

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **THE GOVERNMENT OF SOUTH KOREA'S STRATEGIES IN CONDUCTING THE KOREAN WAVE**

In this chapter, the writer will explain about the government of South Korea's strategies in conducting the Korean Wave as its public diplomacy. In order to do so, the government do several actions, including create some policies and also do cooperation with several non-governmental actors, such as the film and drama makers, internet, entertainment companies, individual, business companies, and media.

#### **A. Government Creates the Policy**

In helping the growth of the Korean Wave, the government has played an immense role. The reason is that in the 1980s under Chun's administration, in order to shift the public's concern from politics. The government made the societies concerned watching movies and television dramas, through airing as many as possible the television dramas. The government believed that, if the societies were too focused on watching television dramas and movies, thus the societies will not have time to demonstrate. According to Park Seung-Hyun in his journal, he argued that the government was actively promoting the Korean film industry itself and making all television networks owned by the Korean television government (Seung-hyun, 2002). In this matter, the government has a significant influence on what types of dramas and movies are created.

At that time, there were only two themes of Korean drama, namely love stories and historical dramas. It is because the drama and filmmakers were not allowed to make dramas

that show the current situation of South Korea at that time. Although the South Korean government never told the drama makers clearly what themes they should make, however, the government censored political drama, and indirectly this made the drama makers should make other themes. It is evident that there is transparent cooperation between the Korean government and drama makers (ibid).

As an article by Javabeans explained on the internet, in the 1980s in South Korea the love story and historical drama were well watched on television. After the process of democratization in South Korea, both themes of drama continue to be made (Javabeans, 2008). In the 1980s it was put to the popularity of this type of drama. Even in 2012 up to 2018, the two themes of drama were mostly made by drama makers, and also both themes of this drama were most in demand by the audience. Thus, when private channels are allowed on television, they also enthusiastically made drama with the theme of love stories. From the list of the ten most popular types of drama, drama with the theme of love stories is the most superior. (Park, 2008).

The use of music on television shows is another development that can be found in the 1980s besides the development of television dramas. The government can also influence what people hear on radio and television. This was because two broadcast networks such as KBS and MBC have been declared as government property. Since at that time South Korea did not allow foreign popular culture to be imported into the country, so there was a big vacuum that had to be filled on television. Music shows are relatively inexpensive to make and entertain.

In his journal, Dooboo Shim noted that in the 1980s South Korea did not have an independent music industry. He also stated that the government could decide what type of music would be played on radio and television (Shim, 2006). Television is relied on by the government for the production,

promotion, and sale of music. Most of the music played is ballads. For this case, other types of music such as metal, rock and so on did not reach a wide audience because they were not allowed to appear on television.

President Chun turned over the leadership of his party to his friend Roh in 1987. In order to demand more democracy, new protests soon emerged in South Korea at that time. Roh's concern arose if he did not permit the elections, so his leadership will compete too much. To get much support from the societies, he promised more freedom. Apart from allowing elections, he also began allowing American popular culture to be imported into the Korean market. Thus, Hollywood films could be imported into South Korea directly in 1987. This means a sudden increase in Hollywood films in South Korea. The film industry in South Korea believes that their products will disappear if they do not start making better quality films. In the end, the cultural industry in South Korea can develop even slowly.

The Asian Financial crisis in 1997 hit many Asian countries. South Korea was one of the countries who got the impact. Inevitably, South Korea must borrow money from the IMF and the United States to help its country condition. However, the IMF strongly demanded that South Korea should continue to open its markets to other countries. Furthermore, South Korea must recover the country's economy. As a result of this shift, for the first time in history, Japanese popular culture can be imported into South Korea. It made the cultural industry in South Korea experiencing more competition. In doing so, the experiences made more innovation in the Korean film industry, so they began to emulate Hollywood.

Thus, in developing their cultural industries, Koreans have imitated and adapted the American cultural industry. Through this process, Koreans have given their style to different styles and forms, by combining and adding their

original characteristics and developing uniquely in innovative ways (Shim, 2006). In order to improve the quality of films produced by the film industry, the government began to establish a film quota system. Film quota required cinemas in Korea to play Korean films for at least 146 days a year. As a side effect of this, the number of Hollywood films imported and watched in South Korea was much reduced. (ibid).

