdom. Shin Chaeho raised a sense of ethnic homogeneity, which was a major element in Korea's politics and relationship with foreigners. In Korean working spaces, foreigners may be subject to the purity of their bloodline (Campbell, 2016).

Furthermore, there were some intellectuals that adopted a nationalist discourse against the authoritarians. In South Korea, there was a time when the lower class; such as, farmers, laborers, peasants and some intellectuals criticized the government because Koreans under an authoritarian regime depended too much on foreign investment.

However, after the fast development of South Korea and the popularity of Hallyu, it is very important to point out the different characteristics of nationalism and national identity, which is presented in the media today. South Korea after the 1990s experienced rapid change in various aspects including the nation's identity and nationalism. Yang Young-Kyun (Young-Kyun) discussed the possibility of the weakening of traditional nationalism in South Korea due to many changes. Bak Sangmee explored the consumption patterns in South Korea. Her research showed that while the importance of the nationality in the Korean people is now decreasing, globalization is becoming more important in certain parts of South Korean society (Sangmee, 2005).

In addition, Yang Young Kyun examined Korean nationalism in the era of transnationalism and globalization by using the case of Michelle Wie, a second generation Korean-American and global golf star. He explained that American mass media never raised the issue of her national identity, but the Korean mass media always emphasized her national issue by reflecting on her strong ethnic nationalist sentiment. Therefore, the use of mass media has had a role in spreading national awareness among the South Korean nation (Young-Kyun).

Of course, the intellectuals of that period, on the other hand, were against the ruling of the authoritarian regime from the 1970s. They criticized the way the government practiced the rule on the South Korean people. They also criticized the government on depending too much on foreign investment, which only benefited the upper class of the country while in fact, the country was developed by laborers, peasants, and progressive intellectuals as a foundation of the nation. Later, the folk culture, which was enjoyed by the lower class, was promoted as the prototype of national culture (Domínguez, 2002).

From the case, there were two ethnic points that displayed a different tendency. The first one was those people who adhered to the viewpoint of ethnic nationalism, and the second group was those people who maintained a civic nationalist view. According to Yang, the encounters of the two forms of nationalism

among Internet users can be examined, which means that traditional ethnic nationalism in South Korean society is not strong at all.

McDonald's restaurant is a very interesting case for South Korean nationalism. When McDonald's entered the South Korean market, the country used the campaign of local (Korean) to deal with anti-Americanism in South Korea.

Starbucks has also opened in the South Korean market in Insadong; Starbucks satisfied the people by changing the famous Starbucks logo from English to Hangeul.

Along with the evolution of brand managers to brand ambassadors in the 1990s to early 2000s, at first brand managers were used to boost a company's revenue from the mid-1950s to the mid-1960s. This was because firms used the tactic of brand managers to connect with the growth of the middle class. The increased demand for household products made companies use someone as a brand representative (Amba).

Celebrity branding had been the marketing concept of large corporations since the 1970s. However, the age of celebrity brand ambassadors started in 1995 with actress and model Cindy Crawford becoming the new face for the Omega watch company (OMEGA official).

In South Korea, the famous brand ambassador concept was quite similar to those of Western companies. The very famous example is the cosmetic and

skincare product company called Laneige, which used Hallyu star “Song Hye Kyo” for the brand for 10 years. Doreen Chia, the then brand manager of Laneige, shared the positive impact that the Korean series made on their brand awareness. The manager revealed that the use of a brand ambassador helped to boost the sales and expanded their customer base. Moreover, the help of the Hallyu star made the product reach new target groups (Writer, 2018).

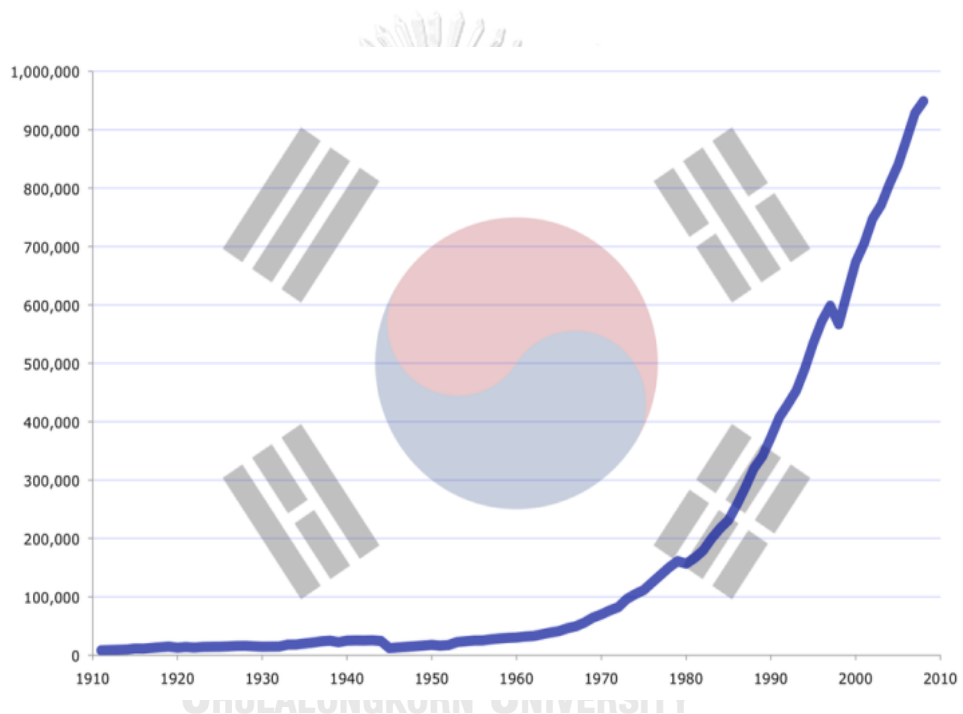
In the current research, because South Korea has experienced various issues, the country was affected by the impacts from past wars and political conflict. As such, the researcher has wondered how the country has been able to maintain the nation’s spirit and still spread the uniqueness of Koreanness to the world. As the use of a brand ambassador has become popular over the decades, South Korea is currently the number one country in the world to be using brand representatives. As a consequence, this could mean that brand ambassadors are helping the brands to sell more Korean products as well as spread the awareness, identity and image of Korean culture to the world through the help of Korean brands.

CHAPTER III

BRAND AMBASSADORS AND NATIONALISM

3.1 Korean Economic Development

Figure 1: South Korea's GDP (PPP) evolution from 1911 to 2008 in millions of dollars.



Source: Angus Maddison. South Korean flag File: Flag of South Korea.SVG (Cantus, 2010).

The diagram above explains the huge shift in South Korea's economy from 1910-2010. The first period was the period of Malthusian stagnation up to 1910. Then between the Japanese annexation in 1910 until 1945, Korea was under the control of the Japanese imperialists; however, Korea faced the lowest gross domestic product

(GDP) in 1946. Lastly, the postcolonial period when South Korea started to recover from poverty. In the 1990s, the Korean Wave and great government plan made a huge change in South Korea's economic status.

3.2 The History of Korean Advertising

3.2.1 The old era of Korean advertising

The history of modern Korean advertising is less than 100 years with the very first advertisement appearing in a government gazette called the Hansong Chubo in 1886.

During 1886-1900 was the period of the early stage of the development of modern Korean advertising which lasted until the Japanese annexation in 1910.

1910-1920 was considered to be the dark age of Korean advertising because newspapers were the only channel that people could use to communicate in that time period. All but one Korean newspaper were forced to close, which was used by the Korean government under the rule of the Japanese. As such, the Koreans were forced to read a Japanese newspaper.

During the colonial period, the Japanese subjected the Koreans to hardship in every way. There was even a cultural policy for Koreans to follow. In 1919, there was the March 1st Uprising with over two million Korean activists and nationalists

gathering into a massive crowd against the Japanese military. This event also saw the creation of the Korean Independence Movement, which established the Provisional Government of the Republic of Korea in Shanghai as well. The Movement ended in a very tragic way in which many were killed, wounded and some of the arrested were executed in public.

In 1945 until around 1968, Koreans resumed advertising in the Korean language after having used the Japanese language for such a long time. Additionally in 1957, South Korea also saw the birth of the era of a commercial television station with television commercials. Then in 1959, commercial radio came to South Korea (Maliangkay, 2008).

In the 1960s, the electronic age in South Korea began. This period saw the country facing many changes in every way. The change in media from printed advertising to TV commercials was very new and opened lots of opportunities for the country and also for international companies to trade and have easier access to the South Korea market through the use of TV commercials. At this time, soft drink companies; such as, Coca Cola and Pepsi entered the South Korea market. Moreover, in 1968, the period of internationalization for South Korean advertising began.

