

# Exploring the Branding of Korean Entertainment Industry from Human Brand and Brand Loyalty

Yilan Li<sup>1\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Ohio State University, Columbus, US

\*Email: li.9426@buckeyemail.osu.edu

## ABSTRACT

This paper investigates whether the use of human brands in Korean entertainment industry has opened new opportunities for the whole entertainment market, and whether new media communication can support the successful marketing of human brands in the digital age. This paper mainly adopts the quantitative research method and obtains the relevant data through the questionnaire. The purpose of this survey is to investigate whether the potential consumption perception of the target group is affected by the new media platform and the advantages of the entertainment industry in the brand field (brand uniqueness, easier formation of brand loyalty and personal brand value), and what factors play a decisive role in brand loyalty. Through the graphic display and analysis of the collected data, this paper holds that the brand value of celebrities is the key to maintain brand loyalty. Brand loyalty is positively related to the consumption behavior of fans, and the new media platform also makes a positive contribution to the brand. This study will provide some superficial international insights for human brands, and bring some enlightenment to the entertainment industry in the field of new media marketing.

**Keywords:** Korean entertainment industry, New media, Brand value

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Branding is a topic that has been studied for years in the field of marketing. Now, the Chinese market has many international brands, both from European and American countries and from East Asia. The introduction of brands has had a certain impact on Chinese consumers' consumption choices and consumption habits. At the same time, the introduction of international brands also brings certain impact and pressure to Chinese local brands, and also stimulates Chinese enterprises to continuously improve brand value in the fierce market competition. On the definition of brand, some scholars have defined it as "on using all the company's particular assets to create unique entities that certain consumers really want- entities that have a lasting personality, based on a special combination of physical, functional, and psychological values, and that have a competitive edge. entities that have a lasting personality, based on a special combination of physical, functional, and psychological values, and that have a competitive advantage in at least one area of marketing" [1]. A broadly defined brand is a visual or verbal message that can be sold in the marketplace and makes the corresponding product or service stand out among

similar products. Kapferer has emphasized brand as an identity structure with six integrated facets of culture, personality, self-projection, physique, reflection, and relationship [2]. While the core of a brand is a concentration of needs and desires of a certain group of consumers with the same consumer characteristics, a concentration of needs and desires for a product (or service) because of their needs in life and social interactions, and a feeling resulting from the experience of the goods (or service). In other words, consumer needs and desires are at the heart of a brand and determine its ultimate development and destiny. Traditionally, brands are associated with companies, products, organizations or services, but today there is research that recognizes that brands can also be human. Human brands refer to the persona, well-known or emerging, who are the subject of marketing, interpersonal, or inter-organizational communications [3].

When it comes to human brand, it is hard not to associate it with the creation of stars. As we learned more about this concept, we realized that there are many parts of Korean entertainment culture that we have been exposed to for a long time that reflect human brand. How the Korean entertainment industry creates stars.

The Korean pop culture is now sweeping the world, and Korean star groups, led by BTS, have overcome long-standing language barriers and aesthetic differences to become a worldwide success. While creating a global brand is a long and difficult process, the success of BTS in the U.S. marked their opening of the world in less than six years from the group's inception to their worldwide fame. The branding part of this is undoubtedly worth exploring.

We can treat individual celebrities as brands, as they possess similar associations and features to a brand that can be professionally managed [4]. The name and appellation of that celebrity is the brand name, the unique external figure and internal personality, cultivation, and professional competence is the embodiment of brand reputation, and a sentiment, impression, and value held by the public is associated with brand loyalty. When organizations have a superior brand reputation; build stronger, more meaningful relationships with customers and increase brand loyalty [5], branding then has a foundation for success. It is a gradual process. The relationship cultivation between celebrities and consumers is different from general brands, they can build a stronger emotional connection with consumers in a short period of time, and some scholars call this emotional bond linking consumers and human brand as idol attachment [6]. With the addition of idol attachment, brand loyalty is more accessible and stickier for human brand.

Consumers with high levels of brand loyalty tend to promote their preferred brands to those around them and purchase and trust new products within those brands. Brand loyalty is a basic, yet important, concept in brand operation [7]. Meanwhile, back to the topic of BTS, for numerous times over the years, the fandom ARMY has clashed and fought with difficult opponents-Korean politicians, the Japanese extreme Right, and a Jewish human rights organization [8]. Thus, brand loyalty not only brings free promotional benefits to companies, but also allows consumer groups to spontaneously defend the brand and even instigate these defenses to the political level. So here comes the question, what are the factors behind the worldwide marketing success of Korean stars that shape brand loyalty? What opportunities and conveniences does this bring to branding and marketing?

In order to investigate the above questions, this paper conducted research on a specific group of consumers using a cross-sectional survey and a simple correlation analysis using SPSS to find out what factors correlate with the formation of branding and brand loyalty in the Korean entertainment industry, and how human branding compares to other types of branding. The study was conducted to investigate the correlation between branding and brand loyalty in the Korean

entertainment industry, and the advantages of human brand compared to other types of branding.

