

## Suggestions for Korea's Corporate Image, Product Image, and Purchase Intention with Consumer Hostility: Focusing on Korean Wave and Satisfaction Variables

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### Abstract

**Purpose** – The purpose of this study is to investigate the effect of Korean Wave on consumer intentions by adjusting the Korean image and image of Korean company to counterbalance the hostility through the control effect of Korean Wave.

**Research design and methodology** – This paper measure individual and national hostility and suggest that the effect of the adjustment of Korean culture satisfaction on corporate image, product image and consumer's purchase intention.

**Results** – This study suggests the subjects to be studied empirically by presenting research themes and models, but it is necessary to verify the model through statistical verification since it is not verified empirically. In addition, it is necessary to further control factors and identification of anti-marginal or anti-marginal products.

**Conclusions** – This study suggests research topics that investigate how hostility affects Korean Wave in consideration of the current special situation, while conventional researches mainly focus on ethnocentrism and patriotism. In this way, this study suggests research direction that helps to enhance corporate image and product image by eliminating hostility and actively utilizing Korean Wave. The Proposal will be helpful to provide a frame for empirical analysis in future and to develop strategic means to further utilize it in international marketing.

**Keywords:** Consumer Hostility, Corporate Image, Product Image, Purchase Intention.

**JEL Classification Code:** M10, M31.

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## **1. Introduction**

Recently, the international diplomacy capacity and the business environment are rapidly changing around the world. In a borderless global marketplace, consumers are evaluating and purchasing products from various countries. Therefore, companies have to understand the characteristics and desires of national consumers for import and export. However, hostile feelings triggered by long-term or temporary diplomatic conflicts between countries have a negative impact on the company's overseas expansion and marketing activities (Klein, 1998; Shimp, 2004; Ettensen, 2005 etc).

The hostility that consumers can have is measured differently depending on the important historical events, the effects of transient events, and the experience of individual consumers. As for the measurement result of the effect, it can explain the change of consumers' perception due to the time change of hostility from the viewpoint of memory theory. The memory of short-term phenomena and the memories generated by meaningful events show many differences in the difference of influence by persistence and memory (Tulving, 1972).

Since the establishment of the diplomatic relations between Korea and China in August 1992, many human and material exchanges have been promoted and the development of the nation has been promoted without special diplomatic conflicts between the two countries. However, the China-Korea diplomatic conflict that emerged with the THAAD (Terminal High Altitude Area Defense) installation in 2017 surfaced, and China pursued direct and indirect economic restructuring for Korea. The Chinese authorities banned the sale of overseas travel products to the South, delayed customs clearance, and retaliated customs procedures such as customs clearance, etc. The Chinese media promoted boycotts by covering up Korean companies in their countries with immoral images as a result, Lotte Mart's sales in the eleventh year in China dropped sharply to less than 75%. However, as the summit between the two Koreas began in 2018, the conflict between the North and the United States has also been settled. In this temporary diplomatic conflict situation, there have been few studies to measure the hostility of Chinese consumers and to confirm the influence of hostility. As the various businesses that have been resumed since the resumption of Chinese tour of South Korea are gradually proceeding, Chinese consumers who have recently experienced hostile feelings will be able to understand the evaluation and purchase intention of Korean companies and products. It is judged that the situation is appropriate. In particular, I would like to propose a hypothesis about the effect of Hallyu and Satisfaction on Chinese hostile feelings in China, which played a central role of Hallyu culture. In addition, we will combine the study of consumer's hostility and memory theory in the aspect of international marketing, and propose a direction for development of marketing strategies that companies can pursue in case of similar disputes in the future.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1. Research on Consumer Hostility**

Klein et al. (1998) found that past and present historical events, political and economic events, or consumers' personal experiences and perceptions of consumer animosity negatively affected the evaluation and purchase behavior of certain national products. We conducted an empirical analysis focusing on the image of Japan to the Chinese consumers. In the representative historical events, we measured the hostility of the consumers in the Chinese indiscriminate massacre event in Nanjing, China, for about two years from 1937. This analysis suggests that antagonism to a particular country in the home country (country of origin) may result in a negative impact on the purchasing behavior, although antagonism does not significantly affect the evaluation of products when purchasing products from a particular country.

