

Research Article

The Analysis of South Korean Gastrodiplomacy Towards The Increase of South Korean Kimchi Export

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Abstract

This research aims to provide the blueprint of how South Korea's both state and nonstate actors are involved in South Korea's Gastrodiplomacy. This research will provide the details of the South Korean government's implementation of "Kimchi Diplomacy" and the increase of South Korean Kimchi export. This research uses literature studies to collect all the information and data needed to answer the Gastrodiplomacy impact on the South Korean economy. Gastrodiplomacy is a form of South Korea's soft power in promoting culinary culture, especially Kimchi. South Korea's strategy in introducing their Kimchi commodity to the world is mainly carried out from people to people. In addition, Gastrodiplomacy is used by the South Korean government as a national branding strategy. This strategy has succeeded in improving the country's economic situation, especially the increase in exports of South Korean Kimchi commodities. South Korea's Kimchi exports have increased since 2011 (a total export 104.58 million USD) and reached a tipping point of 144.51 million USD in 2020. This study indicates a relationship between South Korea's Gastrodiplomacy strategy and the improvement of the kimchi commodity economy.

Keywords: Soft Power; Gastrodiplomacy; Kimchi Diplomacy; South Korean Kimchi Export

Introduction

There are various ways to maintain relations between countries in the world nowadays, one of them is through soft power. It is a special method, which is often used by middle-power countries to participate in their art of diplomacy in shaping preferences. Shaping preferences is not always something that could be achieved by hard power such as economic, security and political affairs, but through soft power such as culture, common values and nation branding. These aspects could be the 'power' that contribute to shaping the preferences of the global society. However, this process is not only executed by state actors, but also by non-state actors. Soft power is a new approach in country relations that permeates all levels, such as International Governmental Organization (IGO), Non-Governmental Organization (NGO), and people to people. Gastrodiplomacy is a type of cultural diplomacy that uses culinary culture as an attraction and medium for diplomacy (Rockower, 2012).

Gastrodiplomacy has become a part of cultural diplomacy, and cultural diplomacy is considered as a branch of public diplomacy. Gastrodiplomacy is only intended only as a communication instrument, not as an effort to help other countries deal with the problems of famish and malnutrition (Djumala, 2020). One of the countries that is famous for its Gastrodiplomacy in fulfilling its national interests is South Korea.

Gastrodiplomacy carried out by South Korea is globally spread through the Korean Wave. Initially, the global society only knew of the Korean Wave from its catchy pop tunes and improbable TV drama plot lines that were in demand. The Korean Wave became an introduction to South Korean culture for the global community. Both of these entertainment aspects started gaining more attention throughout the years (Paik, 2012). But the Korean Wave also has a third aspect, which is the country's bold and colorful cuisine. At first, South Korea's cuisine was less well-known but not long after the Korean Wave spread, Korean cuisine also gained attention. Therefore, the attention of the global community is not only limited to the actors, actresses, and stories that exist on TV dramas, but also to the cuisine served there. This phenomenon shows that South Korean foreign policy has moved from a government-oriented diplomacy to a more public-oriented diplomacy. Seeing this phenomenon, South Korea began to use their cuisine as a tool for diplomacy (McCurry, 2012).

South Korean Gastrodiplomacy began during President Moo Hyun Roh's leadership era in 2003–2008. He set up the Korea Foundation for Cultural Industries Exchange (KOFICE) to promote the Korean Wave. President Roh aimed to transform South Korean food as a global brand. This policy was carried out through cooperation with various groups such as companies, the social community, and the mass media. This policy was resumed by President Lee Myung Bak through the Global Hansik program: Korean Cuisine to the World. This program aimed to introduce food and make it easier for the global society to know more about South Korean food. The Korean Cuisine to the World program focused to further increase the number of South Korean restaurants around the world, increase investment in the South Korean food industry in expansion, creating lists of public figures, and others. This policy was viewed as an effective way of spreading South Korea's influence to the global community (Istad, 2016).