In 1969, South Korea found new routes with commercial and advertising agencies as well as market research. This saw the birth of Manbosa, the first

advertising agency and in 1971, the Korean Advertisers Association (KKA) was established.

In 1987, with nationwide protests for more democracy for the country, South Korea brought some changes to the entertainment industry. The government no longer censored movies, nor did movie scripts need special approval. This was supposedly a result from the pressure by the USA to open the South Korea market to Hollywood movies.

Then in 1988, South Korea hosted the Olympic Games, which was the first time for the USA and Soviet Union to compete in the Games together since 1976. TIME reported that it was a great opportunity for South Koreans to let the world see the development of the country's economy.

The result of the Olympics opened a new market for advertising companies. By January 1, 1991, South Korea liberalized and allowed foreign companies to do business in the country.

3.2.2 Modern Korean advertising

Because the use of Western celebrities had become the norm for marketing strategies, South Korea also featured their own celebrities in products for the increasing trend.

The brand ambassador became a tactic for major companies to advertise their products or services with a positive image. A brand ambassador is a person who is meant to use his/her ability to promote the brand along with the brand's strategy. Brand ambassadors are known to be a good spokesperson for the brands, beneficial influencers and also great leaders.

The current status of South Korean advertising in 1990 until today is much different after decades of heavy government censorship in the press and television. However, in 1990, the television market expanded significantly in South Korea compared to 1980, in which there were only 28 national newspapers, but now there are 122 newspaper companies. Furthermore, today, most of the news in South Korea is delivered by electronic devices, which has led the country to enter the digital era. Samsung is the best example of South Korea's most successful electronics company, and is also one of the strongest companies that started to use Korean idols as a brand ambassador (Fedorenko).

3.3 The beginning of brand ambassadors in the world market

In today's marketing world, the term "brand ambassador" is usually used to refer to celebrity branding or personal brand management. In the South Korea market in this century, about 70-75% of South Korean advertisements have featured idols or celebrities.

Value added is the extra feature(s) of the product, service, etc. Most companies use value-added features to obtain a competitive edge over companies that have more expensive products (L. Lucouw, December, 2014).

Nelson and Dedorah explained the use of celebrities and influencers in the eyes of customers is the most compelling way of attracting attention compared to a non-celebrity featured advertisement. As such, brands tend to spend more on famous celebrities for their products. Celebrities with a look image and great personality always attract large audiences for the brand. Likewise, most companies and organizations are more interested in marketing their products and gaining more views in the market share. Brand ambassadors also help the companies gain their loyalty to not only just a product, but the company overall (Okorie Nelson, 2017).

The use of a celebrity's endorsement is one of the most popular marketing strategies of advertising in the USA. A brand ambassador is someone who is hired by the companies or organizations to be the representative of the brand by helping the brand's image and raising awareness of the brand (Kamakura, 1995).

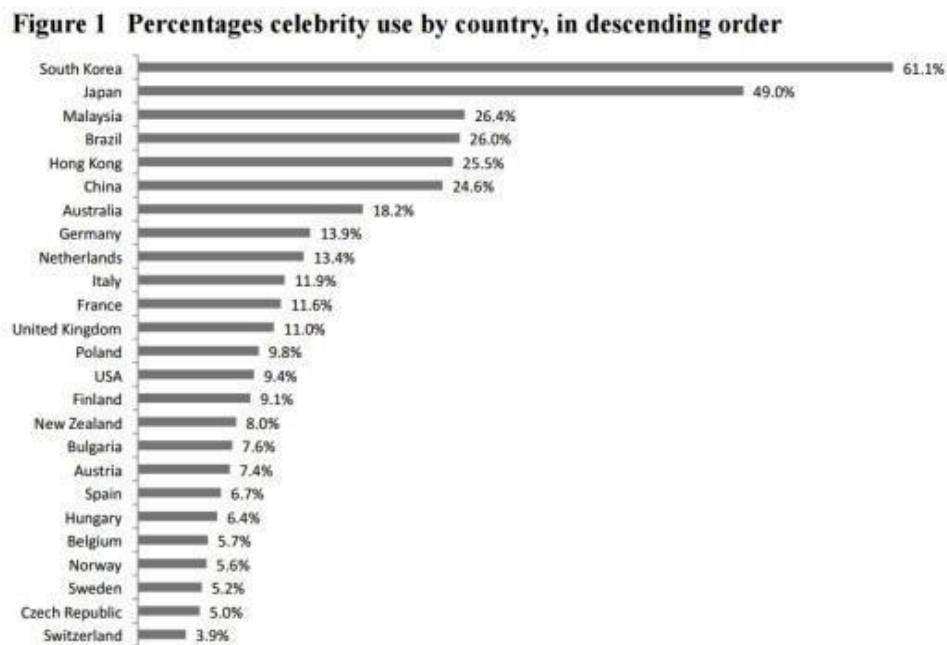
In today's market, the term "brand ambassador" is used to describe celebrities. However, brand ambassadors can definitely be someone with knowledge of the brands or products, but it is easier to use a famous, well-spoken celebrity to present a brand. Consequently, many companies usually started making products or

services around famous celebrities or even Internet influencers, YouTubers, Bloggers, Vloggers and later on they became the companies' brand ambassadors.

Around the 1980s, the world athletic clothing and sportswear brand name "Nike" noticed a talented young basketball player called Michael Jordan. Later on, he became the celebrity brand ambassador for the company. The concept of a brand ambassador with the brand is not only using celebrities by having them wear products; such as, sportswear, shoes, etc. from the company, but for both the brand and celebrity; such as, Michael Jordan to work together on how the products are going to look, the pattern of the products, as well as having the campaign after the products have been released to the market.

From the case of NIKE X, Jordan became one of the most successful celebrity brand ambassadors in USA advertising history, According to Investopedia, Jordan signed a five year US \$2.5 million deal with Nike Inc. The Air Jordan basketball shoes later became a national sensation. The business's success at its peak generated approximately US \$1 billion annually for Nike (McFarlane, 2019).

Figure 2: Percentages of celebrity use by country.



Source: The grand narrative: Celebrity Endorsement in South Korean Advertising (Preat 2009, p.10).

Figure 2 clearly shows how much celebrities in South Korea were used as brand representatives in 2009. The figure shows Korea as the first in the chart with 61.1 percentages of the usage of celebrity endorsers.

3.4 Korean Brand Ambassadors

The use of Korean brand ambassadors was popular after the Korean Wave spread throughout Asia in the 1990s. There were several Hallyu stars that later became the face of Korean brands. As a consequence, the impact of the Korean Wave not only opened the door for Korean popular culture, but also became a

measure of the positive lifestyle for many Asian people. By that time, not much had been known about South Korea. During the same period of time, nationalism sentiment began to rise in South Korean society as a result of the end of the Cold War (Ryoo, 2008). The image of the Korean War had created a bad outcome for South Korea in the world's eyes. However, the help of the Korean Wave had diminished and purified the negative image of South Korea (Roll, 2008).

In a very competitive market, brands not only create an image, but also use the tactic of using a brand ambassador as a brand representative, and many brands are willing to display more of the Korean culture and traditions and add them into the brands.

After South Korea opened itself to the world in 1988, the use of Korean brand ambassadors were ignited from Hallyu in the 1990s by only using idols as a presenter of the brands to being the spokesperson of the brands as brand ambassadors (Paek, 2015).

Korean Popular culture or K-pop has massive influence over the rest of Asia and now almost all over the world. It is no surprise that even international brands are also choosing to feature Korean celebrities in their products' advertising and commercials.

In addition the use of Korean celebrities is not only as brand ambassadors for famous Korean brands or international brands. There are many idols who are also part of non-profit organizations, which makes the idol appear to be thoughtful and considerate toward the people in the country. This has resulted in creating stronger fan bases for the idols and attracted people's attention to the non-profit organizations as well.

Many Korean pop idols have taken on the responsibilities and been a good role model as a brand or organization ambassador. Despite their hectic schedule and music promotions, some have taken the time to become an honorary ambassador of special organizations. By becoming an idol ambassador, they take on the responsibility of fulfilling dutiful events, which promote not just the organization, but themselves as a good example of society as well.