Most of the studies on the hostility of the consumers have been conducted on the attitudes of the members or consumers of the products in other countries. Witkowski (2000) shows that American consumers' attitudes toward products made in China or originating in China, Ettensen and Klein (2005) found that Australian consumers' purchasing attitudes toward French products, Nijssen and Douglas (2004) conducted an empirical study on German products recognized as hostile against Dutch consumers. And the study of hostility between countries has been done mainly. Shimp et al. (2004) examined the more compact objects in the study of hostility between countries, and studied the hostility of single or multi-ethnic cultures within the country. In addition to investigating hostility in the northern and southern regions through the American Civil War, we developed measures for measuring hostility attitudes. Hinck (2004) studied hostility between East German and West German after German unification in 1990.

Shoham et al. (2006) have been actively studying hostility due to differences in religion, origin, and region in the same country, such as studying hostility among Jewish and Arab Israelites among the people of Israel.

In Korea, An (2014) conducted an empirical study on the influence of hostility of Chinese consumers on the whole process of national image effect composed of "national image, product evaluation, product attitude" Kim and Kim (2010) studied the effects of ethnocentrism and hostility on product evaluation and purchase intention based on Korean consumers' mobile phone products and reaffirmed the positive correlation between ethnocentrism and hostility. Lee et al. (2009) examined the effects of negative influences on hostility toward Japan and purchase intentions on younger generations born in China after the 1980s, suggesting implications for the derivation of variables and ways to utilize them.

Historical hostility toward war among existing consumer antagonisms may not have a significant impact on the aging of major consumers and the economic and cultural development in their own countries. In time, conflicts based on historical facts can be less influential in the process of changing generations. Relatively recent diplomatic conflicts between Korea and China show a series of processes starting from military conflicts and leading to economic conflicts. Beginning with diplomatic conflicts related to the establishment of the THAAD (Terminal High Altitude Area Defense) in Korea and China starting in 2017, the Chinese have held back investment in the joint venture business in Korea, impact on the tourism industry, and so-called customs retaliation.

## **2.2. Research on Corporate Image**

Dowling (1988) found that the image of a corporation lies in the mind of an accepting person. Businesses should be able to communicate their messages and opinions to employees, investors, customers, and all consumers of the enterprise.

The corporate image can be defined as the "overall impression" left in consumers' minds through accumulated emotions, ideas, attitudes and experiences of consumers. The positive or negative impressions and emotional changes of consumers can be reconstructed (Fombrun, 1996; Hatch et al., 2003). Therefore, the corporate image is composed of strategic intentions such as mission, vision, goal and identity that reflect the core values that the company wants to communicate and communicate, so that the communication process (Leuthesser & Kohli, 1997; Van Riel & Balmer, 1997). And Keller (1993) found that corporate image can be regarded not only as a single product and service, but also as a brand image type pointing to the whole organization together with the brand image. Ultimately, the image of a company is determined entirely by the consumer's intention to deliver an image and whether the consumer accepts the message.

In recent years, research has focused on the role of corporate image and the application of marketing and utility to create sustainable competitive advantage. (Hertz & Schultz, 1997; Simoes et al, 2005; Worcester, 2009).

## **2.3. Research on Product Image**

The basic concept of product image is the overall impression and awareness that a specific product produced in a particular country by Roth and Romeo (1992) provides to consumers, the results of this study are summarized as follows. First, the results of this study are as follows.

First, there is a positive relationship between positive and negative perceptions. Similar researches on past product images have been conducted on the relationship between the national image and the product image, and the research has been carried out to analyze the correlation between the related variables. Bilkey and Nes (1982) argue that the image of a country's products can be defined as a national image based on product quality and level of quality, Parameswaran and Pisharodi (1994) focus on the relationship between two concepts through a clear distinction between product images and national images. In a study of the relationship, Lee and Ganesh (1998) found that images of products produced by consumers in a particular country may be favorable, but the image that a country may have may be negative due to political and economic conflicts and differences between countries, it is argued that it is necessary to study the effects of product image and country image on product evaluation.