Adding to the massive success of the five strategies, the Korean Wave is still thriving as one of the main South Korean national identities. The Korean Wave phase has gotten bigger, especially with the influence of the movie "Parasite" that was crowned as Best Film at the Oscars, and the series "Squid Game" that earned first place on Netflix. The tipping point was brought by a singer named Psy with the first Korean song that entered the American Billboard chart titled "Gangnam Style", and currently brought by one of the biggest South Korean boy band known as Bangtan Boys also known as BTS who sell-out crowds in a number of countries despite performing in a different language than most of their audience (Sang-Hun, 2021). With all of this heightened interest in the Korean Wave culture, more interest in all other things that South Korea has to offer, particularly food, naturally follows. Through the years, the South Korean government has adapted its strategies on how to expand its food influences with one of South Korea's favorite cuisines, namely Kimchi.

Through this explanation, the research question arises about how South Korea's Gastrodiplomacy impacts on increasing exports of Kimchi products? This question was chosen by the authors because there has not been any previous research that discusses the relationship between South Korea's Gastrodiplomacy strategy and the increase of Kimchi products and exports. So far, the authors conclude that South Korea's Gastrodiplomacy strategy can provide a significant impact on increasing Kimchi exports to several countries in the world, especially the United States, Japan, and Hongkong as the top three leading country destinations for Kimchi export from South Korea. This was achieved because Gastrodiplomacy is an approach that is more easily accepted by the international community.

Literature Review

Based on the introduction, this research will be analyzed by conducting a literature review based on the increase of Kimchi exports of South Korean Gastrodiplomacy throughout the years from 2011-2020. By referring to this variable, the authors have found various literature bases that can support further research. The first literature is a journal written by Kim Chi-Hoon titled "*Let Them Eat Royal Court Cuisine! Heritage Politics of Defining Global Hansik*" (Kim, 2017) that has the same scope of research as the second literature, a journal written by Ratih Herningtyas entitled "*Korean Gastrodiplomacy: Strategy to Enhance Country Promotion Toward Moslem Countries*" (Herningtyas, 2019). These two journals have the same topic, namely about South Korea in spreading its influence through culture to the world community. Kim noted that the strategy is South Korea's culinary capability to mark boundaries and reaffirm a collective identity that allows the government to use it as a tool to advance its local and global interests. Herningtyas' research also agrees that this strategy is mainly supported by his statement that emphasizes the effectiveness of the Korean Wave or often known as *Hallyu* as a successful step in shaping the South Korean national identity and also spreading its influence as not only a unifier of the domestic community, but also as an image of South Korea.

These two journals begin their research with the process of spreading South Korean influence through the ever-widening *Hallyu* wave. Kim started this discussion as an effort to build a national identity starting in 1960, when the Joseon dynasty was still headed towards the project of unification of Korea in unity among differences in contemporary times. Kim only focused on the development of the spread of *Hallyu* during the reign of President Lee Myung Bak. Kim explained the dynamics of South Korea's efforts in making their special food one of the national heritages. Kim focused his discussion on South Korea's efforts through UNESCO, to convince the world that kimchi is one of South Korea's heritages. Korea has a priority for rapid economic growth and as an advanced country, their next step is to globalize food. In addition, food is also one of the national representations and pride for South Korea, thus President Lee pursued kimchi to be registered as a South Korean national heritage food through UNESCO. South Korea compared this effort with Japan's ease of obtaining a national heritage title by UNESCO, while South Korea experienced many obstacles in obtaining the title. In the end, the Korean government's dependence on Japan and UNESCO to determine its self-worth reaffirms their regional and global power hierarchy.

Kim's research emphasized the challenges for South Korea in the process of registering a national heritage at UNESCO, while Herningtyas' research focused on the challenge of South Korea's efforts to convince certain countries, primarily Muslim countries that their food had met Halal standards, which means the food has been prepared in a manner prescribed by Islamic law. Herningtyas' research explored the spread of South Korean food along with the spread of existing *Hallyu* ideas. In addition, Herningtyas' research does not only focus on President Lee's government but on 2015 in particular. This challenge is quite huge for South Korea, especially Muslim countries consist of almost one third of global populations. The main strategy conducted by South Korea is developing a halal certification organization in Korea that is currently conducted by the Korean Muslim Foundation (KMF). When Kim explained the historical importance of food to the point of national heritage, Herningtyas discussed the importance of South Korean food being accepted by every member of the world community.

