



South Korea public diplomacy through K-beauty as an effort to improve nation branding

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Abstract

South Korea is a country that uses the Korean Wave as a means of public diplomacy for its country. Korean wave itself is a term or trend that brought South Korean pop culture to be known globally, especially in Indonesia since 1990 and is used to spread South Korean culture. The promotion of South Korean Culture through the Korean Wave is carried out in a way that is easily accepted by the public and peacefully through, dramas, films, musical instruments and beauty. Korean Beauty or K-Beauty is one form of the Korean Wave that has recently begun to be favored by women throughout Indonesia. K-Beauty's fame was successfully brought by Korean Wave to the world and managed to build a good South Korean image. This study argues that South Korea uses the Korean Wave to improve the image of South Korea through K-Beauty. The purpose of this study is to identify how K-Beauty becomes a nation-branding tool. This study uses a qualitative approach. The results of the study show that some South Korean beauty products have begun to take several ways to attract the interest of certain groups and build nation branding.

Keywords: South Korea, korean wave, k-beauty, nation branding, public diplomacy

Introduction

South Korea is a nation in East Asia located in the south of the Korean Peninsula. A nation that shares its border with North Korea. South Korea is growing with its Korean Wave. This term is used to describe the pop culture product of South Korea. Korean Wave successfully exported to other nations in Asia, Europe, dan America through the industry of music, film, drama, and other entertainment (Suryani, 2015) ^[15].

Apart from these advantages that made South Korea was popular among other nations. South Korea currently developing Korean Wave with K-Beauty to achieve its interest. K-Beauty is a Korean-style skin beauty trend, which estimated will be Indonesia's current trend in the near time (Morgan, 2022) ^[7]. Currently, part of the middle and upper is starting to shift its cosmetic from Western brands to Korean beauty products (K-Beauty).

This research focused on how South Korea utilizes K-Beauty as a public diplomatic tool. This research is appealing because of how limited the research on K-Beauty and how general the discussion on Korean Wave the researcher found was. One of which is a paper written by Putri, Amirudin, and Purnomo in 2019, discussing the factors that help shaped the lifestyle of generation Z as their status as a fanatic fan of the Korean Wave. Other research by Putri, Liany, and Nuraeni in 2019, discusses the impact of the emergence of the Korean Wave in Indonesia.

A paper written by Rheina Ostriana in 2019, identifies the strategy of the South Korean government through K-Beauty influencing the diplomatic relationship between Indonesia and South Korea. In 2021, a thesis written by Mutmainah discusses how the Korean Wave influenced K-Beauty to be even more famous in Indonesia in the marketing and product trend, also other benefits brought by the Korean Wave like a corporation to fulfill the demand for K-beauty products. On the other hand, this paper will focus its research on how South Korea built its nation branding to improve its damaged image of South Korea.

Method of Research and Theory

This research used qualitative research method. The qualitative method is a research procedure that utilizes descriptive data in the form of written word or speech from individuals and actors that can be observed to describe problems and research focus. This research will explain how South Korea build its nation branding through the manifestation of the Korean Wave which is K-Beauty. The data source used is secondary data with a sample taken through literature reviews, documentation, books, magazine, journal, and electronic publications like websites and other electronic media. The data that will be used will help the researcher to collect relevant samples with the research topic.

Diplomacy is a practice that was exercised by the delegation or representative of a group or a nation in an effort to influence the policy of a foreign nation through the use of dialog, negotiation, and other non-violence ways. Generally, diplomacy in International Relation refers to solving a various problem that was done by a representation of a professional diplomat. Diplomacy is the main instrument of foreign policy, which direct a nation's interaction with the whole world. Diplomatic negotiation results in an International agreement, foreign policy, etc. Other than negotiation, a diplomat also could help form foreign policy by advising the government (Berridge & James, 2003)^[3].

There are few types of diplomacy, one of which is *Public Diplomacy* and in International Relations, *Public Diplomacy* is one the attempts sponsored by government to directly communicate as a means to inform and influence the foreign public to tolerate and support the government. The purpose of public diplomacy is to minimize misunderstandings which can have a negative impact on the nation itself because it can complicate bilateral and multilateral relationships with other countries. Asian countries attempt on manifesting this relationship with a cultural instruments to attract the attention and indirectly spread their cultural influence so that followed by the foreign public (Trisni *et al.*, 2018)^[16].