## 2. METHODS

To investigate the factors of successful branding in the Korean entertainment industry among the fan base, this paper used cross-sectional survey as my research method, as well as SPSS for validity analysis, correlation analysis of variables, and simple regression analysis. The survey lasted for about a week, and targeted different Korean celebrity chatting group members and specific active Korean celebrity forum users as potential respondents and distributed the questionnaires. In the end, 105 valid questionnaires were collected.

This paper randomly formed and organized 23 questions into two sections, using Multiple Choice, True or False, Likert scale, etc., respectively explored the ways in which the entertainment industry conducts branding and its strengths in the area of branding (brand uniqueness, ease of brand loyalty, individual brand value), and the impact of brand loyalty on consumer behavior. In the survey, the first section focused on the correlation between star-chasing behavior and new media platforms. The questions included the most frequently used social media platforms for star-chasing; which types of star-chasing activities on the platforms best reflect your devotion for the stars and your willingness to consume product related to them; and whether you would consume products endorsed by stars while you do not need or like. In the second part, this paper then explored the connection between human brand building and fan loyalty, as well as consumption behavior, setting questions such as I like the star because I like his or her appearance, personality, three fundamental values, etc., and if these factors change, I will stop paying attention to them; the company's good planning, personal unique label, higher achievement will attract me to like the star, etc.

## 3. RESULTS

At the end of the week-long questionnaire, this paper conducted a validity analysis (Figure 1) on all questions designed for the Likert scale (a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = not at all, to 5 = very much) and categorized the items with the same dimension, and screened out those with unreasonable validity: the items "I am more interested in buying the products used by the artist than the company's advertisement" (this item is not in the same dimension as other items related to consumer behavior), and "I am willing to spend money because of the company's planning and the artist's good quality" (the question was set up with the specificity of summarizing the above questions). This paper finally get three categories that meet my expectations.

The three categories of data mentioned above can represent the aspects of brand connotation, the role of brand packaging, and external factors influencing consumer behavior in the study, respectively. This paper then further tested the correlation of the factors in each category and selected the tabular data with significant results (Figure 2).

**Table 1.** Effectiveness analysis of related questions

Items	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Communality
A	0.09	0.03	<b>0.69</b>	0.08	0.487
B	0.04	0.07	<b>0.83</b>	0.06	0.695
C	0.15	-0.07	<b>0.75</b>	0.27	0.664
D	0.07	-0.22	<b>0.55</b>	0.38	0.498
E	<b>0.80</b>	-0.07	0.16	0.16	0.698
F	<b>0.77</b>	0.07	0.09	0.04	0.604
G	<b>0.84</b>	0.10	0.08	0.12	0.729
H	<b>0.81</b>	-0.01	0.07	0.21	0.702
I	<b>0.76</b>	0.31	0.01	0.08	0.683
J	0.02	<b>0.74</b>	-0.02	0.40	0.713
K	0.41	<b>0.74</b>	-0.13	0.09	0.741
L	0.02	<b>0.85</b>	0.03	0.07	0.737

**Notes:**

A: I chase stars because I like their physical abilities (looks/talent).

B: If stars' business ability declines, I will hate/no longer pay attention to him/her

C: I chase stars because I like their inner qualities (personality/character).

D: If stars' and my three views do not match, I will hate/no longer pay attention to him/her (political stance, social opinion, do illegal things, etc.)

E: The company's brilliant planning will make me fall in love with the stars I used not pay attention to (such as novel album concepts, interesting publicity, etc.)

F: I will fall in love with a star because of some distinct personal characteristics and labels

G: I like stars (groups) because they have very recognizable plans and concepts

H: I think these unique schemes and concepts are the key to attracting fans

I: I like them more if they achieve more (Billboard Top 100 / Winning the Award of the Year/Speaking at the UN, etc.)

J: I will consume some products related to star that I don't like/need

K: The repeated appearance of advertisements will make me more willing to consume

L: Other fans' provocative purchase comments make me more willing to consume

**Table 2.** Correlation of significant factors

MV	SD	A	B	I	J	L
4.24	0.96	1				
3.08	1.10	0.43**	1			
3.50	1.36	0.14	-0.05	1		
3.07	1.10	-0.02	-0.04	0.20*	1	
2.93	1.29	-0.07	0.06	0.29*	0.48	1
				*	**	
* p<0.05 ** p<0.01						

**Notes:** MV: Mean Value ; SD: Standard Deviation

From the above table, the relationship between the variables " I chase stars because I like their physical abilities " and " If stars' business ability declines, I will hate/no longer pay attention to him/her ", it is easy to see that the external ability of the star is significantly correlated with consumers' preference for the star ( $p<0.01$ , coefficient=0.43). This finding provides a rough proof that brand value in branding plays a significant role in consumers' choice of brand and formation of brand loyalty. At the same time, " I like them more if they have higher achievement ", " Other fans' provocative purchase comments make me more willing to consume ", "I will consume some products related to star that I don't like/need", and there is a significant correlation between these three variables. From this, we can generate conclusion that the inflammatory purchase statements of fan groups are closely related to the consumption behavior of fans, and the higher the achievement of celebrities, the more irrational (consuming unwanted goods) the consumption behavior of their fans tends to be. The results of this analysis show that the higher the value of the brand, the stronger the consumer's loyalty to the brand, and after the formation of brand loyalty, the spontaneous promotion behavior of this type of consumers can bring the company rich commercial benefits.