And the consumers' purchase intentions proved that the national image plays a mediating role in product image. In addition, Wang et al. (2012) explained the image of the product along with the image of the product in the process of decision making of the consumer for the foreign product as a prior consideration factor, it proves that there is a difference in relation to intention.

Many consumers form a product image through the product information and direct or indirect experience when they contact a specific product, and then perform a purchase selection action by being influenced by the image of the product previously formed in the purchase selection process of the product. And experience of satisfaction after purchasing form a new product image.

## **2.4. Research on Consumer Purchase Intention**

Intentions can be defined as the probability that an individual's attitude and belief will be transferred to direct action for the planned and anticipated future situation and behavior (Clark, 1990). Engel et al. (1995) described the beliefs and attitudes in the concept of defined intention as the probability of actual purchase behavior.

In the studies conducted mainly on the purchase intention and evaluation of existing consumers in Korea, the purchase intention is commonly defined as 'the will to purchase behavior that can be executed by general consumers', and the intention of the consumers and the direct purchase. It has been studied that there is a close relationship with behavior.

Lee, Choi, and Lim (2004) In the case of involvement products, it is influenced by opinions of other consumers. This is because communication activities of group members have a strong influence on purchase behavior.

There are a number of studies (Taute, 2017; Choi & Soo, 2015) that identify consumers' perceived brand awareness, brand, reputation, etc. have a positive effect on purchase intention.

## **2.5. Research on Korean Wave**

Before exploring the theoretical background of Hallyu culture, it is necessary to summarize various views and arguments about Hallyu origin. 'Korean Wave' is a concept that appeared in the Chinese media in the late 1990s and has been described as a phenomenon in which popular culture contents such as Korean dramas, songs, and movies are becoming very popular (Lee, 2002; Lee, 2004; Lee, 2011). In the early days when the Korean Wave culture was influential, it was prevalent in Japan and China. In the mid-2000s, it expanded to Southeast Asia such as Vietnam. During the period from the late 2000s to the present, It is creating a boom in the global wave that includes the Americas and Europe (Korea Tourism Organization, 2012). The widespread regional influence of the New Korean Wave means that consumption of tourism and related products and improvement of the national image of Korea are expanding based on various cultural contents.

The scope of Korean Wave in various documents and researches is about the Korean art culture including Korean popular culture and performances including traditional films, music, broadcast programs, games, musicals, mobile contents, animations and characters, and includes all products and services linked to popular culture and fine arts, including Asia, including direct purchases and tourism of Korean products (International Foundation for Cultural Exchange, 2008)

Studies on the existing Korean Wave culture have been actively studied in various fields along with the development of the Korean Wave phenomenon. By analyzing the trends of Korean Wave literature 526 (2002~2014), Lim and Che (2014) analyzed 225 trends of Korean wave phenomenon about 42.8% and 25.7% 135, and Hallyu tourism (11.8%).

The diversity of research subjects was narrowly analyzed. In addition, the majority of studies on Hallyu consumers focus on the influence of Korean Wave on the purchase of products, and a comprehensive analysis of the characteristics of consumers and studies using other variables are insufficient. This researcher summarized recent Korean studies on the main papers published after the trend analysis.

First, various researches related to tourism business have been conducted focusing on the intention and intention of visiting foreigners who visited or experienced Korean culture.

Jang (2016) examined the impact of economic and cultural wave phenomena on the visitor's intention toward American people, and confirmed that the positive attitude of Korean wave culture directly affects the visitor's intention. Lee et al. (2017) pointed out the characteristics of visiting age groups and the necessity of marketing strategy for each generation through the empirical study on the influence of Korean Wave on the visit of foreign tourists by age. Oh and Oh (2015) measured the marketing effectiveness of the Korean Wave preference group and the non-contact group, focusing on the intention to visit and the intention of the tour, and presented the results with different influences by content type. It is confirmed that the spread of contents is not directly connected with actual visit.

Second, studies related to Korean Wave content are based on consumers' content satisfaction, exposure level and quality excellence as variables and their effects on national and corporate image and product evaluation. Kim (2016), examined the effects of Korean Wave content experience on national image, content satisfaction and loyalty, and examined the effects of content experience and national image on consumers' satisfaction.