Under Kim Dae Jung's leadership, in order to fix the South Korean economy in 1998, the government made the cultural sector as one of their primary targets for growth. The reason behind this was that Korean films and music are expected to generate many benefits for South Korea. The 5-year plan or often called as the 'broadcast video promotion plan' was made by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism in 1998. The purpose of this plan is to support the Korean Film Board while the function of this institution is to fund Korean films and promote its exports abroad.

Other institutions, namely the Korean Culture and Content Agency, is financed by money from the Ministry of Culture and Tourism in order to seek new talent. In order to promote the Korean Wave, the Korean Broadcasting Commission went directly to some countries like Indonesia, Thailand, and India. The trip had a direct impact on Korean dramas export to those countries (Millim, 2011). We can see that after those countries got to know about the Korean Wave, then they will get more familiarity towards South Korea. It seems that the government had successful public diplomacy with other countries.

The main point in the government's cultural policy is maintaining the Korean Wave. The Ministry of Tourism established an Advisory Committee to find how to maintain the Korean wave in culture and sports realms in 2012. This committee also has another duty namely to promote the Korean Wave and Korean traditional culture. For this plan in the same year, the Task Force for Promotion of Korean culture

was initiated with the same purpose. The government has provided a budget of 230 million dollars for 2014 and 2015 been provided by the government. In the promotion of the Korean Wave, even the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trades also participated (Chung-un, 2012).

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Korean Broadcasting Commission jointly visited distant countries to promote Korean dramas such as countries in South America, the Middle East, and Africa. This has paid off that countries like Paraguay, Peru, Iran, and Eswatini have now broadcast Korean dramas. Besides, high-ranking state officials also took part in promoting Korean films at international film festivals. On Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade's website, they stated that besides their aim of promoting the Korean Wave to the international community, their aim was also to promote South Korea itself.

The author wants to know what the government thinks about the Korean Wave. Moreover, find out the reasons why the Korean Wave is so attractive to many countries in the world. To find out all of that, the author pays attention to government reports. There are four reports from the Korea Information and Culture Center (KOCIS) which prove to be very valuable. Government organizations published reports on Korean waves, including Korean dramas, films, and music in 2011 and 2012. These reports show the triumph of the Korean wave abroad and also an introduction to those who do not know what the Korean Wave is.

## **B. The Cooperations Between the Government and Non-Governmental Actors**

As the writer has mentioned above that in conducting the Korean Wave as the public diplomacy, the South Korean government do the cooperations with some non-governmental actors. Both actors whether government and non-governmental

actors played an immense role in conducting the Korean Wave as South Korea's public diplomacy towards other countries around the world.

### *1. Internet*

KOCIS stated that in the spread of the Korean Wave, one of the factors that accelerated its deployment was the internet. Universal access to high-speed Internet services and the development of various mobile devices - along with the rapid development of social media such as YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter - have influenced innovative information on how to present cultural content, consumed and distributed (Ministry of Culture, 2011). YouTube has changed the way people feel r music.

Therefore, in recent years, the majority of Korean Wave fans have also enjoyed K-pop or watching Korean dramas for the first time on the Internet. Thanks to the internet, in Europe, fans can see performances of their Korean idol groups that had never released an album or perform in Europe. Besides, because their fans already knew their album through their videos on Youtube, Korean K-pop stars were also able to dominate the Japanese charts simultaneously with their debut. For this reason, the Internet has become a very influential media throughout the world. Over the past few years, South Korean management agents have been controlling K-pop by actively using social networking services such as Facebook and Twitter and operating their channels on Youtube. KOCIS calls K-pop as fusion music.

They also saw that the dance had its selling value. Many K-pop fans around the world tried to dance like their idols and then upload it on the internet. Not to mention, the fashion style in a music video is also considered important. For this case, the government did not consider themselves as the main factor behind the success of the Korean Wave but instead they saw

the role of entertainment companies. According to KOCIS, the combination of attractive forms for everyone with the professionalization of the music industry is the basis of the popularity of the Korean Wave.