Table 1: Example of Korean products using Korean idols as brand ambassadors

<u>BRAND</u>	<u>PRODUCT</u>	<u>BRAND AMBASSADORS</u>
DNA	Fashion / Clothing lines	Winner (Boy Band): Seunghoo/Mino
Samsung	Mobile phones	Kim Soo Hyun (Actor)
Laneige	Cosmetics	Song Hye Gyo (Actress) Lee Sung Kyoung (Actress)
The Face Shop	Cosmetics	Bae Suzy (Actress / Solo artist)
LG	Electronics	Lee Min Ho (Actor) Super Junior (Boy Band)
Moonshot	Cosmetics	BlackPink (Girl Group)

BlackPink



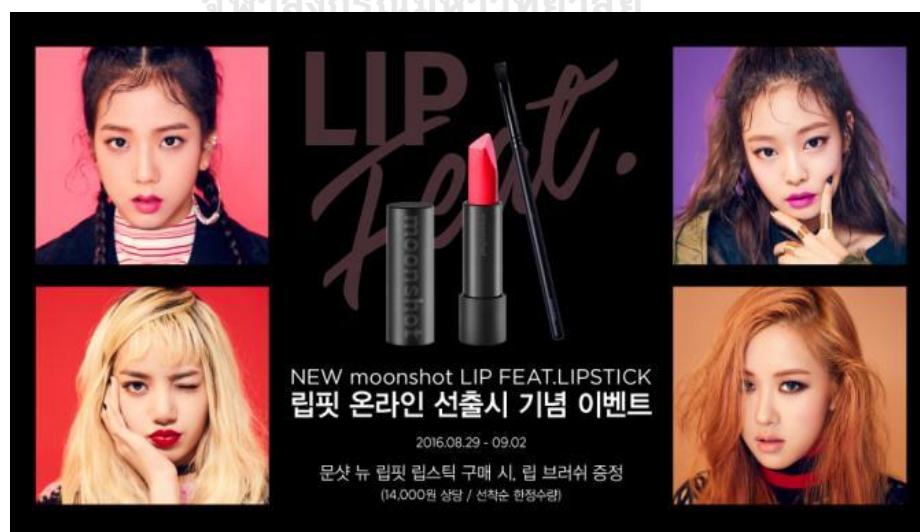
The South Korean girl group named BlackPink is one of the fastest-growing girl groups, which placed second behind famous boy band Exo for brand reputation in August 2016 by Naver top Korean singer brands power ranking (Zellner, 2019).

The group debuted on August 8, 2016, with four members consisting of three South Korean members Jisoo, Jennie, Rose and Thai member Lisa, and has become even more famous for the public. BlackPink is the highest charting female South Korean pop act on the Billboard Hot 100 peaking at number 55 for their new song and on the Billboard 200 at number 40 for their album. From this, BlackPink is

considered as the first female South Korean girl group to have entered the Billboard's Emerging Artists chart. Now, the group has become a brand endorser or brand ambassador for many brands. Another study from Naver in 2016 revealed that BlackPink had already surpassed the famous Girls' Generation (SNSD) and also Twice.

In May 2017, BlackPink became the brand ambassadors for the Incheon Main Customs. BlackPink has also endorsed and collaborated with Korean brands, street brands, high-end international brands including Puma, Reebok, Dior Cosmetics, Louis Vuitton, Chanel, Moonshot, Sprite Korea, Lotte sparkling water, Shibuya 109, Tokyo Girls collection x Cecil Mcbee, Adidas Women, Guess, Kiss me cosmetics, and also the e-commerce shopping company Shopee.

Figure 3: BlackPink as a brand ambassador of Moonshot, a famous South Korean cosmetics brand.



Source: YGdreamers (2016).

Brands most likely want to work with BlackPink not only for their fame and appearance, but also BlackPink's style makes them suitable for many brands from Asian clothing street brands to high-end luxury brands. Brands always choose to work with BlackPink due to the variety of styles that suit the whole group.

Song Hye Kyo.

Song Hye Kyo (born November 22, 1981) is a famous Korean actress who starred in her first role in the drama "Autumn in My Heart" in 2002, and her most famous role in "Full House" in 2004 made her a top Korean Hallyu star. In 2017, Song ranked no. 7 in Forbes magazine for the Korean Power Celebrity List. She received the title of South Korea's most beautiful woman in 2011.

Song Hye Kyo's image is always down to earth with a straight-forward relationship style. She has captured the hearts of viewers all over the globe. Song was the brand ambassador of the South Korean famous skincare products brand Laneige Cosmetics for 10 years.

Figure 4: Song Hye Kyo, a famous actress as a brand ambassador of Laneige cosmetics.



Source: LANEIGE: Female celebrities that are endorsing cosmetics brands (2016).

Kim Soo Hyun

Kim Soo Hyun (born February 16, 1988) achieved fame from his first role in the drama called “Dream High” in 2011, and his recent drama “My Love from the Star”, which made him a worldwide sensation.

He received an award for South Korea’s Actor of the Year in 2014, and was first included in the Forbes Korea Power Celebrity list in 2013. The business magazine’s Asia edition also listed him in its 30 under 30 in 2016, with his soft and kind image. Kim loves traveling. He was also chosen to be the brand ambassador for Samsung in 2015.

Figure 5: Kim Soo Hyun as brand ambassador for Samsung.



Source: Samsung Ad K-Entertainment (2015).

Red Velvet

In 2016, Red Velvet (SM Entertainment) became the ambassadors of the Red Cross Youth (RCY). The group was chosen to be the organization's ambassadors to engage young people to understand the importance of global causes. The good image of the group has helped the organization get more views from youth. As the ambassadors of the Red Cross Youth, Red Velvet's members have to promote different activities with elementary, high school and college students including basic health awareness, social inclusion and most importantly global interaction.

Figure 6: Red Velvet, a famous girl group from SM entertainment as a brand ambassador of the Red Cross Youth (RCY) in 2016.



Source: Red Cross Youth (RCY) (2016).

Infinite

Another foundation is the Green Umbrella, which uses the Korean boy band Infinite as the ambassadors. The foundation uses an umbrella as the representation of inclusion and non-discrimination on the basis of race, color and religion.

Most organizations use Korean idols as ambassadors to promote the organizations to the younger generation and raise awareness among younger audiences.

Table 2: Example of non-profit foundations or companies that use the popularity of brand ambassadors.

<u>Non-profit organizations / Foundations</u>	<u>Names of Korean Brand Ambassadors</u>
BLOCK B's Park Kyung	Red Cross / Red Cross Youth (RCY)
Red Velvet	Red Cross Youth (RCY)
Infinite	Green Umbrella Child Fund
APRIL	Korea Scout Association

Lee Min Ho, the famous Hallyu star, achieved fame from being an actor and singer.

Lee has received several awards. He was the brand ambassador for Samsung Korea and LG electronics company.

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Figure 7: Lee Min Ho with the LG campaign.



Source: Lee Min-ho with LG ad campaign (Chung, 2015).

Park Hang Seo

Figure 8: Park Hang Seo as the Samsung international brand ambassador.



Source: English.vov.vn (2018).

Park Hang Seo is a South Korean soccer coach. He used to play for the Republic of Korea's national team and later became a professional coach. He was known as the national team's assistant who led the Republic of Korea's team to the semi-finals of the World Cup in 2002. Currently, Park is coaching the Vietnam national football team; he helped Vietnam's national under-23 football team claim second place in the AFC U23 Championship 2018. This success has led him to be well-known in Vietnam and later was signed by Samsung to be the brand ambassador in Vietnam.

PSY (Park Jae-Sang)

Figure 9: Famous American rapper Snoop Dog and famous Korean singer and influencer Psy in the Soju in Hangover music video.



Source: ModernSeoul.org (Goh, 2014).

Psy is an example of a celebrity who has presented himself as a nationalist through several incidents and movements of Korean nationalism.

In 2013, Psy was chosen to be the "Korea Tourism Ambassador". The famous Psy made the district of Gangnam the hottest word in 2012 while the song "Oppa Gangnam Style" was released. Psy held the position with the Korean Tourism Organization (KTO) for approximately one year. According to KTO, Psy introduced the more "modern and fun Korean cultural concepts" to the world (Frances Cha, April 29, 2013).

3.5 Korean Nationalism

The term Korean nationalism refers to nationalism among the citizens of the Republic of Korea. In the Korean context, this has encompassed several uprisings and movements throughout Korean history to maintain the national identity, nation's history, and ethnicity (Oxford).

From the history of Korean nationalism, it is connected to the idea of "One Korean" as an ethnically homogenous people. Koreans trace their own history back to 2333 BC where they believe to have originated from the mythical founder of their race "Dan'gun" or some say "Tan'gun" (Korean Culture through K-pop 102: Korean Nationalism uncovered). Dan'gun is believed to be the child of God (Hwan-ung: God and Ung-nyeo) who wished to live on Earth, so the father of Hwang-ung permitted him to descend to Earth from heaven to Mount Paektu, which is now located on the North Korean and Chinese border. Dan'gun is also the father of the Korean people and a legendary ruler (Main, 2014).