Choi, Im, and Mo (2016) derived the results that positive ideals of Chinese consumers are positively influencing brand connectivity and purchase intention, focusing on Korean drama among cultural contents. And the direction of the drama 's composition direction. Lee, Kang, and Park (2018) identified the influence of various cultural contents

and the interaction effect between content satisfaction and exposure to ethnocentrism on the purchase intention of Korean products by Korean consumers. Finally, studies were conducted to measure the effects of Korean Wave on consumer perceptions, purchase intentions and attitudes.

Jung (2006) argue that the direct influence of the Korean Wave culture affects the preference and purchase intention of Korean products. Lee and Yoon (2017) have shown that Chinese consumers perceive Korean Wave and the mediating effect of brand image has a positive effect on the intention of repurchase of smartphone. And they suggested strategic implications for improving brand and corporate image.

Jung, Jin, and Yang (2017) studied the effect of Korean Wave and product image on the online purchasing intention of Korean cosmetics for Vietnamese consumers and found that Korean Wave has a direct effect on product image enhancement and purchase intention of cosmetics respectively. Wang, Kang, and Go (2017) are influenced by the Korean Wave in the purchase of Korean food by Chinese consumers.

### 3. Methodology: Research Model and Hypothesis proposal

#### 3.1. Research Model

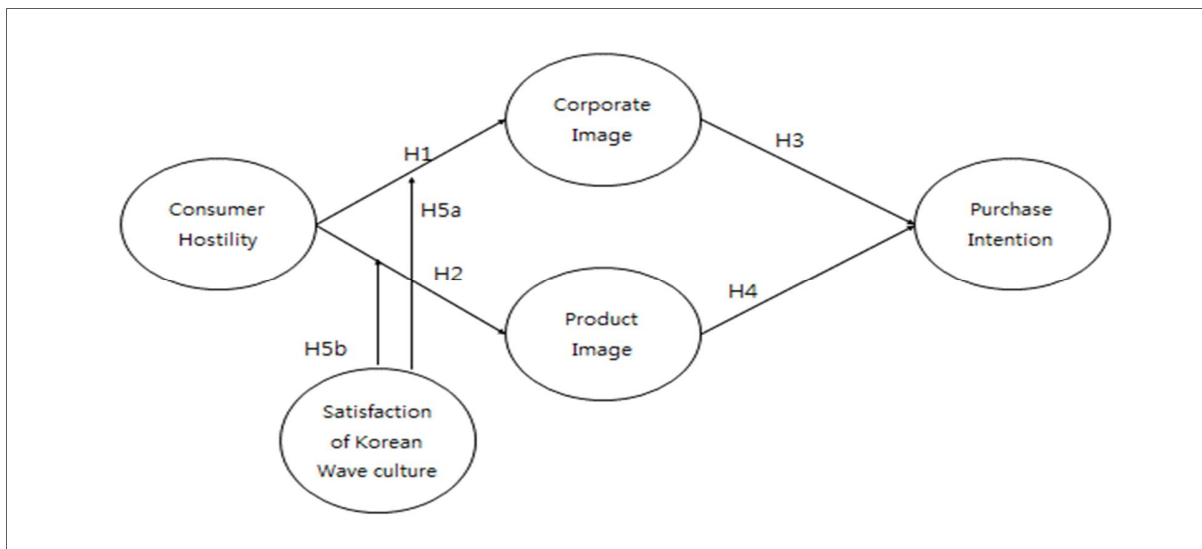


Figure 1: Research Model

Personal hostility and national hostility are major factors in hostility. Although it can be said that national antagonism had a great influence on purchasing due to the political influence, it could be said that it affected the image of foreign companies and product images together with personal hostility. It can be inferred that such animosity was influenced by the favorable Korean Wave culture and played a role of mitigating much of the hostility. Therefore, it is necessary to clarify whether the Korean Wave is more satisfying and controls the adverse effects of hostility on companies and product images. Therefore, it is necessary to identify the effect of the research model shown in Figure 1 on the final purchase intention.