In other literature sources with the focus on Gastrodiplomacy of South Korea, that is an article written by Rockower (2012), noted that Gastrodiplomacy quickly became a foreign policy instrument to increase the nation's brand and broader cultural appeal through soft power. In his writings, Rockower described the work of Gastrodiplomacy and established a dichotomy with a more formal culinary diplomacy. Gastrodiplomacy has proven to be an increasingly popular and dynamic public diplomacy strategy. In the end, it is a successful path for cultural diplomacy and national branding because it indirectly introduces foreign cultures in real terms (Rockover, 2012). Wilson (2011), who is also a researcher in public diplomacy, described the usage of food

in national branding as one of the many tools used by the government for the development of cultural diplomacy strategies. In his writing that discusses Gastrodiplomacy conducted by the Peruvian government, it is seen how a country wants to explore cultural richness, especially in food, as the basis for diplomatic initiatives. Through food, they can introduce national identity to the whole world (Wilson, 2013).

Demir and Alper (2021) explain how the official menu at the G20 is a means of Gastrodiplomacy. They analyzed the contents of the G20 working lunch and official dinner menus in the UK, South Korea, Turkey, and Argentina. The results of their research reveal that menus containing historical, geographical, cultural, and economic content are used as suggestions for soft power diplomacy by these countries to achieve their various goals (Demir & Alper, 2021).

From research conducted by Noor Nirwandy and Ahmad Azran Awang (2014), Gastrodiplomacy offers a deeper understanding of approaches to nation-building. Gastrodiplomacy communicates not only non-verbal aspects—food and culture—but also promotes progressive economic and trade growth, because the basic human need to survive is through food, to obtain nutrients that are useful for the body. Countries see this as an opportunity to increase their economic potential through Gastrodiplomacy (Nirwandy & Awang, 2014).

In other literature sources, a reference titled 'Current Status and Future Prospect of The Kimchi Industry', analyzed South Korean kimchi's international and local market data. The results of this study show South Korea's strategy to globalize kimchi. The main strategy is to export abroad by adjusting the variety of foreign markets to kimchi. The scientific article posits the final conclusion that the South Korea's small and medium-sized businesses can target the B2B (Business to Business) market first and can be expanded later. Other strategies target the overseas market by strengthening the kimchi company in the kimchi industry based on the market strategy. This reference does not discuss the strategy and Gastrodiplomacy conducted by South Korea which will be answered by this research.

The kimchi industry and Gastrodiplomacy is narrated in the journal titled 'The Foods of the World: the Mapping and Comparing Contemporary Gastrodiplomacy Campaigns' by Juyan Zhang. Based on the perspective of communication, this paper analyzed the differences in Gastrodiplomacy campaigns from Malaysia, Peru, Japan, South Korea and Thailand. The analysis showed that Gastrodiplomacy has a variety of messages such as the arts, naturalness, health and culture. Each country has a slogan of its own in communicating food as Gastrodiplomacy. This paper also analyzed the innovative tactics in developing Gastrodiplomacy and combined it with the kimchi value in 2011-2020. Based on the previous literatures, this research will focus on the details of the South Korean state and nonstate actors involved in the Gastrodiplomacy implementation strategy of "Kimchi Diplomacy" in the world and the increase of the South Korean kimchi export.

Methods

This research uses a qualitative approach by elaborating social and political facts to explain South Korea's efforts in spreading its influence through kimchi, especially from the perspective of Gastrodiplomacy and the increase of South Korean kimchi exports. Data gathering was conducted by library research, i.e. journal articles, books, polls, magazines, news, and some qualified online sources. This research was analyzed using descriptive analysis to explain how the Korean Government conducted their Gastrodiplomacy strategies to enhance country's promotions and global branding to the global community.

Gastrodiplomacy Concept

Public diplomacy is a crucial but often overlooked tool for promoting security, democracy, and economic stability worldwide. Cull (2006) wrote of the development of public diplomacy in the 20th century as a state method used by the ministry of foreign affairs and other government agencies to influence the governments of other countries to be influenced by their foreign policies. Public diplomacy uses a more modern approach than

traditional diplomacy, namely diplomats and foreign ministries in carrying out their duties to fulfill national interests. They involve traditional culture to influence foreigners. Diplomacy's public actions should not be restricted or rigid. One of the reasons countries carry out public diplomacy is to maintain and source the country's economic income. Where the country's economic strength must be preserved and developed to maintain economic stability and prosperity and to achieve the benefits of multi-economic flows, the dimensions of this approach need special attention and planning (Cull, 2008).