Not inferior to K-pop success, based on national success, Korean films also have even attracted many audiences abroad through the internet. In some Asian countries, a fairly legendary film titled *Shiri* has been sold, even received critical and commercial praise. At the Japanese box office, specifically, the film generates around the US \$ 14 million from 1.2 million theater viewers. Even, this film also topped the Hong Kong box office. An overseas achievement that was rarely obtained for a Korean film at that time (Mi-Hui, 2000). Many Korean films have since been released for commercial shows in foreign cinemas to win nominations at prestigious world film festivals such as Cannes, Berlin, and Venice. A total of 193 Korean films were exported to 62 countries in 2004, with revenues of the US \$ 58 million, a number very different from the export rate of 15 films in 1995 with revenues of US \$ 208,679. Please look at table 4.1 below

**Table 4.1 Korean film exports (1995-2004)**

Year	Amount Exported	Increase Rate
1995	0,208,7	-
1996	404	48%
1997	492	22%

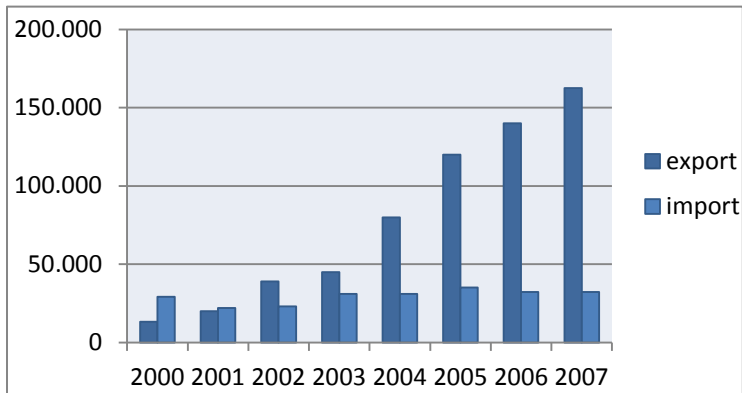
1998	03,073,8	52%
1999	5,969,2	94%
2000	07,053,7	18%
2001	11,249,6	58%
2002	14,952,1	33%
2003	30,979	10%
2004	58,284,6	88%

Source: Korean Film Council (2006)

The Korean Ministry of Culture and Tourism in 2009 also shew the chart about the import and export TV programs in South Korea starting from 2000 up to 2007. Please look at the chart 4.1 in the next page.



**Chart 4.1 The Export and Import TV Programs**



Source: Korean Ministry of Culture and Tourism in 2009

In order to make this thesis more credible, the writer also provided the current data from KOFIC in recent years starting from 2016 and 2017 regarding the Korean film export. KOFIC announced a report on the Korean film industry in 2016. According to the report, the Korean film industry had sales of USD 1.98 billion last year which rose 7.6% from the previous year, so sales had exceeded USD 1.74 billion (KRW 2 trillion) for the third year in a row (Young-yoon, 2017). While in 2017, exports reached \$ 118.8 million with films that had finished generating \$ 40.1 million, the amount of which dropped by 7.2% from the previous year. In contrast, export services such as VFX and DI almost doubled to \$ 78.1 million, with demand for large-scale Chinese film services with a stable flow (Noh, 2018).

The government saw that in the Korean wave, Korean drama and K-pop as the most significant part. In the report, KOCIS wrote about Korean films and Korean literature, but they acknowledged that the impact was less interesting than K-

pop and K-drama. KOCIS also stated that the director and actor were the two most important things in a film. Especially for Korean films, the government believed that themselves as the primary initiator of the Korean Wave. In the increasing competition between Korean films and Hollywood films, KOCIS saw that government policy had a significant influence. Also, by providing financial support, Korean films can compete successfully with Hollywood (Ministry of Culture, 2011).

## 2. *Entertainment Companies*

We cannot forget the role of Korean entertainment companies in the development of the Korean Wave itself. One of the pioneers who played a significant role in the development of K-pop is Lee Soo Man. Lee Soo Man is the founder of SM Entertainment, one of the most famous record companies in South Korea today. Many idol groups created by this company, such as H.O.T., BoA, SHINee, Super Junior, SNSD, and many more. Lee Soo Man once dreamed of bringing J-pop style music to South Korea. Although J-pop was not that popular in South Korea, Lee Soo Man thought positively that this type of music could become popular in South Korea someday. Then he imitated the style of the favorite Japanese metal band X-Japan and created a band of its own.