#### 3.2. Measures of Variables

Based on the previous studies (Hoffmann et al., 2011; Stanton, 1981; Keller & Aker, 1992; Klein, 1998; Wood & Darling, 1993; Hwang & Cho, 2008) can be measured. The constructs of variables consist of consumer hostility, corporate image, product image, and purchase intention to the Korean Wave. Consumer hostility can be measured by national antagonism and individual hostility.

**Table 1:** Measures of variables

Factor		Measurement items	Reference
Consumer Hostility	National Hostility	1.Korea is a threat to us. 2.The political situation in Korea affects us a lot. 3.Korea is trying to dominate us economically. 4.I do not like Korean diplomatic activities. 5.I do not like the political attitude of Korea.	Hoffmann et al.(2011)
	Personal Hostility	1.I personally have bad experience with Korea. 2.I do not like the Koreans I met. 3.I am angry with Korea. 4.I do not like Korea.	
Corporate Image		1.Korean companies have excellent technology. 2.Korean companies are transparent and rational. 3.I trust Korean companies. 4.Korean companies are highly recognized. 5.Korean companies are customer oriented.	Stanton(1981)
Product Image		1.Korean products have excellent quality. 2.Korean products have excellent functionality. 3.Korean products are excellent in design. 4.Korean products are durable. 5.Korean products are highly efficient.	Keller & Aker(1992)
Purchase Intention		1.If I buy Korean products, I will feel guilty. 2.I will not buy Korean products. 3.I do not want to own Korean products. 4.I do not prefer Korean products.	Klein(1998), Wood and Darling(1993)
Satisfaction of Korean Wave culture		1.Korean dramas are fun. 2.I feel satisfied with watching Korean drama. 3.I think K-pop is good to hear. 4.I hear K-pop and feel satisfied. 5.Korean movies are fun. 6.I feel satisfied with watching Korean movies.	Hwang and Cho(2008)

### 3.3. Research Hypothesis Proposal

Jung et al. (2002) and Ang et al. (2004) classify hostility according to four types through studies related to hostility, in addition to the concept of consumer hostility as summarized in the previous section and the previous studies. This was largely divided into stabilization and adversarial hostility and situational hostility, which were classified as personal hostility and national hostility. Fixed antagonism can be seen as antagonism based on historical facts and experience for a long time, and antagonism based on situations can be explained by the unexpected special circumstances and the antagonism that is provided by the provisioned environment temporarily. Personal antagonism refers to feelings based on various experiences experienced by an individual. National antagonism refers to a period of time that has affected the entire nation, such as war, and emotions that represent a macro and national perception based on events at the time of the occurrence.

This study suggests the following hypotheses, focusing on four types of hostility among the existing studies, focusing on individual hostility and national hostility.

**H1:** Consumer hostility will have negative impact on image recognition of Korean companies.

Shoham et al. (2006) show that recent conflicts can lead to greater hostility toward the target country and negative perception of the product compared to the conflicts that have occurred in the past. And the level of evaluation can be different. Han (2015) had a negative impact on the Japanese product evaluation, and the analysis of the consumer's tendency, as the hostility toward Japan felt by the Korean consumers.

The following hypothesis is proposed to investigate how diplomatic and military conflicts and conflicts that arise in such countries affect hostile feelings of the consumers of the country and affect the image of the products of the disputed country.

**H2:** Consumer hostility will have a negative impact on image recognition of Korean products.

The corporate image can be defined as the "overall impression" that is left in consumers' hearts through accumulated emotions, ideas, attitudes and experiences of consumers. The positive or negative impressions and emotional changes of consumers can be reconstructed (Dowling, 1988; Fombrun, 1996; Hatch et al., 2003). Therefore, the corporate image is composed of strategic intentions such as mission, vision, goal and identity that reflect the core values that the company wants to communicate and communicate, so that the communication process (Leuthesser & Kohli, 1997; Van Riel & Balmer, 1997). And Keller (1993) found that corporate image can be regarded not only as a single product and service, but also as a brand image type pointing to the whole organization together with the brand image.

The hypotheses are as follows for the effect of consumer's perception on corporate image on purchase intention.