The rules and regulations of the development of international relations depend on the countries' economic, political, and military power. Understanding diplomacy is a tool to build agreements and communication between countries through reciprocal negotiations and peaceful methods (Griffiths & Roach, S.C., 2013). Although the content of the concept of diplomacy varies by individual and society, it is considered an important policy tool in international relations (Sandal & Fox, J., 2015). Diplomacy itself is not political, but it is used as a tool for implementing policies, which are complementary to each other. Because when policy makes strategy, diplomacy creates tactics with various values and tools in this strategy. For example, student exchange agreements, media use, cultural events, tourism cooperation, sports organization partnerships, and promotion of local products (Morgan, L., 2012).

Qin (2020) explained that diplomacy is the implementation of foreign policy through various instruments, then a process of communication, negotiation, and exchange of information occurs in international relation (Qin, Y., 2020). Hurd (2011) reveals that diplomacy is also a social activity that gives meaning, reasons, and explanations for state actions. Therefore, it is placed in social rules, motivations, and intentions before interacting. Countries have the power to mobilize all diplomatic instruments to improve bilateral relations and provide accurate information to the international community. Through culture as soft power, several ways of diplomacy are used to harmonize relations, strengthen trust, and a sense of understanding between the two countries. Using diplomacy as a soft power activity indirectly creates an environment for diplomacy that can achieve the results targeted by the state with a subtle approach. Gastronomy is also a social object and subject from a soft power perspective (Hurd, I., 2011). There are three primary sources of soft power, namely culture, political values, and foreign policy (Nye, J.S., 2004).

Gastrodiplomacy has begun to receive attention from countries to promote their culture in recent years. Gastrodiplomacy is currently a relatively effective method of nonverbal communication. Gastronomy is one of the contemporary topics of interest by various disciplines, and research has been carried out in recent years (Kivela & Crotts, 2005). According to Sánchez-Cañizares & López Guzmán (2012) the study of gastronomy is conducted mainly in the fields of tourism, food, and beverages. This concept is limited to cuisine and has historical, cultural, economic, and political dimensions. Gastronomy is a bridge in cultural interaction because it can create an element of attraction in the international tourism movement. Moreover, it has become an essential diplomatic tool in international politics. The use of gastronomy in international relations by many countries has given birth to new communications for diplomacy (Sánchez-Cañizares & López-Guzmán, T., 2012).

In this study, the author uses the concept of Gastrodiplomacy from Paul S. Rockower, who wrote the theoretical definition of 'Gastrodiplomacy' as an effort of public diplomacy. Paul S. Rockower (2012) defines Gastrodiplomacy as a form of public diplomacy that combines cultural, culinary, and nation branding to make foreign cultures accurate in taste and touch. Good public diplomacy pays attention to local culture to find ways to share something foreign; Gastrodiplomacy introduces culture through more familiar access points such as the sense of taste. It offers the foreign public a way to interact with cultures different from the confines of a restaurant friendly, or even at home with a bit of cultural diplomacy. Gastrodiplomacy helps familiarize foreigners—especially those in certain societies who are more reluctant to travel—and, thus, through culinary experiences, the audience discovers another part of the world.

Theoretically, Paul S. Rockower explained that culinary diplomacy exists because Gastrodiplomacy is an extension of public diplomacy. Whereas diplomacy requires a high level of communication from government to government, public diplomacy is an act of communication between governments and non-state actors to the foreign public. In the same vein, culinary diplomacy is characterized by food for diplomatic purposes, i.e., proper cuisine, amid all formal diplomatic procedures. In this case, culinary diplomacy is the use of cooking as a medium to enhance traditional diplomacy in official diplomatic functions such as visits by heads of state, ambassadors, and other officials. Culinary diplomacy enhances bilateral ties by strengthening ties through dining experiences and involving visiting dignitaries.

James Beard in Wilson (2013) stated, 'food is our common ground, a universal experience. Gastrodiplomacy seeks to build the universality of that experience by deepening the understanding of foreign cultures through luring the audience to experience cultural diplomacy according to the taste of cuisine. Wilson (2013) also mentions that food can function as a non-threatening way to gain favors and connect with a foreign audience. In short, Gastrodiplomacy argues that the public tends to come in contact with foreign cultures when introduced through input, thereby creating economic and political possibilities for countries engaged in culinary diplomacy (Wilson, R., 2013).