Ironically, all of his band's concerts were canceled when Chun's administration ran in 1980. At that time, it turned out that music bands were also banned from filling out shows on television. After learning about this uncomfortable reality, Lee Soo Man decided to move to America to study computer engineering. In America, he even received a reference from MTV. MTV was one of the major TV channels at that time, a music station that broadcast many pop music videos with dances in the video. Lee admitted that it was possible to be able to replicate this success and bring it to South Korea.

When he returned to South Korea, in 1989, he began to form SM Entertainment. H.O.T, the first boy band in South Korea, in 1996 made its first debut. The members were chosen not because of their singing skills but because of their dancing skills. One member won the dance competition, and after that, he asked to join the group. Two other members were found when they danced on the street. Although the group broke up in 2001, the group has inspired many boys and girls to try and become K-pop stars as well. (Tuk).

As with Lee Soo Man, Yang Hyun Suk was another important actor in the development of the K-pop industry. In 1991, he became a dancer in the music group Seo Taiji and Boys. Seo Taiji and Boys was the first group to use rap and dance in Korean songs. Since 1982, the group's first album has become very popular and has the fastest sales record. It is the first group on television that did not use in-house bands from television channels. The Korea Herald named Seo Taiji and Boys as the first cultural product in South Korea (Chung-un h. , 2012). After Seo Taiji and Boys broke up, in 1998, Yang Hyun Suk then formed YG entertainment. YG Entertainment later became the second largest entertainment company in South Korea after SM Entertainment. YG Entertainment specializes in using hip hop as a basis for their songs. Several groups and singers who are contracted with YG Entertainment until today are Big Bang, Psy, 2NE1, and many more.

. As support of the Korean Wave, the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism (MCST), KOCIS, and the Korea Tourism Organization (KTO) all released news about the Korean Wave on their website. KOCIS complements reports about K-pop, K-film, and K-drama. However, these reports depict a biased story. The report looks very confident and does not show the Korean Wave's failure. MCST and KTO both present news about the success of Korean artists abroad. As we know, in 2012 Psy was very successful with the hit *Gangnam style*. Both institutions, whether MCST and KTO continue to write about what Psy has done.

Twenty-one news reports on Korea.net mentioned a singer, Psy in October 2012. Korea.net is a South Korean official website, and its founder is MCST. News on Korea.net entitled "Psy's Popularity encourages the Korean language" shows that during the broadcast on the Today Show in America, PSY spoke Korean (Jae-un, 2012). The interesting thing here is that the government believes that K-pop can influence the rise of the schools of Korean language all over the world. In the news entitled 'Psy catches the eye of Swiss media,' it shows that there was a Swiss columnist who has mentioned Psy in his column (Seung-ah, 2012). Also in the other news entitled 'Psy heats Australia by dancing with Spice Girls Melanie Brown' and 'Psy's Gangnam style arrives in Sweden' (Tack-Whan, 2012) profoundly shows the world how the Korean government is trying to prove how well the Korean Wave is spreading. In the same vein, it has been reported that other Korean Wave stars went abroad.

Considering how the government enthusiastically wrote about the Korean wave on their website, it certainly made the authors believe that the government was proud of themselves for the significant development of the Korean Wave. The government is very interested in the phenomenon of the Korean Wave, proven by almost every day the government's website provides the latest information about anything the Korean Wave's stars do overseas. The government now sees that they have to keep the Korean Wave running, rather than just supporting the film industry. They also embarked two advisory organs to examine what they have to do. The government seems to have two interests from the Korean Wave itself.

First, in order to increase economic income for South Korea, selling popular culture to other countries is a way to go. Especially, selling popular culture to Japan, this is because, for South Korea, Japan is an attractive market. Japan was the wealthiest country in the Asian region. Moreover, Japan was

willing to buy Korean products. Video or DVD recordings will be worth ten times more expensive in Japan than in other Asian countries, such as Malaysia. Promoting South Korea as a brand is the second reason for the government's interests in the Korean Wave. The Korean wave was able to change the perception of the world community about South Korea itself. The proof is that people who watch Korean dramas are starting to see South Korea as a developed country in terms of infrastructure and technology, a modern lifestyle, and a friendly society. (Toru Hanaki, 2007).