Of course, the majority of people in South Korea acknowledge that the tale of "Dan'gun" is just some type of myth. However, some argue that it must have been based on a true story or even a historical figure. Even though some believe in it, realistically most of the people understand that it could not be possible.

The idea first appeared in the Samguk Yusa, historical annals back in the 14th or 15th century. The same bloodline idea has taken a stronghold in both countries, especially in North Korea.

In fact, most Koreans in the late 1800s did not even have an idea or know about Dan'gun, as there was no nationalist sentiment like in the modern day. In the 19th century, Korea was a Neo-Confucian monarchy, which was dominated by a class system and kinship ties (chaebol in the modern day), so the idea of Dan'gun only came into being through many nationalist narratives.

3.5.1 Anti-Japanese sentiment as an expression of nationalism

In the early 20th century, the situation of the Korean peninsula had taken a serious turn for the Korean people. There were sides and competitions between the European powers over Korea. Ultimately, the Japanese won over Korea and annexed the country in 1910. As such, Korea was struggling to maintain its sovereignty.

The anti-Japanese attitudes in South Korea can be traced back to when the Japanese ruled Korea between 1910-1945. The period caused much frustration for the entire Korean population. Japanese occupation forces attempted to dispose of Korean culture and tradition by commanding restrictions and orders on education, language, arts, theater, and music. Additionally, the Japanese forced the Korean people to adopt Japanese last names. According to a poll conducted by the BBC

World Service in 2014, 79% of South Koreans view Japan's influence negatively and only 15% had a positive feeling toward the Japanese.

Ishida pointed out that the period of Japanese occupation was cultural genocide (Ishida, 2004).

The Annexation inspired "A Wave of Nationalism in Korea" that the country finally legitimized "Hangeul" as the National Language. At that time, artists used many methodologies, styles, and techniques to express their despair of the country.

Koreans were forced to obey and bow down to Shinto shrines and ordered to destroy the nation's spirit. School children were also forced to use Japanese textbooks for studying and learn the Japanese language. Schools were forced to teach Japanese calligraphy to Korean students. Thousands of Korean females were also forced to be "comfort women" for Japanese soldiers, which made Koreans start the hatred from generation to generation toward the Japanese. The Koreans were forbidden from using their own language in schools, offices, and public areas; otherwise, you would receive the death penalty; thus, it was the period of rising nationalism and the formation of an independent movement.

Figure 10: Yu Kwansun.



Source: Yu Gwan Sun, Korea's Joan of Arc (ER, 2016).

The case of Yu Kwansun could be a good example of the anti-Japanese sentiment that later was turned into a symbol of Korean nationalism.

Yu Kwansun, 16 years old, was one of Korea's most famous independence fighters. Yu was an organizer who was known for the March 1st Movement that went against imperial Japanese colonial rule of Korea in South Chungcheong. *Even though it was a peaceful demonstration, many Koreans started to show the sign of resistance toward Japanese rule.* There were about two million Koreans who joined the movement, and it was repressed by Japanese military power. Both the Japanese and Koreans were injured and many of them were killed (Jeong, 2009).

This story addressed how much Koreans thought of Japan. The current researcher provides Yu Kwansun as an example of the very first nationalist representative. Yu Kwansun became one of the most well-known people during this period and became the symbol of “Korea’s fight for independence”.

In the 1920s, the Japanese government responded to the criticism and explained the occupation era as the Japanese prepared Koreans for modernization and a new era of trading. The Japanese allowed books and some magazines to be published in Korean. Then, the Koreans began to invest in education by publishing their own books. By the 1930s, the Japanese saw the Korean independence as a serious threat to the country.

The South Korea economic stage in this period was forced to use Japanese products, read Japanese books, act like Japanese and also be Japanese.

South Korea's economy in this era was based mainly on agricultural products from family farms. Traditionally Korea was a closed economy; however, foreign exchange usually happened in the trading of goods or presents.

3.5.2 Anti-Americanism as an expression of nationalism

Not only did anti-Japanese sentiment happen in South Korea, various movements, demonstrations, and uprisings also occurred against American sentiments and sometimes Chinese throughout Korean history.

Lee mentioned that the history of anti-Americanism in South Korea was motivated by authoritarianism and resurgent nationalism. During the 1990s, the "Western princess" or so-called Yankee princess, a common name for prostitutes in the USA military, became a symbol for anti-American nationalism. The former military sought compensation and apologies, as they claimed to be the one that sacrificed the most during the alliance (Lee, 2004).

The Korean anti-American sentiment was increased by the American military presence and also the support of the USA for Koreans authoritarian rule. This evidence was still shown during the country's democratic transition in the 1980s. Moreover, the hatred was increased by a number of incidents; such as, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) crisis in 1997.

There were many incidents that were held against the USA around the 2000s. Frequent human gatherings in South Korea were organized by human rights supporters and college students that sought rightful compensation from crimes committed by USA soldiers.

The “**Oh-No USA Festival**” was held in the Myeongdong area on May 2001. The concert was to help the alleged victims of USA criminal cases. Another concert was held against the level of pollution near USA military bases.

There is also the famous case of the Yangju Highway Incident on June 13, 2002, when a USA military vehicle injured two 14-year-old Korean girls, Shin Hyo-sun and Shim Mi-Seon who were walking along a street in Euijeongbu, Gyeonggi-do. The incident provoked the rise of anti-Americanism in South Korea again. When the USA military court found out that American soldiers were involved in the accident, the soldiers were immediately sent back to the USA (Revovly).

With the country's democratization, South Korea became very sensitive to issues with the USA. In the winter of 2002, tens of thousands of people gathered to mourn for the loss of the two girls. The activity forced South Koreans to revise the law against USA military actions (Chang Hun Oh 2007).

Conclusion

For South Korea, nationalism in the late 19th century was a form of a resistance movement. Over the past century, Koreans have had to construct their own identity in ways that has forced them to be against foreign countries. Likewise, Koreans have participated in a wide range of different movements, actions and much more.

The new era had come while nationalistic theory and practice during the colonial era and the first Republic of Korea (first independent government ruling South Korea from 1948-1960) were mainly movements on specific forces. In the 1990s, the middle class developed with the new ideologies called new nationalism, which drives South Korea's new nationalism. The old nationalism is focused on anti-imperialism, and the new nationalism is worshipping the state, which was introduced by the former President Park Jung-Hee. The new nationalism had been controlling the national consensus on issues; such as, participation in Iraq, South Korea's gestures with the military alliances with the USA, modern confrontations with Japan and China, etc. Then on June 23, 2012, South Korea was landmarked to become the seventh member of the 20-50 club by maintaining income of US\$20,000 per capita after the USA, United Kingdom, France, Italy, Germany, and Japan.

CHAPTER IV

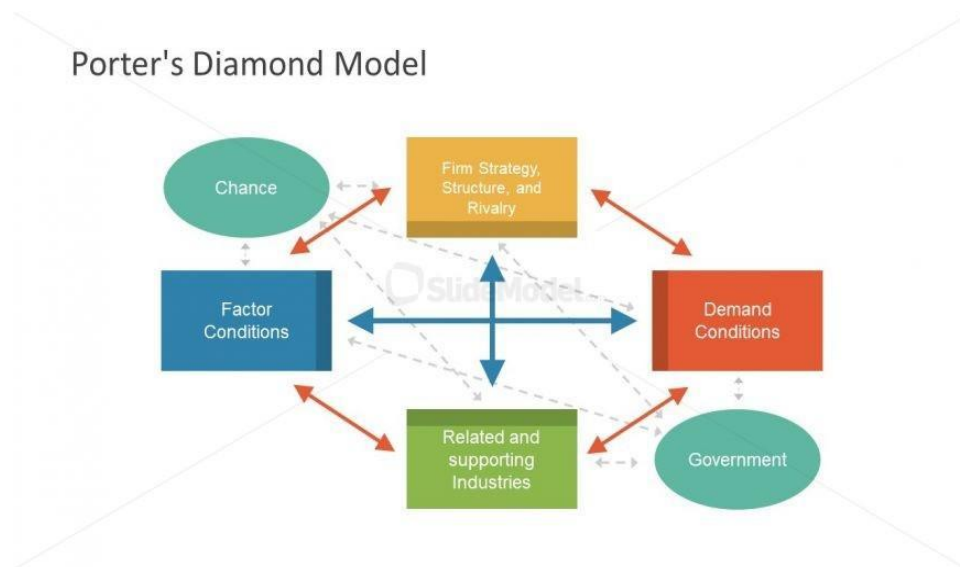
BRAND AMBASSADORS AND KOREAN NATIONALISM

Porter's Diamond Model (Claessens, 2016) was used to explain the strengths and popularity of Korean brand ambassadors in South Korean society and the different types of products that use those brand ambassadors. In-depth interviews and experts' personal perspectives were used to explain how nationalism influenced each brand's choice of brand ambassador.