Public Diplomacy is an attempt by a sovereign government to communicate with other nations as well as a forum to promote its foreign policy. Actors involved in public diplomacy as well as non-government like NGO, mass media or organization even individual (artist, journalist, or public figure). The mechanism for public diplomacy is different from conventional diplomacy, in which public diplomacy emphasis on the relationship between government to people or people to people.

Generally speaking, public diplomacy can be done by any individual because it provides an opportunity for each individual to participate in building nation's relationship with other nations.

South Korea is a country that utilizes public diplomacy in building its nation's credibility. The exercise of public diplomacy by the South Korean government is realized in its foreign policy, which is known as *for Global Korea*. Korean Wave became one of the focus of this policy. The purpose and main focus of this policy is to identifies the new market by introducing Korean culture, which contributes massively to the nation's economy. The domestic success of the Korean Wave is supported by the increased economic capacity (tourism, immigration, and export) and living standard that goes along with it. The increase of demand for cultural product has been fulfilled with significant investigation by large South Korean conglomerates. The success of the Korean Wave is manifest in the aspect of the economy, including tourism, immigration, and export (Hidayati, 2019)^[4].

Findings and Discussion

South Korea Public Diplomacy Through K-Beauty in Indonesia

After the manifestation of the Korean Wave like K-pop dan K-Drama, the currently beauty trend of K-Beauty will be consumed by Indonesian women. K-Beauty became the manifestation of the Korean Wave that was known in Indonesia and became the choice in the Indonesian beauty market. Make-up, Skincare, and other beauty product are inseparable things for women. These factors to the popularity of Korean Beauty in Indonesia in such a short time. According to the president of Chang Won Co Ltd, Lee, with a population of 250 million people, Indonesia is the potential to be one of the largest market for k-beauty, after China. Lee said that Indonesia is a very large market.

Similar to the other Asian countries, Indonesia is a new market for south Korean skincare beauty product and cosmetics. According to him, Korean Wave spread fast on global trends, mainly in Asia, like Malaysia and Vietnam, supported by the similar skin tone of Asia (Lukihardianti & Murdaningsih, 2018)^[5]. The Indonesian people themselves have the desire to possess similar skin tone as that of Korean, with white skin, spotless, smooth, and other Korean beauty standards. Even make-up became an important thing in supporting the appearance so that the wearer feels more confident. Indonesian that affected by the Korean Wave started put interested in the secret of Korean skin beauty. Thus resulting in them following the secret of Korean beauty and using K-beauty products.

Basic ingredients to the production of K-Beauty tend to use natural ingredients and went through very strict testing and monitoring to minimalize an allergic reaction on use. This is the factor resulting K-Beauty easily accepted in Indonesia. Currently, a number of middle and upper-class people began to switch western cosmetic brands to K-Beauty. On the other hand, Indonesian women are increasingly concerned with skin beauty and are increasingly educated by seeking skincare that is made from natural ingredients and does not contain harmful substances (Nurhan *et al.*, 2017)^[8]. The current selling value of K-Beauty is higher than western brands. It is evident that Korean beauty products are starting to increase in sales from time to time than western products.

Public diplomacy is defined as a tool used by governments to mobilize these resources to communicate and attract the publics from other countries. At first, the only actor in charge of implementing Public Diplomacy was the government of a country. That is, the state is the holder of full implementation in public diplomacy which aims to influence public opinion. However, along with the development of Public Diplomacy, there have been changes in the implementation of public diplomacy (Nye, 2008)^[9]. This change can be seen in the increasing number of actors who now involve individual actors and non-governmental organizations. The government realizes that another condition for achieving success in the implementation of Public Diplomacy is collaborating with non-government actors. Achieve this success requires collaboration and solid coordination between government and non-government actors.

Public diplomacy involves large-scale participants and the focus is on foreign societies. The state government should not only focus on its public diplomacy strategy but also focus on actions in improving its country, both domestically and abroad so that the goals of public diplomacy can be achieved optimally. The government must have preparations to resolve the crisis. The presence of the era of globalization that connects countries is the trigger for people in this era to be more active and aware of what is happening in other countries. This causes anyone to have the right to express their opinion on an international issue that is currently happening. The level of success or effectiveness of Public Diplomacy is measured by a change in the mind of a person or a group of foreign people regarding an attractive country (Nye, 2008) ^[9]. The more foreign people pay attention to a country, the more prominent a country will be.