### 3. *Business Companies and Individual*

The government believes that the Korean Wave can provide a positive image of South Korea in the eyes of the world. Something that has been forgotten since South Korea reached its status as the eleventh largest economy in the world. (Jeongsuk, 2011). The government also believes that the Korean Wave is a means used to get more profits. They want to utilize the Korean Wave to generate much money for the Korean economy. Their views are almost similar to those of commercial businesses. Research on the Korean Wave was carried out by various giant companies such as Samsung, Hyundai, and LG. These companies acknowledge that the Korean Wave makes it easier to sell products abroad. LG Electronics, for example, has awarded the benefits of the Korean wave.

In the view of the Korea Culture and Content Agency USA in terms of getting more profits, Korean businesses are taking advantage of the Korean wave. The real evidence that can be seen is that after using actor Ahn Jae Wook from a Korean drama entitled *Stars in My Heart* in commercial advertising in Vietnam, sales in that country have increased (Tuk). In order to increase the popularity of the Korean wave, the LG company gave Korean dramas for free to TV stations in Vietnam and even paid for dubbing from the drama. The

Samsung company does another case. They made advertisements for LCD TVs in China and also invited actor Ahn Jae Wook to promote the company's products. Samsung has taken over Phillips as a new LCD TV in China.

The Samsung research institute has created a model to provide an overview of the Korean Wave in the minds of the government. On behind, we can see that the Korean Wave has well-spread in other countries around the world. Please see the table in the next page.

**Table 4.2 Stages of Korean Wave**

No.	Stages of Korean Wave	Explanation	Country / Region
1.	The popularity of Korean popular culture	Korean dramas, movies, and pop become favorite outside of Korea. Other countries start broadcasting Korean dramas.	Philippines, Malaysia, Russia, Uzbekistan, United States, South America, Europe, and Africa
2.	Purchase of Korean popular culture products	Besides broadcasting Korean dramas also movie ticket sales and DVD sales start rising. Also, foreigners start buying k-pop records and attend concerts.	Indonesia, Thailand, Singapore, India, and Brazil

3.	Purchase of other Korean products	<i>Hallyu</i> inspires countries to buy Korean products related to Korean popular cultures such as food, Korean language, plastic surgery, and tourism.	China, Japan, and Hong Kong
4.	The impression of South Korea	Other countries get a new positive impression of South Korean lifestyle and culture.	Taiwan

Source: Kim, M, (Millim, The Role of the government in the cultural industry. Some observations from Korea's experience, 2011)

The first stage shows us about countries that only broadcast a few Korean dramas. K-pop fans can be found in these countries. However, the sale of Korean popular culture products and the country's involvement in the spread of the Korean Wave was very low. Although the Philippines and Malaysia have broadcast several Korean TV dramas, researchers were not sure whether the Korean Wave has been famous there. The United States and Europe are also in the first stage. Although South Korean entertainment companies have tried to send their stars to the United States there is no South Korean idol has gained widespread popularity there, except hit singer *Gangnam Style* by Psy.

While we can see that in the second stage, the Korean Wave became so popular that many people in countries such as Indonesia, Thailand, Singapore, Iran, and Brazil began buying recordings of K-pop songs, DVDs of Korean dramas,

and DVDs of films, the Korean wave in these countries has become a widespread phenomenon. At the third Korean Wave stage, researchers showed countries that were first affected by the spread of the Korean wave. These countries include China, Hong Kong, and Japan. Besides, the researchers also showed that other Korean products had been targeted as a direct result of the popularity of Korean K-pop, Korean dramas and films. As a result of Korean drama, tourism in South Korea has increased. The Korean government calls this tourism as Korean tourism. Thanks to K-pop, people in these countries were inspired to learn Korean.

In the fourth stage of the Korean Wave, researchers showed countries that had a positive perception of South Korea. Taiwan is the right country for this level. Taiwanese see South Korea as a country capable of being the leader of the world culture and economy. Taiwanese people admit that they are very positive about South Korea. Sung saw the connection between the Korean Wave and the search for national identity by Taiwanese people. For them, South Korean nationalism was used as a benchmark for them. (Sang-Yeon, 2010). When Taiwanese watch Korean dramas, they see that Koreans are very proud of their culture and traditions.