After the information had been gathered as stated in Chapter 3, in this chapter the researcher found that there was a relationship between nationalism and brand ambassadors in some parts of the South Korean market.

The Diamond Model includes four attributes, which are factor endowment, demand conditions, related and supporting industries, and firm strategy, structure, and rivalry.

Figure 11: Porter's Diamond Model.



Source: Slidemodel (2018).

Porter's Diamond Model is also known as the Theory of National Competitive Advantage of Industries (ibid). The model is shaped like a diamond, which focuses on explaining why certain industries within a particular nation are competitive in the international market. For this research, the Diamond Model was used to describe the different products, which supported the use of Korean brand ambassadors.

4.1 Factor Endowment

Creative economy was first mentioned by Howkins (2001), and has the concept of an economy that is selling ideas and earns money from it. The largest sectors of the creative economy include art, design, culture, entertainment, and also innovation. In this new era of global economics, even though each concept has

individual values, strategies, and business models, South Korea has united each concept together and created new ideas for its country's economic success.

Since 1970, South Korea's economics have been driven by chaebols (big family business companies); such as, Samsung, Hyundai, and LG. However, in 2013, the former President Park Geun-Hye wanted to help small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and start-up companies by nurturing them, particularly in the digital sphere.

However, after the presidential scandal ended in 2016, the new president Moon Jae-in entered South Korea's Blue House in 2017. President Moon Jae-in, the heads of each department on the State Affairs Planning Advisory Committee gave the presentation about the five-year policy goals of the new administration at Cheong Wa Dae on July 19, year.

For South Korea's creative market, the entertainment industry is one of the main goals for the country. Many South Korean agencies will potentially receive support from the government. Korean dramas will likely get more recognition from more markets with the help of the government and social media. Potential products can also help cosmetic brands, clothing brands and also electronic brands gain more customers.

For the electronics market, South Korea is already providing many useful products for the market; for example, Samsung has become one of the brands that the world's market trust and consume. From this, there are plenty of chances for Korean brand ambassadors to work in many fields; they will not only focus on their own professional areas, but also could possibly work in other areas of the market.

Furthermore, in order to sell products to the market and expand Korean culture to the world, many companies will have to choose the type of brand ambassadors that are approachable, have a good image, and great attitude and personality.

If walking around the subway of Seoul, many posters of South Korean products with Korean brand ambassadors can be seen. Life-sized cutouts can also be found in front of cosmetic stores in Myeongdong, Seoul, as well as on billboards, buildings, etc.

One of the major Korean brands, Samsung has leveraged its use of Korean pop idols and Korean drama actors as brand ambassadors to spread awareness of its products worldwide. The company commissioned four idols, who were the most famous in that period, comprising Junsu, BoA, Tablo and Jin bora to collaborate for a special series of music videos and commercials for Samsung's products. The special group released three songs together with a live performance for fans in Seoul. Nonetheless, Korea is not the only country that chooses to use celebrities as

endorsers of brand ambassadors. However, using the face of famous stars in many cases seems to work better in South Korea than it does in other countries.

Dae Ryung Chang mentioned that historically Koreans have been influenced by Confucian principles, which emphasize what others think who I am and not what I think I am. Many young Koreans now want to be like a pop idol or at least if they cannot be one, they will follow the fashion or hobbies and buy products idols' recommended (Chung, 2015).

Thus, the use of celebrities as brand ambassadors in South Korea appears to be very effective. South Koreans tend to be communal in their listening and viewing habits, so they are always keeping up-to-date on trends and popular topics, which make it easier for brands to choose to work with idols.

According to Hackernoon.com, the perfect type of brand ambassador is considered to consist of the 4Cs.

1. Creativity – The best kind of brand ambassador is all creative in his/her own way of living and style, so the company does not have to work hard to create a concept for him/her. This can be easily adapted to the Korean brand ambassador, as he/she has a unique lifestyle and fashionable sense of style.

2. Connections - A person with natural confidence can be a great example of a brand ambassador with leadership skills. Today's world has the flow of social media, so brands with brand ambassadors with many followers can communicate with the customers easier that can also help the brands sell more products and/or services.
3. Cultural fit - The cultural fit means the brand ambassador who the brand selects has to match the behavior of his/her own brands and embody the personality of the brand. From this, many Korean artists have become the brand ambassador for the brand and also the spokesperson; such as, Chanel that chose the latest addition to the brand to be the member of the famous Korean girl group, Jennie as the company's Korean Chanel ambassador.
4. Care - Caring is the key to a successful brand, which Korean idols have genuinely cared for their fans.

Blackpink is an amazing example of how a brand chose to work with the group due to the great personality of each group member. Lee Min Ho, a famous Korean actor and singer, who successfully played the role of Gu Jun-Pyo in "Boys over Flowers" in 2009 and has been known since is another example. Lee has been the product endorser and brand ambassador for more than a decade for many Korean brands; such as, the cosmetic brand called Etude House, Binggrae Banana Milk, etc.

Based on the analysis by the Korea Reputation Research Institute (2018), BlackPink ranked first for brand reputation. The group outranked BTS (boy band), Wanna One (boy band) and Twice (girl group).

Most Korean girl groups would perform with the same type of clothing and wear the same coordinating outfit when they perform, but for BlackPink, each member has their own clothing concept to suit their personality and characteristics. Stylist Choi Kyung Won who works with BlackPink's wardrobe since their debut said that she wanted to accentuate BlackPink members with their feminine beauty but also differentiate them through their characteristics.

To understand more about the nationalism in the market, showing signs of being a nationalist may help Korean brand ambassadors in the new era of Hallyu because nowadays consumers tend to buy more creative and cultural-related products. Brand ambassadors can sell their Asian image along with the cultural context. They can additionally promote their image that agrees with Koreanness.

Because of the result of the South Korean creative market, Korean brand ambassadors are most likely to work in many different areas, as brands will focus on selling their products. Being an Internet sensation is the goal for brands, so using a nationalist brand ambassador might not be the most important thing the brand looks for in choosing the brand ambassador.

The creativity and uniqueness of Korean music are the other main successes of the country. Korean Pop music or K-pop has an amazing and such extraordinary melody. The lyrics of every song always includes English phrases; such as, the famous song "Oppa... Gangnam Style" by Psy. As such, Korean songs have become more appealing to the audiences. This is the major way for South Korea to spread its language to the world. The mixture of Korean and English has become common for every entertainment company to use as a songwriting tactic. People tend to catch the words in the English language than the Korean lyrics first, which is very normal, and later on, the song becomes viral on social media platforms.

4.2 Demand Conditions

The demand for Korean brand ambassadors is increasing due to the size of the market. The large market is providing more space for Korean brand ambassadors, both in the Korean market and internationally.

The local consumers in South Korea are familiar with the use of Korean products; such as, cosmetics, clothing, and electronic items along with the advertising with Korean brand ambassadors. As a consequence, the overall market makes it easier for new products to enter the market and also makes the market be very competitive. This can be beneficial for the home market to create new products or services as well as to protect it from the declining in the market.

Only the size of the South Korea market can create many more brands for different target groups. For example, in the cosmetic market, South Korea has a variety of products ranging from cheap to expensive. The consumer also starts using make-up from a very young age. Therefore, it is very easy to persuade young buyers to buy the product by using famous viral Korean brand ambassadors.

Additionally, the local consumers who commonly consume products within the country can enjoy their shopping sphere in South Korea's vast market. This is because customers in the home market will potentially increase consumer sophistication and shape the way the market should possibly be.

One of the interviewees working in e-commerce for an online shopping company mentioned that even when European brands set their goals to sell products in Asian countries, they would change the brand ambassadors from Caucasian girls to Asian girls to be able to sell the products successfully in the Asian market. However, for Korean brand ambassadors, it is the opposite, as eventually gigantic markets like China and even Southeast Asia that are accepting more Western products use Korean idols as the brand ambassadors; such as, Estee Lauder on a collaborating campaign using Irene Kim (Korean famous model and TV host) with Kendall Jenner (famous model and reality star) to work on the project together to sell products to younger targets and in new markets, which was the Asian market.

An international market; such as, Thailand has already accepted Korean idols as brand ambassadors for many Thai products for over a decade; for example, Tao Kae Noi (Thai seaweed snacks) has used Korean idols; such as Got7 as a marketing tactic to sell more products by having them as the brand ambassadors with special offers to customers. If the customer wants a meet and greet event with the boys, then they have to buy more products and send a code to the official Line account of Tao Kae Noi.



