

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

The relationship between South Korea and Japan has always been laced with lingering negative sentiment from the past. Sentiments drawn from the colonization era by Imperial Japan still leave unfinished issues until recent times. With South Korea left behind after the colony and devastated from the war, the country has to find ways to build itself up from poverty. Through successful economic strategies, South Korea was able to launch the country up to be one of the top in the world now. In efforts of rectifying its image in the international community, South Korea launched their public diplomacy overseas. However, South Korea's relations with Japan are still in turmoil despite being each other's largest trading partners. Therefore, South Korea has to build positive relations with one of their close neighbors, Japan. Through the use of public diplomacy South Korea hopes to create positive opinion in the foreign public of Japan in order to further its agenda of mending the historical conflict between the two nations and improve its image. South Korea's public diplomacy comes in the form of the Korean Wave, or *Hallyu*, which entails the export of Korean culture overseas.

Hallyu, or the Korean Wave, means anything of the Korean products that became popular overseas and many aspects can come into the category. Korean Tv dramas, movies, and music are the three leading elements of the Korean Wave and it proves to be making progress in foreign countries, particularly Japan. *Hallyu* have proven to be making waves in the international community through its phenomenon and achievements globally. Those influences became proof of *Hallyu*'s success in spreading the Korean culture. Being so close in proximity, Japan is one of the earliest to be affected by the Korean Wave. Especially with *Hallyu* championing K-Pop as its

frontrunner, Japan is now going through its third wave of *Hallyu*. In the front leading this *Hallyu* wave would be the multinational K-Pop girl group, TWICE, who has become a leading icon of *Hallyu* in Japan.

As an icon of *Hallyu*, TWICE reignited the enthusiasm for the Korean Wave in Japan. As a K-Pop group, the existence of TWICE in Japan is already an indication of *Hallyu* thriving. TWICE's promotion and activities in Japan operate as a medium of public diplomacy of South Korea. Their success in both Japan and Korea indicates TWICE's global potential in spreading the Korean culture.

In terms of TWICE supporting Korea's public diplomacy efforts, the group was able to introduce, promote an appreciation, and engage the Japanese public through endorsement of Korean cultures. Notably in the younger generation of Japan, the enthusiasm towards K-Pop became increasingly higher with each of TWICE's promotions in the country. Equipped with three Japanese members in the group, TWICE is able to penetrate the foreign market and connect with the foreign public easily. This serves as a medium to familiarize the Japanese public with the Korean Wave much easily if it comes from their own citizens. After that, TWICE is able to accommodate the appreciation and involvement of the Japanese public by providing concert venues and engaging them with Korean culture through content media.

Through the cultural diplomacy of music, dance, food, fashion, and tourism, TWICE shows their support and uses those aspects to reignite the interest towards Korean culture in Japan. TWICE's K-Pop songs charted very well in Japan, their dance and trendy pose that were popular in Korea was also brought to Japan and gained virality in both countries. The Korean culture was able to be included in TWICE's Japanese promotion for the foreign public to understand more. The Japanese public has learned more about trends, fashion, and daily food of

the Korean society, which lead to the increase of tourism into the country. These new cultures were followed and taken interest by the younger generation of Japan who do not share the same negative feelings as the older generation of Japan. Their perception and response to Korean culture is to embrace and enjoy rather than reject them.

Conclusively, TWICE has become more than just a music artist for South Korea. The group has become a beacon that ignites *Hallyu* back for the third time in Japan after being absent from the country's media for several years due to the tensions between the two countries. Appearing back in Japanese television media and bringing their title as a Korean girl group back into the spotlight of the public. Proving South Korea's public diplomacy, *Hallyu*, is able to permeate in any foreign public, even including the country with historical issues, such as Japan.

TWICE's efforts in promoting South Korea's public diplomacy serves as an indication that a non-state actor serves as a medium to further the country's agenda. Through TWICE, South Korea is able to open the Japanese public towards their culture diplomacy. Essentially, South Korea focuses its target on the younger foreign public rather than trying to satiate the negative sentiments of the older generation. Building up a positive image and positive opinion in the generation who would be leading the country in the future.

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