Here are other reasons related to the similarities between South Korea and Taiwan. Taiwanese can identify themselves better with Korean culture and values. Korean dramas describe family values and respect for the elderly. Korean drama also tends to be more familiar to them than US dramas which have a different culture than them. This is different from the Korean government and business people in Korea. What they see from the Korean Wave phenomenon is an aspect that might affect the Korean Wave, which are economical, political and commercial. They see the Korean Wave as a commodity. Something that must be developed to gain profit. They tend to overlook the meaning of the culture associated with people.



From the table above, we can also see that stages 1 and 2 are most pertinent for several industries in South Korea such as the music industry, film industry, and the broadcast industry. Stage 3 is highly pertinent for huge companies such as Samsung, LG, and Hyundai. They hope that the Korean Wave will bring more attention to their products so that many people in the world will buy their products. While stages 3 and 4 are strongly pertinent to the Korean government. The Korean wave is also considered as a media to enhance bilateral relations between South Korea and Vietnam and Taiwan. Korean actors, Jang Dong Gun and Kim Nam Joo, are big stars in Vietnam.

Both were invited to have dinner with South Korean president Kim Dae Jung and president of Vietnam Tran Duc Luong in 2001 (Shim, 2006). Sung, in his article also explained how the Korean Wave had changed the image of South Korea in Taiwan's eyes. In fact, for a long time, Taiwanese people preferred to listen to music from Hong Kong and were also more interested in watching Japanese dramas. They did not like South Korean products because at that time South Korea had a negative image in Taiwan. This was because South Korea had established new diplomatic relations with China and cut off diplomatic relations with Taiwan. However, since 2000, this has changed. Korean music and drama are the number one choice in Taiwan. As the effect, Taiwanese began to have a more positive image about South Korea.

#### *4. Media*

Another actor who helps the government in conducting the Korean Wave as its public diplomacy is the media. Korean news media began to write about the Korean Wave since 2001. Initially, when the news report came out, the general public was very surprised by this news and questioned the validity of the report. It also because the Korean media have not been

able to provide a satisfying reason why Korean dramas can be top-rated in China and Japan at that time. Until when a Korean drama entitled *Winter Sonata* became very popular in Japan, photos of Bae Yong Joon arrived at the airport in Tokyo in 2003 and many Japanese women were waiting for him, making Koreans begin to believe that the Korean Wave was something serious to noticed (Toru Hanaki, 2007).

That inspired all new writings about the Korean Wave abroad. Since then, many news about Korean singers, artists and actors have been written from a very nationalistic perspective. In fact, in Korean newspapers, professors and politicians were interviewed to give their opinions on the phenomenon of the Korean Wave (Jeongsuk, 2011). Their argument remains in the writing of Korean journalists. Everyone is proud that the Korean Wave is liked by all circles in the world, including politicians, journalists, and ordinary people

If there were a lot of people in this world questioning why the media wrote so positively about the Korean Wave, then Joo (2011) in his journal, he stressed the main reason is that Koreans are always afraid of the entry of other cultures into Korea and cause Korean culture will slowly disappear. For example, in 1987, Koreans were worried that Hollywood films would take over the Korean film market. However, in 1998, South Korea began to lift the ban on Japanese popular culture. This ban began in 1945 after Japan left Korea. In the past, many Koreans thought that Korean popular culture would not be able to compete with Japanese popular culture. Koreans are very worried that American and Japanese popular culture will defeat South Korea.

The idea that other countries will like their popular culture is something they did not think at the time. Lee (2011) explores in his study how nationalism greatly influenced a news report. He found that all news reports about the Korean

Wave in China and Japan could make him conclude that the Korean Wave was a victory. The journalist incline is putting the Korean Wave concerning the past that has problems with Japan and China. Korean waves are something you can be proud of for many Koreans (Sue-Jin, 2011). As mentioned above, Korean media have written very positive things about the Korean Wave abroad. Korean newspapers are also very proud of their popular culture in the world. Many Koreans rely on Korean media to preach about the Korean Wave so that the general public in South Korea has a very optimistic view of the success of the Korean Wave.