Figure 12: Got7 with Tao Kae.



Source: Tao Kae Noi official page (TaeKaeNoiofficialpage, 2017).

Overall, after the home market is saturated with the same type of products, companies will look for a new market usually an international market, which automatically makes more ways for brands to use Korean celebrities as brand ambassadors in those respective markets.

4.3 Related and Supporting Industries

After the widespread use of Korean brands; such as, the cosmetic industry, entertainment industry, etc. through the use of social media, this has provided a new perspective for Korean products in the world market and more job opportunities for Korean brand ambassadors.

From Chapter 3, it can be seen that there has been a rapid growth of Korean products in the world market. One of the Korean brand ambassador markets is cosmetics. According to Invest KOREA (IK), South Korea's cosmetic industry is the 10th largest in the world and currently has 2.9% of the global cosmetic market.

The advent of the Internet is one of the main reasons for Korean Pop culture's worldwide popularity. The Korean entertainment agencies took this as an advantage by using social networking services (SNS); such as, Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter to help publicize and transmit the Korean Pop culture content.

From the in-depth interview, all of the interviewees mentioned that because the use of the Internet and YouTube helped to introduce new idol groups and songs faster, it would be possible for Korean brand ambassadors to have more markets in the future even though they were already quite famous in the world market.

There are also many South Korean export companies including Hyundai Motor Company (car and truck manufacturing) , Lotte Chemical (specialized

chemicals), LG (consumer electronics), Samsung Electronics (telecommunication equipment), and many more (Workman, 2018). From the rapid growth in global business, many Korean brands are using advertising to help expand their products, which is an advantage for Korean idols to be chosen as the products' brand ambassador. Most of the companies have different types of products. Hence, it is likely that there will be more opportunities for Korean brand ambassadors in the market.

Moreover, not only are Korean brands using Korean brand ambassadors as a representative of the product, famous luxury brand names have started to use Korean artists as brand ambassadors as well. The world luxury brands; such as, Chanel in recent years has been using Korean brand ambassadors as the face of its product, which has increased the number of sales and also the interest from the general public. Chanel chose G-Dragon, which appeared on the House's F/W 2015 casino theme couture show in 2016 (Thefashionlaw). From the use of Korean brand ambassadors in international brands, this has opened more opportunities for Korean brand ambassadors to work with more global brands in the future.

4.4 Firm Strategy, Structure, and Rivalry

The Hallyu 2.0 is the New Korean Wave in the creative industry in the era of social media. From 2007, there was a significant shift in the South Korean

entertainment industry in SNS; e.g., Cyworld, a South Korean network service; gaming and famous smartphones; e.g., Samsung that are now focusing on the New Korean Wave.

In July 2017, the current president of South Korea, Moon Jae-in mentioned the five-year policy from the government that he plans to increase the number of Hallyu fans to 100 million; the number of Hallyu fans today is estimated to be around 60 million. The plan is to make the Korean Pop industry receive more recognition from the global market (Jin, 2012).

Cho Won-hee, a culture critic, and movie director said that the best tactic for creating content that would be appropriate for the foreign market would be to focus on each individual content; such as, the case of Psy, which changed the world of Korean artists in 2012.

From the very positive five-year concept to improve the Hallyu by the current government, there is a good sign for the future for Korean brand ambassadors to have more job opportunities with both domestic and international companies (Min-sik, 2017).

The South Korean entertainment industry is very active. Each agency has the opportunity to cooperate with each other and also create strategic partnerships with international brands; such as, in Thailand with Tao Kae Noi, Est Cola, etc. Overall, the

Korean brand ambassadors receive a lot of support from the South Korean government, domestic brands and many international brands as mentioned above.

Porter's Diamond Model explains the supporting factors of the popularity of Korean brand ambassadors. In order to explore how Korean brand ambassadors are used in the South Korean nationalistic society, the researcher interviewed some business operators.

4.4.1 Operators' points of view

The in-depth interviews for this research were collected from different expertise comprising a South Korean media agency (TS Communication), a Thai media agency (All About content), and also a Thai e-commerce company (Konvy).

The researcher was able to ask about the concept of nationalism in South Korean society, and how it affects the selection of being chosen as a brand ambassador in each brand.

When asked if being a nationalist was the key for some types of brands to select a brand ambassador, the key informants explained that for some products or services, being a nationalist was very important because the target group of the product might be older housewives who mostly live at home, or sometimes the product might need a brand ambassador who needs the Korean look for selling traditional products.

The first interviewee was from a South Korean media agency. The interview was held in the Siam Square area of Bangkok, Thailand, and the questions mostly focused on the use of Korean brand ambassadors in the media. The answers were mainly about how much the advertising affects social media.

“I would say being VIRAL is the most important issue for the brand to choose the brand ambassadors nowadays. People always look for something that is a trend. Old idols are all dead to the new generation”, said the interviewee.

When asked the question about “Do you think that being a nationalist is part of the brand that selects the brand ambassador?”

The interviewee pointed out that there was a possibility of some brands choosing the brand ambassador based on his/her nationalism in some areas for the business. However, for well-known brands to choose the representative or the celebrity endorsement, “Viral” would be the first word that would come into the mind of the owner of the company.

Furthermore, the interviewees from the South Korean agencies added that *“The customers are willing to pay for products that got them to meet and greet with their favorite brand ambassadors, so they could care less about what the product actually is.”*

The interviewee gave some inside information about the popular use of Korean products by Thai users that the use of Korean skincare and cosmetics had increased over the past two years as a result of Korean dramas because the actors used the products. Hence, many Thai users wanted to follow the trends. Many youngsters also wanted to be able to obtain the products faster, so the company had been successfully importing South Korea skincare lines and cosmetics to Thailand.



For example, Thai fans are already familiar with the idol groups. Thus, the companies do not have to spend more on commercials or advertising. Instead, the companies can choose to spend on promoting campaigns on social media. From this, the popularity of Korean brand ambassadors would automatically help the companies to succeed in their goal.

There is also a long history of Thai companies that are using Korean presenters and brand ambassadors. From the beginning, many brands chose Korean idols as the representative or presenters of the brand. In the Thai case, the idols are mostly boy bands appearing on posters and TV commercials. As such, the use of Korean idols as brand ambassadors has greatly increased in popularity among the Thai brands. They are not only using Korean idols as just being the presenter of the brand, but they have become part of the development of the brand and become

brand ambassadors, which is more complicated and difficult from just being presenters.

The brand ambassadors have also participated in different events; such as, fan meetings, fan signing meetings, or have traveled to different places with lucky fans who have spent quite a lot of money on the products. Many brands today are using this marketing strategy to help to increase sales. Using Korean idols as brand ambassadors can create a trustworthy image for the companies using this strategy.

The interviewee said that the most important thing for the company to select the brand ambassador is the "LOOK". Korean looks are always the ideal type for selling skincare related products to the Asian market with the clear fair skin. The Asian market has always called on the Korean look for the brands. Even though some products are originally made in other countries; such as, China, the brands intend to use Korean idols as the brand ambassadors.

Each key informant provided a dissimilar point of view on the different market approaches. To address the question: Most of the time, all brands are only thinking about how much income and benefit the company could possibly get from each brand ambassador. So, having many fan bases and followers are the main choices for the brand to choose the brand ambassador.

“For being nationalistic, of course, being Koreans will get them far in terms of being pure Korean, which could be promoted to the public that they are pure blood. Many people find that being pure Korean could definitely be very appealing. Many companies are likely to use the pureness, as the representative of their product lines; such as, cosmetics or traditional foods and beverages. But, in order to grow bigger in the industry, I do not think it is that important at all. For example, my job is to find the boy bands or girl groups that are in trend now. In terms of business, I would say being a nationalist is not the key for the company to pick a brand ambassador, but how famous that person is, is much more important. Therefore, many idols might be using Koreanness to blend in with society and to raise their own fame, but after they are starting to be known outside the country Koreanness was not the answer.” said one of the interviewees from TS Communication in South Korea.

A product like Soju or another famous Korean beverage mentioned to be using real Koreans as the brand ambassador to please the home market.

Mostly Asian consumers follow trends from South Korea and not only fashion or specific products, they observe the Korean beauty concept through TV dramas and series. The fans always want to have similar products like their favorite idols. Skin lightening or whitening products from South Korea is very popular among

famous beauty bloggers and influencers that have become very popular items for both Korean and international customers.