Finally, this paper conducted a more diverse discussion of irrational consumption behavior by correlating it with four factors: use of new media platforms, frequency of advertising placement, brand loyalty, and other consumer behaviors, with the aim of exploring whether new media platforms contribute to fans' consumption behavior. The results show that high frequency of advertising placement is closely related to each of these consumption behaviors or tendencies, while the combination of fans' inflammatory speech and high frequency of advertising placement is the most influential (coefficient=0.55). From this, we can deliberately conclude that using new media platforms for marketing, while combining the multiple benefits of brand loyalty, can induce consumers to consume, thus making the company profitable.

## 4. DISCUSSION

Low-order needs should first be met before consumers could move to high-order needs, guided by Maslow's hierarchy of needs [9]. The logic of brand building is also based on this. Only when consumers' bottom-level needs are met first, higher-level needs will be solicited and will also lead to greater brand loyalty. This study provides some valuable insights into the way the entertainment industry conducts brand building, its strengths in the field of brand building, and the impact of brand loyalty on consumer behavior. The research data suggests that the brand value of celebrities is key to maintaining brand loyalty, which is positively correlated

with the consumption behavior of fans, and that the company's benefit acquisition channels can also be optimized by using the spontaneous promotion behavior of fans. Last but not least, this paper introduced variables about the marketing tools of new media platforms, analyzed and obtained the positive contribution of new media platforms to branding, such as promoting fan consumption, spreading a large number of visual resources, and optimizing marketing channels, which can provide appropriate references for future promotion strategies in the entertainment industry and make academic progress in the field of advertising and marketing.

The study also contains some shortcomings, the first of which is the imbalance in the ratio of male to female respondents. Of the total 105 questionnaires, 73% were female and 27% were male, which makes my study unable to reflect gender differences, and it is a point that should be improved. Secondly, although it was not considered in this study, this paper hope to have a more in-depth study on the cultural aspect of branding in the future. Several scholars have studied the song concepts used by BTS in its foray into the United States and found that it incorporates Western values and very intelligently uses some cultural concepts that Americans can easily resonate with.

In order to appeal widely to American consumers, BTS and Big Hit utilized a similar strategy with the youth trilogy for the Chinese market. The Wings series is based on *Demian* (1919) by Hermann Hesse, ..... , the song *Blood, Sweat, and Tears* (2016) is in fact the name of a popular North American jazz-rock music group from the 1970s, while the title of the third trilogy is same as Justin Bieber's song "Love Yourself" (2015).....This strategy makes not only young fans but also older figures in American broadcasting networks feel familiar with the songs of BTS, which facilitates the penetration of BTS into the US market [10]. This cross-cultural embodiment of branding is well worthy of in-depth consideration. At the same time, it is also an area of exploration for the development opportunities brought by new media platforms in the digital age, such as the help of short video platforms for branding and marketing. These contemporary studies could be implemented more.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Brand is always inseparable from star culture and fan economy. In recent years, China has indeed been greatly influenced by Korean entertainment culture in the development of star endorsement and fan economy. Of course, Korean pop culture is also sweeping the world and has a certain impact on the development of world brands. Under the background of globalization and digital convergence, media integration and industrial transformation are the new ways for the entertainment

and cultural industry under the general trend. By virtue of the excellent upstream and downstream vertical integration ability of the industry, some entertainment companies in South Korea have undoubtedly become the most representative indicator entertainment economic companies in today's Asian entertainment industry. As we all know, South Korea's entertainment industry is very developed.

This paper mainly discusses how Korean entertainment industry uses humanized brands and whether these brands bring new opportunities to the whole entertainment market. In the context of new media, whether new media communication can support the successful marketing of humanized brands in the digital age. In terms of research methods, this paper mainly adopts questionnaire survey and based on relevant data analysis, discusses whether the potential consumption perception of the target group is affected by the new media platform, as well as the advantages in the brand field of entertainment industry, such as brand uniqueness, brand loyalty and personal brand value, which factors play a decisive role in brand loyalty. This paper holds that the brand value of celebrities is the key to maintain brand loyalty. Brand loyalty is positively related to the consumption behavior of fans, and the new media platform has also made a positive contribution to the brand. This study will provide some superficial views for human brands and bring some enlightenment to the entertainment industry in the field of new media marketing.

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