**H3:** Korean companies' image recognition will have a positive effect on the purchase intention of the product

Global companies are striving to develop strong brands that have the same level of their own brand value in their own markets in order to enter overseas markets and establish marketing strategies (Samiee, Shimp, & Sharma, 2005). Domestic companies also utilize the effects of Korean Wave culture to enter overseas markets and establish international marketing strategies based on these strategic theories. Through cultural marketing approaches, we are making efforts to improve the brand value of the company and improve the image of the products produced.

The hypothesis is suggested that the image enhancement of the products produced by the companies will have a significant influence on the consumers' purchase intention.

**H4:** Image recognition of Korean products will have a positive effect on the purchase intention of the product.

This study confirms the effect of consumer hostility on the images of foreign products and companies, and it is judged that their relationship plays an important role in consumer's personal experience and satisfaction. This study is based on Lee and Ganesh's (1999) study, which shows that the various knowledge and experiences consumers have about a particular country determine the emotional level of familiarity with and appreciation of particular countries, which is the result of the study. In addition, Jang (2011) examined the structural relationship between corporate image, consumer's hostility, and intention to buy foreign products, and examined the effect of ethnocentrism and familiarity among countries. But the reputation and image of the corporation proved to be a factor to mitigate consumer's hostility.

Based on the results of previous research, it is assumed that Chinese consumers will play a moderating role in the relationship between satisfaction with Korean culture and image of Korean companies.

**H5-a:** The satisfaction of the Korean Wave culture will be adjusted in the direction of positive relation between consumer hostility and Korean corporate image.

Hong (2007) studied the relationship between the influence of Korean Wave culture on the image and product evaluation of Korean products and the purchase intention of Japanese consumers, and the favorable evaluation and purchasing intention due to the positive impact of Korean Wave culture.

Lee et al. (2009) analyzed the results of the hostility of Japanese products and the effect of nationalism on the birth of China since the 1980s. In addition, changes in time, positive product experiences of consumers, openness of

cultures and characteristics of innovative products could control the negative effects of hostility. Lee (2018) have examined the moderating effect of ethnocentrism in research that influences the purchase intention of Korean products depending on the satisfaction and exposure of Korean Wave content. Therefore, the researcher suggests the following hypothesis to test the control effect by presenting the satisfaction of the Korean Wave culture as a variable to counter hostility.

**H5-b:** The satisfaction of the Korean Wave culture will be adjusted in the direction of positive relation between the consumer hostility and the image of Korean products.

#### 4. Conclusion

Lee, Lee, and Li. (2017) measured the effect of hesitation on consumers' purchasing, focusing on the relationship between ethnocentrism and hostility in terms of memory theory. Disputes over the effects of hostility have greater impacts than those after the dispute, and companies in particular have argued for the need to look very carefully and react to consumers' short-term memory effects in international conflicts. It is an academically meaningful to study how consumer antagonism affects consumers' image and product image, and how this relationship affects purchase intention according to memory theory.

Recently, various factors such as the THAAD (Terminal High Altitude Area Defense) problem caused by the political influence with China have raised the hostility of Chinese people, and the cosmetics industry and tourism industry as well as Lotte and E-Mart, which are Korean multinationals, have been hit hard. Therefore, it is suggested that research should be conducted to verify how the Korean Wave can eliminate and counteract such hostility by using Korean Wave. In addition, it is important to grasp the intention of purchasing that directly affects the performance according to the influence relationship.

This study suggests research topics that investigate how hostility affects Korean Wave in consideration of the current special situation, while conventional researches mainly focus on ethnocentrism and patriotism. In this way, this study suggests research direction that helps to enhance corporate image and product image by eliminating hostility and actively utilizing Korean Wave.

And the limitations of this study are for Chinese consumers, but because China has a vast territory and population, it is necessary to withdraw samples focused on specific regions through subdivision markets. In addition, since this research model can show differences in each industry, it is necessary to control the industries and to narrow down the effects to the specific industries or the specific industries.

Finally, this study suggests the subjects to be studied empirically by presenting research themes and models, but it is necessary to verify the model through statistical verification since it is not verified empirically. In addition, it is necessary to further control factors and identification of anti-marginal or anti-marginal products.

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