In public diplomacy, it is natural for countries to build "brands" to promote themselves better to the world. Branding, usually used by companies or businesses, use words or slogans to characterize the essence of their products. A nation or country often creates a unique or distinctive representation through words and visual images or simply through ideas and concepts portrayed to other countries. It aims to achieve name recognition and international respect from the representation. National governments often invest large sums of money into branding campaigns hoping that it will benefit their countries, such as a more robust economy through increased trade and investment, political capital in influencing a negotiation, or increasing revenue generated from tourism. One of South Korea's government branding campaigns was supporting food and beverage industries in Iksan City, North Jeolla Province with a total funding of USD 474 million (Korean Ministry of Agriculture, 2009).

The country that initiated Gastrodiplomacy was Thailand. The Thai government even financed the opening of Thai cuisine restaurants abroad, for example, in the United States. They provided loans and helped promote these restaurants. The Thai government started promoting this program in 2002, which became known as Gastrodiplomacy, meaning using food to spread the influence of a country's culture. Gastrodiplomacy exists between two meeting points of 21st-century trends, namely globalization and foodie culture. It started to strengthen the nation and develop a national identity. Thailand's gastrodiplomacy impacted on the increase of Thai restaurants in the food and beverage industry abroad from around 5,500 in 2002 to over 13,000 in 2008 (Korean Ministry of Agriculture, 2009).

Thai Select is a program run by Thailand since 2002 to promote their traditional cuisine. The Thai government provided training to Thai chefs, loans to restaurants wishing to open branches abroad, and studied preferences (tastes) in other countries. The destination country came up with three prototypes from Thai restaurants that successfully opened overseas (Golden Leaf: high end, classic; Cool basil: Contemporary, fusion; and Elephant Jump: fast food, adaptation). Paul Rockower (2019) explains that Gastrodiplomacy is a form of edible nation branding that promotes soft power through culture, focusing on cuisine to connect people, and therefore, helps the economic sector.

The Thai government's success in Gastrodiplomacy led other countries to follow their program. Such as South Korea, which has a Gastrodiplomacy program called Kimchi Diplomacy managed by the Ministry of Food, Agriculture, Forestry, Fishery (MFAFF) and Korean Tourism Organization on food promotion abroad, making many videos related to their food and making an English K-pop album only about food. Countries' campaigns through their Gastrodiplomacy policies have helped us receive a variety of food that we can taste. Another

reason governments are jumping on Gastrodiplomacy is the rise of international foodies. Gastrodiplomacy not only sees food as a symbol of nationalism but also a transformation of something foreign and exotic to become a part of our daily lives (Quartz, 2019).

Result and Analysis

South Korean Kimchi as a Commodity for the World

It is safe to say that kimchi is one of many South Korean national identities in cuisine. It is also a food of pride as evidenced in 1986 from the establishment of a Kimchi Pulmuone Museum in the city of Seoul, South Korea (Pulmuone, n.d.). This museum is dedicated to introduce the history of kimchi to local and foreign people. This Museum is also a famous tourist destination that offers kimchi products to training academies and shows that kimchi is attached to the history of South Korea (Pulmuone, 2019). For the South Korean people, kimchi is not just fermented vegetables, but is a food that is closely related to the important culture of South Korea. kimchi is a food that has a long history and is of great value to the Korean society. Along with the globalization of Korean culture, kimchi also introduced South Korea to the global society. From its manufacturing to its consumption, kimchi is considered as a food that part of the South Korean people's daily life.

Korean people often perform the ritual of making kimchi together, called Kimjang. The ceremony of turning cabbage into nutritious food is closely linked to South Korea's history of poverty and hunger. Kimjang itself is currently listed as one of South Korea's intangible cultural heritages by UNESCO (UNESCO, 2013). In addition, kimchi has also become one of South Korean people's favorite menus to consume, amounting to about 1.9 tons of kimchi per year (Jobst, N., 2021). Apart from the history of kimchi, which has important meaning for South Korea, kimchi was chosen as a commodity to introduce to the world because of its growing popularity in various countries and has become the image of South Korea.