The success of the Korean Wave in Indonesia is inseparable from the success of the actors involved in it, If a country wants to establish relations with other countries, the relationship must have several supporting factors to show the importance of the role of government actors and non-government actors. Without these actors, the relationship will not run well. One of the actors involved in the spread of K-beauty in Indonesia is the Mass Media. The impact of the globalization era is that the development of technology and communication has changed people's lives and their environment. Technological advances have made it easier to work or carry out daily activities and also make it easier to find information. In this case, the media plays a role in disseminating information quickly to the public. The media used in this process are the internet, magazines, newspapers, social media, TV, and others. Media is also a tool of a country to spread its power to other countries. Like, doing diplomacy to achieve its vision and mission with other countries. South Korea uses mass media as a tool to influence the entry of the Korean Wave into Indonesia. The Korean Wave is quickly known because of the development of technology so that society can quickly access information about South Korea or the Korean Wave through the desired media.

South Korea cooperates with several South Korean television station companies. One of the shows is Lipstick Prince, which first aired in 2016. This variety show is broadcast by the cable channel, OnStyle. This program targets people who are interested in the South Korean beauty industry or K-Beauty. This event features seven k-pop idols who will learn the make-up techniques that women usually use in everyday life. This event presented Kim Hee Chul as the host and was accompanied by seven Korean K-Pop idols, namely, *Monsta X* Shownu, SF9 Rowoon, NCT Doyoung, *Block B* U-Kwon, and P.O, BTOB EunKwang, a former member of the *H.O.T* boy group Tony Ahn. Also invite a female actress guest star, Park Ha-Sun. The seven K-Pop Idols were given the challenge to be able to win the hearts of female actresses by using make-up on the faces of their guest stars. The men were given teachings on the correct way of making up before being given this challenge.

This program is also broadcast with the aim of eliminating stereotypes among a society that all parties, men, and women can also wear makeup and take care of themselves with a series of steps using routine skincare.

Not only TV programs that broadcast beauty trends, but there are also Korean dramas that raise the issue of plastic surgery. One of them is a Korean drama with the title *My ID is Gangnam Beauty*. This drama aired on the JTBC channel in 2018 which has a romantic comedy genre with a total of 16 episodes. This drama is adapted from a South Korean webtoon of the same title. This drama tells the story of Kang Mi-Rae (Im Soo-Hyang) who changed her life with plastic surgery because she couldn't stand being bullied by her friends at school. Then, he meets Hyun Soo-Ah (Jo Woo-Ri) who is a woman with natural beauty but two-faced. He doesn't like Kang Mi-Rae and makes Kang Mi-Rae his real enemy on campus. Kang Mi-Rae lives her campus life comfortably and according to her expectations. It is because of Hyun Soo-Ah's presence that Kang Mi-Rae is looking for the true meaning of beauty. Kang Mi-Rae's college life brings her together with Do Kyung-Seok (Cha Eun-Woo), a handsome man who is known to be indifferent, but always helps Kang Mi-Rae in good and bad times. This drama teaches not only to judge someone based on their appearance. In addition, the drama explains that plastic surgery is a common thing in South Korea and *Gangnam Beauty* is the idea of the drama. Gangnam is one of the areas in South Korea with the best and most beautiful beauty clinics in South Korea. Many local and foreign tourists come to Gangnam for plastic surgery. This drama is quite detailed compared to other dramas that present the idea of plastic surgery, by showing a very clear series of procedures and implementation of plastic surgery procedures, where parents are required to accompany patients to undergo plastic surgery.