For the famous idol that later becomes a brand ambassador, it gives both the company a good image and benefits. The collaborating product between the Korean brand ambassador and the brand will always sell successfully. This is because the brand and brand ambassador are supporting each other and creating a healthy brand image for both the brand ambassadors and the company itself. In many cases, the product life cycle can happen to the product for some companies; as such, to boost the number of sales, the company can either create new products or just use famous idols as the new face of the brand as a brand ambassador. The brand can also provide a special event for customers who are willing to buy more products or services from the company to participate in a "MEET AND GREET" event, which is beneficial for brands to sell more and gain more recognition from new target groups. Consequently, brand ambassadors will become more popular by meeting fans and can promote themselves without using their own budget. Overall, this is a win-win negotiating strategy for both parties.

One of the interviewees answered that *"The customers are willing to pay for products that got them to the meet and greet with their favorite brand ambassador; they could care less about what the product actually is."*

To address the question: Most of the time, all brands are only thinking about how much income and benefit the company could possibly get from each brand ambassador. So, having many fan bases and followers are the main choice for the brand to select the brand ambassadors.

The interviewee gave the example of Japanese culture and Korean culture that when comparing the two countries, Japan was perceived the most nationalistic one but in South Korea's case, it was willing to show off their nationalistic side when needed for their own personal image and to please the general public.

"To give my opinion about the topic, Korean dramas are definitely the main reason for the beginning of Hallyu. Without it South Korea would not be what we are today. Honestly speaking, being a nationalist is quite important in some types of businesses; for example, traditional related products; such as, Korean Soju or a Korean teahouse. All in all, the one that will get hired by the company would be the one with good manners, a great personality and humble. A very good example is "Big Bang" (The famous Korean boy band debuted since 2012, with five members). They are humble even though they do not have the "Look" that the industry might appreciate, they are very talented and as I have mentioned they have a great attitude toward their career", said the Thai interviewee.

One of the interviewees, who had worked in the industry for 15 years and also worked in the United States, mentioned in the new era of the Korean

entertainment industry, the system had changed quite a lot compared to the industry 10 years ago. Today, all major media companies not only sell music. What they sell are actually the official products, which includes hats, pencil cases, phone cases, posters, pop sockets, socks, T-shirts, sometimes even bottles of water with the brand's signature, and so on.

From the in-depth interview with several business operators, the use of Korean brand ambassadors can be classified into two types of products in three types of markets:

- Cultural products in the domestic market;
- Cultural products in the international market,
- Non-cultural products in the international market.

Considering the Korean homogenous and nationalistic society, each market requires different characters of brand ambassadors.

1. Cultural products in the domestic market

Cultural products in the domestic market prefer to use the brand ambassador who can present him/herself as a nationalist to be able to sell the products to Koreans. A product; such as, Soju that was already mentioned was a product that the interviewee agreed to use someone who appears to be a nationalist.

Psy, a famous Korean singer who is well-known for his song "Oppa Gangnam Style" in 2002, and other artists participated in an anti-American concert.

Psy was chosen to be the "Korea Tourism Ambassador" in 2013 because his famous song "Oppa Gangnam Style" made Gangnam be the hottest word search in 2012. Psy held the position of the Korea Tourism Brand Ambassador for approximately one year. According to the Korea Tourism Organization (KTO), Psy introduced more "modern and fun Korean cultural concepts" to the world (Cha, 2013).

The example of Soju, a Korean beverage is a good example to explain the use of the Korean brand ambassador in the South Korea domestic market. Hence, using the Asian-looking brand ambassador is the tactic for selling a cultural product to consumers, as the local customers will always prefer someone from their own country.

Back in 2012 while "Oppa Gangnam Style" became the worldwide sensation, Psy became the brand ambassador of South Korea's largest manufacturer of Soju called "Jinro", which the global sales in 2013 were around 750 million bottles.

Jinro Soju is also known by the brand name "Chamisul" (참이슬), under the HiteJinro Co., Ltd. The company was founded in 1924, and is the world's leading producer of Soju, which is more than half of the Korean beverage's domestic sales.

Jinro America's President, Mr. Min officially announced on December 6, 2012, that Psy had become the brand ambassador and spokesperson for the brand. Psy is best known for his iconic Gangnam style music video, comedy music videos, and excellent stage performances. Therefore, he was the perfect choice for the company to present the most popular Korean beer and Soju (HiteJinro).

Figure 13: Psy as the brand ambassador of JinroHite.



Source: JinroHite (2012).

Psy is also a natural performer with a great sense of humor. Jinro America's Manager, Kevin Kang stated, "Psy is an aggressive weapon and the company is ready to attack and spread into other markets." Psy is easy to love and hard to hate (Jinro Hite Official).

The Jinro company has used Psy to help generate sales in new markets; such as, America and Europe, which resulted in amazingly successful sales.

For Korean youths; such as, college students, Jinro also uses a younger brand ambassador to present the brand, which is the Korean solo singer, IU.

Figure 14: IU, a Korean solo singer as the new face of Peach Jinro.



Source: JinroHite Facebook Official.

IU has large fan bases in both domestic and international markets. As a consequence, the company has gained more awareness from younger customers as well. The company also uses popular social media by releasing IU's emoticons to be downloaded for free, which can promote the company and IU herself.

2. Cultural product in the international market

Cultural products in the international market are using fewer nationalists as a brand ambassador. However, the products are most likely to sell Koreanness through the use of packaging instead, but for some brands to sell cultural products to the global market using famous brand ambassadors would be a more appropriate key to communicate with the audience.

3. Non-cultural products in the international market

Viral is the only key for companies to choose who they want to use as a brand ambassador. Noncultural products like Korean cosmetic brands or electronic companies are likely to use someone who is famous at that time. For example, around 2009, the drama called "Boys over Flowers" became well-known all over the world because of the Internet. The main actor, Lee Min Ho, caught everyone's attention and later all Korean brands signed him as the brand ambassador from cleaning products, mobile phones to even cosmetics (So-Yeon, 2017).

To answer about the connection between brands and brand ambassadors, the answer is brand ambassadors are selling Koreanness to the world by using their popularity to do so. The group that consists of international members is what many companies aim for because the Korean market is already full of Korean idols. To be

able to gain more sales and profit, the company needs members from outside the country to do its job.

For the international market, the key informants gave the opinions that mainly being a nationalist is not the key for brands to choose the brand ambassador. Going viral is the main concept for many companies; the use of social media has helped the rapid growth of Korean pop culture. *"Viral videos are what make them famous and Koreans are good at it,"* said the interviewee.

Furthermore, the social market along with the viral Korean Pop culture music videos or dramas can give a fresh start for the future market for Korean products. The global market is very sensitive about new products while people want to know more about South Korea's culture and Korean language, it brings a new way for the South Korean market to sell Koreanness through the use of their unique traditional products.

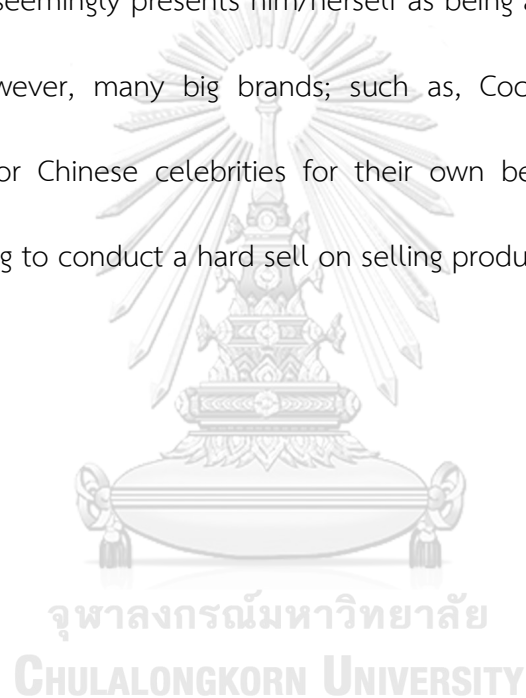


Conclusion

In this chapter, it was shown that being a nationalist could be one of the reasons why some products; such as, Soju, a Korean traditional beverage, chose to use a brand ambassador who represents him/herself as a nationalist. However, for other products; such as, cosmetic products, skincare products, technology products

and even innovative products using famous viral idols were more beneficial to the company than using a person who showed the pride of the nation.

The majority of key informants agreed that sometimes being a so-called nationalist would benefit the brand's images for some types of products. For example, as mentioned above, some traditional products would choose the brand ambassador who seemingly presents him/herself as being a nationalist or patriotic to the country. However, many big brands; such as, Coca-Cola would either pick Hollywood stars or Chinese celebrities for their own benefit even though South Korea is attempting to conduct a hard sell on selling products to the world market.



CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Having been previously under the control of the various superpowers is the main reason that Korea still makes an effort to keep its national identity and image strong and its people together. Koreans were under great pressure and struggled throughout the imperial period, were under control of the United States of America and the Soviet forces during the Korean War, faced extreme poverty and hunger, and were forced to accept the cultural assimilation from these outsiders. Koreans were also forced to follow the rules that were created by various invaders. During the Japanese annexation, there was a time of anti-Japanese movements in Korea; however, the people were obligated to obey the rules of the colonial powers. Yu Kwansun was one of the nationalists who organized the March 1st movement against the imperialists, although she was only 16 years of age at the time. In later years, she became the symbol of Korean nationalism. In the context of Korea, “nationalism” was encompassed through various movements and demonstrations that were against the foreign invaders and also were created to comfort Koreans with regard to the loss of the people who fought for the freedom of the country.

Throughout its history, Korea was always under influence of an imperialist country. The Korean harbored anger sentiment towards the imperialists, China, Japan,

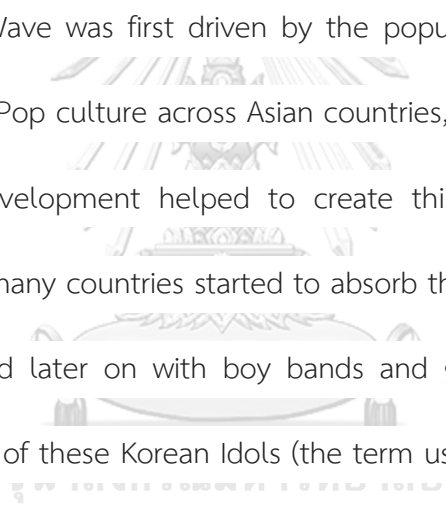
Russia and the USA. This feeling has been passed on from generation to generation, to comfort the people and to encourage autonomy among Koreans. Today, the nationalist movements are always in the form of peaceful demonstrations because people nowadays are not suffering in the same way that their ancestors did. However, the strong feelings are still there.

Any expression of anti-colonialist is always the act of nationalism, although these day South Korea independent country with good relationship with its superpower neighbor. Thus, we can see that the emotional state of the new Korean generations is still at odds with foreign countries and that there are still feelings of abomination against the superpowers among them.

During the 1990s, the massive Korean wave spread all around the world creating many opportunities for Korea to expand its products, including K-Cosmetics, electronic products, vehicles, steel, textiles and also clothing. Koreans were able to sell Korean products in international markets and also able to promote their pop culture widely throughout the world.

The new type of nationalism in South Korea today is different than the old nationalism as it is based less on ethnicity. New generations accept and understand the role of different ideologies, but they are not willing to go back to poverty. Therefore, the main focus now is on further developing the country. South Korea has become a successful developed country. The new generation took the pride in

Korean new visible position in the world arena. This is the new source of new nationalism. South Korea is experiencing an era of the “creative economy”, in which they have successfully invested in the people and their talents. The new economic situation in South Korea has shown a huge transformation, which required the commitment of the government and the private sector, who worked together toward creating the policies and conducting the analysis for the South Korean creative economy.



This Korean Wave was first driven by the popularity of Korean dramas and later on with Korean Pop culture across Asian countries, including Thailand. The shift in South Korea’s development helped to create this phenomenal explosion of Korea’s culture, and many countries started to absorb the Korean way of life through television dramas and later on with boy bands and girl groups. Brands began to notice the popularity of these Korean Idols (the term used for South Korean musical and dramatic artists). At first, the brands chose idols as their brand presenter in order to help increase their sales and gain recognition from new audiences. The term “Brand Ambassador” later started to be used for these Korean idols and celebrities by the brands that were interested in communicating more with the customers, and in addition, these brand ambassadors helped to build the positive brand image for these companies.

The Korean Wave has become the key factor that has helped Korea become wealthy and well known again. However, in order to maintain their national identity, Koreans have found a way to use the soft power through their pop culture. Korean brand ambassadors are increasing in the world market. All types of brands are eager to pay large amounts of money to have Korean idols as the face of their products.

Since the beginning of the 21st century, South Korea has become one of the main exporters of popular culture, and the growing popularity of Korean popular culture is supported by the South Korean government, which provides its creative industry with subsidies and funding for many types of businesses from small start-ups to large entertainment companies.

Regarding South Korea's factor endowment, it benefits greatly from the talented labor, which are called "Idols". The use of Korean brand ambassadors in each market has had different results on various products. The case study of Soju (the famous Korean alcoholic beverage) explains that if a brand wants to sell "culturally related products" to Koreans, brands are likely to choose the brand ambassadors who represent themselves as a nationalist. In terms of nationalists, the majority of them are always wearing traditional clothing and give interviews in the Korean language, as examples. Domestic markets require someone who can relate to the consumers emotionally.

In contrast, for international brands, the focus is always on the reputation of the brand ambassador. However, if we look closely at the core of this situation, even though international brands choose to work with famous idols, it is because of the new nationalism that allows Korean brand ambassadors to work internationally and still be able to express their national pride to the public.

The overall objective of this research on Korean brand ambassadors and nationalism is to understand the use of these Korean brand ambassadors in each market and to understand how brands choose their brand ambassadors. The results of this research clarify that, although the international markets do not need brand ambassadors who show themselves as a nationalist as is done in the domestic market, the Korea nationalism is still deeply and firmly embedded in South Korea today. Koreans still want to determine their own history, which means that they are never going to stop developing. As a result of this, we shall certainly see more markets that are interested in recruiting Korean brand ambassadors in the near future as well.

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APPENDICES

จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย
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Korean Entertainment companies and Korean idol groups as Korean Brand

Ambassadors in this research

1.) Korean Entertainment companies



1.1) Cube entertainment

Information : The company located in South Korea. Cube Label manages several well-known artists since 2006, including Thai brand members

Founder : Hong Seung-sung (Simon Hong)/Shin Jung-hwa (Monica Shin)

Founded : August 29,2006

Industry : Entertainment

Headquarters : Seoul, South Korea

Net income : -5.5 billion won (2015)

Revenue : 22.3 billion won (2015)

The company operates a record label for many famous artists in Korean entertainment industry for example 4 minutes (Disband), HyunA, CLC (including Thai member)

1.1) YG Entertainment



Information : The company located in South Korea. Thai and international members

Native Name : YG 엔터테인먼트

Founder : Yang Hyun-suk

Founded : February 24, 1996

Headquarters : Mapo-gu, Seoul, South Korea

Net income : US\$ 12.50 million (2016)/ US\$ 21.11 million (2015)/

US\$ 7.7 million (2014)

Revenue : US\$ 286.40 million (2016)/ US\$ 170.03 million (2015)/

US\$ 156.31 million (2014)

The company is one of the most famous idol's agencies in South Korea. The company is providing many famous artists such as Big Bang, CL (Former member of the girl group named 2NE1)

1.2) JYP Entertainment



Information : The company located in South Korea. Thai and international members

Founder : J.Y. Park

Founded : May 1997; 21 years ago

Headquarters : Seoul, South Korea

Net income : US\$ 7.533 million (2016)US\$ 3.1 million (2015))US\$ 7.7 million (2014)

Revenue : US\$ 69.51 million (2016)US\$ 50.56 million (2015) US\$ 48.48 million (2014)

The company once the home for the well-known idol such as RAIN (Main actor in famous Korean drama in Thailand called Full-House), 2AM, Jay Park and the company currently manages TWICE, 2PM, GOT7 (Including Thai member; Bam-Bam)

2.) Korean idol groups as Korean Brand Ambassadors



2.1) GOT7

Years active: 2014-present

Label: JYP Entertainment

Members: Mark (Hangul: 마크) JB (제이비) Jackson (잭슨) Jinyoung (진영) Youngjae

BamBam (뽀뽀) Yugyeom (유겸)

Website: got7.jype.com

The group formed back in 2014 with 7 members including Thai member named Bam-Bam who's being the main rapper of the group.

GOT7 became very well known since their debut in 2014. Thai market becomes the main target group of the band since one member is Thai. GOT7 has gained more fans in Thailand since the group becomes the Brand Ambassador of Thai products including Tao Kae Noi, Est. Cola, etc.

2.2) PSY (Solo Artist)



Full Name: Park Jae-sang

Born: December 31, 1977

Years active: 2001-present

Label: YG Entertainment

Website: www.psypark.com

“Oppa Gangnam Style” became world famous music video in June 2012 with more than 3 billion views. PSY became the most famous singer in Korea who’s associated with songwriters, singers, actors in American.



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