K-Beauty Development in Indonesia

K-Beauty in Indonesia began to enter since a brand from South Korea with the Sarange brand in 2014. Miss Korea 2009, Jooa Lee was the brand ambassador of this product and was also present at the launch of Sarange's new product, Triple Crown BB Cream at Plaza Senayan. The presence of Sarange is the starting point for the entry of cosmetic products from South Korea into Indonesia and is increasingly in demand today, it is also easy to find in all shopping centers and e-commerce sites (Agmasari, 2014). In addition, K-Beauty is increasingly in demand because of the visual appearance of K-Pop idols and K-Drama actors. This has further increased the curiosity of the international community about the products they use. It is undeniable that the K-Beauty trend brought by the Korean Wave is increasingly in demand by the international community, especially in Indonesia. The high interest of the Indonesian people towards the Korean Wave, which is now easier to access, will be increasingly popular and in the future, everything about South Korea will become an attraction in itself for its fans.

The entry of K-Beauty products into Indonesia is of course an opportunity and target for South Korea's market to import their products into Indonesia. K-Beauty entrepreneurs are clearly interested in Indonesia because it has

the largest Korean Wave fanbase in the world. In 2016, the Central Statistics Agency also recorded that K-Beauty Product imports reached 5.9 million USD. Even though it already has a clear market share, K-Beauty products entering Indonesia cannot run smoothly. K-Beauty companies have their own challenges, such as finding it difficult to apply for a distribution permit from BPOM. Fitri Nur Arifenie, the Assistant Manager of market research for KORTA (*Korea Trade-Investment Promotion Agency*), stated that every product such as lipstick that has dozens of color variations must have one distribution permit for each color.

Indonesia is a country with a majority Muslim population. Indonesian women are considering buying beauty products with the halal logo from MUI. Because of this, the South Korean beauty industry is considering making K-Beauty products with natural ingredients. Like Nature Republic Aloe Vera 92% Soothing Gel which is made from aloe vera which is mild, natural, and suitable for various types of Indonesian skin. The product is claimed to be suitable for skin types and the climate of a country that has two seasons. A giant cosmetics company from South Korea, Amorepacific, which oversees several K-Beauty brands at once, innovated by adapting to the needs of Muslim women who have to wash their faces five times a day to perform prayers. So that the product created must be easily lost when washing your face and easy to be re-applied (*touch up*). Another innovation is to adjust the skin color of Southeast Asian residents such as Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam, which have warmer colors. As stated by Robin Na, Head of Operations for Amorepacific Southeast Asia, that diversity in the ASEAN region is a challenge for K-Beauty products (Wong & Du, 2017) ^[18].

Other state companies that also produce beauty products cannot underestimate the Korean beauty industry. Vivienne Rudd, Director of Global Innovation at Mitel Market Research Institute said that the South Korean cosmetic and skincare product market grew by 5.8% year on year as of 2013 compared to only 2.1% for the UK and 3.9% for the US (Shadbolt, 2014). The global giant MNC, Unilever, spent 2.7 billion USD to buy Carver Korea Co, a company that produces AHC Skincare. This decision is based on the achievement of K-Beauty globally this year, exceeding 6.3 billion USD. South Korea's beauty industry occupies the top five positions, behind America and France and ahead of Italy (SBS, 2016) ^[13].

K-Beauty products that are present in Indonesia really represent women who want to look beautiful with natural and harmless ingredients. Through the development of natural ingredients used in K-Beauty products so that they can easily win the hearts of consumers. What's more, K-Beauty products have perfect brand ambassadors from head to toe and become *role models* for Indonesian society. The enthusiasm of the Indonesian people is increasingly visible with the number of South Korean products sold in Indonesia, ranging from products with affordable prices to products with premium prices. K-Beauty product names such as Laneige, Etude House, Innisfree, Nature Republic are known as owners of beauty products that offer must-have items in their country, such as *sheet masks* or disposable masks (Putri, 2017) ^[8]. In addition to *sheet masks*, which are *must-have items*, there is a South Korean treatment technique known as layering skincare. This technique is a way for South Korean people to carry out a skincare routine that has quite long stages. As we know the skin has several layers. This layering technique functions to maximize each skincare product to enter optimally into different skin layers so that the ingredients that work in skincare work effectively and according to skin needs. The following are the stages of layering techniques in skincare to get healthy, glowing, and smooth skin like glass or what is now called glass skin (Anjani, 2021) ^[2]:

- a. Double cleansing: The first step in this layering technique is to clean the face from makeup, pollution, sebum, and SPF. Double cleansing is done by using a cleanser or facial cleanser. The cleansers used are varied, such as cleansing oil, which is oil-based, then cleansing wipes and cleansing cream. How to use it is also quite easy, you only need to take enough cleansing product, then apply the cleansing product on your face while massaging gently, then rinse with water.
- b. Face Wash: This stage is still classified as a double cleansing stage. The use of face wash is recommended by experts to maximize the remaining dirt thoroughly and minimize the risk of breakouts. The face wash is a cleanser with water-based ingredients so that it.
- c. Exfoliation: This stage uses special chemicals to clean pores and dead skin cells through physical and chemical exfoliation. Exfoliating regularly helps skin care products at a later stage to absorb and work optimally. This stage is only done 1-2 times a week.
- d. Toner: this product prepares your skin to receive the next beauty product. This stage is important especially before you have just exfoliated. Toner functions to restore skin moisture and pH. How to use it is quite easy, just pour enough toner onto a cotton swab, then gently wipe onto the skin of the face and neck or pour the toner directly into the hands and pat it on the face. Make sure to wash your hands first.
- e. Essence: this product functions to hydrate the skin, is anti-aging, and evens out skin tone to help regenerate cells. Pour essence into hands and pat lightly around face and neck.
- f. Serum: this product has almost the same function as essence. However, the serum has a higher active content than essence, so a serum works faster than the others.
- g. Sheet mask: a product that is classified as a must-have items, this is a must-have for lovers of K-Beauty products. This mask in direct contact with the skin allows the skin to absorb nutrients optimally. How to use it by sticking the sheet mask on the face and leaving it on for 15-20 minutes.
- h. Eye cream: The skin in the eye area tends to be thinner and smoother than the skin on the rest of the face. Regular use can prevent the appearance of eye bags and wrinkles in the eye bags. Use your pinky to apply the eye cream and gently pat the area.

- i. Moisturizer: moisturizer functions to lock in skin moisture. This product comes in various variations such as emulsion, lotion, gel, cream, and sleeping mask. Apply moisturizer to the face and neck area every morning and night.
- j. Sunscreen: this product must be used even if you are indoors all day. Applying sunscreen is the most effective way to prevent aging. Exposure to direct sunlight can cause skin cancer. Therefore, sunscreen needs to be used at the last stage of skincare application so that it protects the skin from damaging UV rays.

This stage may be difficult for ordinary people to do. Some beauticians and Korean people suggest following the layering technique. Even though you are busy outside, it is still important to use skincare with shorter stages such as *cleanser, toner, moisturizer, and sunscreen*. These four steps are known as the basic skincare routine. These steps are important if you don't have enough time to apply the Layering Technique (*10 steps*) or a skincare routine that can be adjusted to the needs of each skin (SOKOGLAM, 2022) ^[14].

South Korea's efforts to take advantage of K-Beauty in improving nation branding

K-Beauty has become part of the lifestyle no longer just a beauty product. K-Beauty as a tangible proof of Korean Wave products and officially becoming a tool of South Korean Public Diplomacy has succeeded in attracting the attention of the global community, especially in Indonesia. The good relations between the two countries have opened up opportunities for the South Korean beauty industry to expand its business to Indonesia. This opportunity was used by Amorepacific to open an Official Store brand Etude House in 2008 which already has 38 outlets spread across big cities in Indonesia (Winar, 2014) ^[17]. Then, it was Innisfree's turn to open its first outlet in Indonesia in March 2017 (R, 2017) ^[11]. Until 2021, there are now 18 Offline Stores throughout Indonesia.

This export activity is carried out simultaneously by improving the image of South Korea in the eyes of the Indonesian people. Export activities can affect the image of a country and are one of the important elements of Nation Branding (Hassan and Mahrous, 2019). Every country is trying to improve the image of their country through the Korean Wave product, namely K-Beauty. The presence of K-Beauty in Indonesia has a positive impact on the image of South Korea because it produces a good experience in the form of online reviews so that people who want to try K-Beauty products are increasingly convinced to try K-Beauty products. This has an impact on South Korea's image as a country with the best beauty product producers. So that South Korea is successful in carrying out nation branding in Indonesia. In accordance with the statement that the image of a country is based on consumers' perceptions of certain products from a country, which are based on the advantages and disadvantages of the country's production and marketing (Roth & Romeo, 1992) ^[12].

In 2018, Amorepacific introduced a sustainable lifestyle by extending the product life cycle. The first sustainable lifestyle is Stronger Product Safety. Amorepacific complies with legal safety regulations and has strict product safety standards by combining the safety regulations of the European Union, Japan, US, China, and Southeast Asian countries. Thus, the product is only launched after passing a series of strict security procedures. Second, Sustainable Purchasing. Amorepacific Group purchases raw materials with local people's lives in mind. To achieve this goal, the company uses raw materials that minimize negative impacts on the environment and continue to prosper with the local community. One of the programs is the Beautiful Fair Trade, which is a program for procuring raw materials to ensure quality products and a healthy community. Since 2010, Amorepacific Group has been sourcing agricultural goods that have been cultivated in an environmentally friendly manner for use as ingredients in our beauty products. Amorepacific Group has three main principles, namely mutually beneficial relationship with local communities, Safe materials sourced from nature, and Protection of ecosystems. Third, Sustainable Paper Packaging. Amorepacific Group makes secondary packaging using paper packaging that is more sustainable. Amorepacific Group uses various environmentally friendly paper materials. In 2018 Innisfree used used tangerine paper to package Green Tea Seed Serum. In addition, there are other brands such as Sulwhasoo, Laneige, Mamonde, Hera, Primera, Iope, and Hanyul which also use FSC paper. Next, Less Plastic, Better Plastic. Fifth, Universal Design for All. Amorepacific Group believes that everyone has the right to the same beauty and health. To that end, Amorepacific Group develops products with universal designs that can be used by anyone – regardless of gender, age, or disability – with ease. In 2018, Ryo added Braille to the Shampoo container, for the visually impaired to distinguish shampoo from a conditioner. Mise-en-scène also adds product names in Braille. Illiyoon added the product name in Braille in the same year. Sixth, Upcycling Abandones Plant Resources. Innisfree, in collaboration with Jeju Anthracite Coffee Roasters, recycles used coffee waste into coffee oil and scrub powder materials and develops a special recycled exfoliator. By recycling discarded plant resources into cosmetic ingredients, Innisfree increases resource efficiency. Not only building recycling beauty infrastructure for the first time and increasing the value of plant resources by extracting and using coffee oil as a moisturizer. Seventh, Minimize the Remaining Amount of Contents. Cosmetics with high viscosity easily leave residue or residue content in ordinary pump containers. To overcome this problem, Amorepacific Group improved the product packaging structure by using airless pump dispensers, so as not to leave a lot of product residue on the packaging and the product was used up to the maximum. Finally, Hera's Pink Ribbon Limited Edition. Hera is the main brand sponsoring the 'Pink Ribbon Campaign', which conveys a message of positivity and love to women while highlighting the importance of breast self-examination and early screening. A portion of the proceeds is donated to the Korean Breast Cancer Foundation for the healthy life of women (Amorepacific, 2018) ^[1].

Amorepacific's success in dominating the Indonesian beauty product market has attracted the attention of PT. Mitra Adi Perkasa Tbk, to establish cooperation in meeting the needs of the Indonesian cosmetic market which is also eyeing the ASEAN market. As of February 2020, Amorepacific is under PT. Lestari Adi Perkasa Cosmetics is a subsidiary company in the field of cosmetics. Through MAP retail, K-Beauty products can expand their market throughout Indonesia, not only in Jakarta (MAP, 2020) [6].

Conclusion

Korean Wave is one of South Korea's soft power assets. The success of the Korean Wave to build South Korean nation branding is processed into a South Korean Public Diplomacy strategy. All Parties take an equally important role in its implementation. South Korea makes good use of Korean Wave actors for the sake of the country's image. This phenomenon proves that foreigners are getting to know South Korean products such as food, electronic products, and beauty products, which each year experience a significant increase in usage. K-Beauty doesn't only excel in terms of marketing. The quality of marketed products also has the same claims as advertised. The suitability of the Indonesian people in using K-Beauty continues to lead to the increased public interest in continuing to use this product. This suitability is due to the basic ingredients of Korean cosmetic products which are made from natural ingredients and maintain product quality before marketing is carried out. These advantages continue to be the reason that K-Beauty product sales continue to increase in Indonesia. Personal experience with the use of K-Beauty products has succeeded in creating a good South Korean nation branding.

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