Adding to that, kimchi was formally introduced to the international community at the 1988 Seoul Olympics. There had been doubts by the South Korean government whether the global community would like it, because kimchi has a spicy taste and a strong smell, especially for the western society. In the end, kimchi was successfully introduced to the world as the South Korean official food of the games (Satran, 2014). When kimchi unveiled itself to the world since this particular time, the world responded to it positively. It has since crossed international borders, popping up in trendy restaurants across the world. Apart from the 1988 Seoul Olympics, South Korea also introduced kimchi to outer space. Kimchi is one of South Korean food brought into space by astronaut Yi Soyeon. South Korea did a lot of research so that the smell of kimchi would not bother other astronauts. This is proof that South Korea wants to push the introduction of Kimchi across all possible areas (The Kitchen Sisters, 2016). From all of these efforts, South Korea considers that food is not only consumed to survive but also to build trust with various circles of society.

Kimchi's role as South Korea's national ambassador has succeeded beyond anyone's wildest expectations. It was claimed by 'Health' magazine, which included kimchi in its list of the world's five healthiest foods, that it is rich in vitamins, helps digestion and is said to ward off some cancers, although overconsumption has been blamed for high rates of gastric cancer among South Koreans (McCurry J., 2021). At the height of the Asian SARS crisis in 2003, a group of South Korean researchers even claimed kimchi was an effective antidote. Adding to those benefits, according to a poll by the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, kimchi is the most famous Korean food among others. Kimchi received 34% of popularity followed by bibimbap 27.8% and Korean-style fried chicken 27% (The Korea Times, 2021). South Korea's success in making kimchi as a national branding commodity also certainly has an impact on increasing South Korea's economy in kimchi production.

South Korea's Strategy in Promoting Kimchi

The success of the South Korean government cannot be separated from its promotional strategy. In implementing the Gastrodiplomacy policy, South Korea has become one of the countries with great success. This country is one of the best countries in branding itself through food. The South Korean government supports its citizens in opening Korean restaurants worldwide. They are also aggressively promoting Korean food. They adapted their primary side dish, namely kimchi, as the name for their Gastrodiplomacy program that is 'Kimchi Diplomacy.' Kimchi was chosen because it is always on the dining table. Here are some strategies that are taken by the South Korean Government in introducing kimchi to the international community (Yeon Soo, 2021):

1. Korean Food Space

South Korea is one of the countries lagging in the development of space technology. After the Korean War around the 1950s, South Korea experienced a food crisis, so it was too late to participate in space exploration. Until 2008, South Korea had a female astronaut named Soyeon Yi as their first astronaut. The South Korean government had the idea of creating food that could be eaten in space, and conducted research for nearly ten years. Ten main dishes were made, two of which were freeze-dried and canned kimchi. This idea came about because kimchi is like air to Koreans, so it is difficult to imagine a day without kimchi when they go on space expeditions.

2. K-Food (Korean-Food)

Just as K-Pop has succeeded in making South Korea known to the international community, K-Food is expected to achieve the same success. In collaboration with K-Pop artists and singers, the South Korean government designed a program to popularize their cuisine through girls and boy bands' songs. They even made an English K-pop album specifically about food.

3. Kimchi Bus

The Kimchi Bus project was launched in 2011 where a chef and writer named Si-Hyeon Ryu travelled in a truck supported by the South Korean Government. Ryu travelled to 32 countries, from the United States to Italy. Ryu, a chef, cooked traditional Korean food and introduced it to people he met on his travels. One of his favourite dishes to serve was kimchi. He said that many people knew about North and South Korea during the trip, but not many knew about the food. From there, he was determined to introduce kimchi as a part of South Korean identity (NPR, 2016).

The Impact of Gastrodiplomacy Towards the Production of Kimchi in South Korea

The meaning of Gastrodiplomacy for South Korea is based on kimchi. Gastrodiplomacy is the practice of using experiences as the political relation of foreign countries and supports the image of the country. Kimchi diplomacy is one of the ways South Korea uses Gastrodiplomacy. For example through the Kimchi Bus Project, which was released in 2011. Operated by chef Hyeon Ryu, he traveled to 32 countries to promote the variety of South Korea. Followed by Yi So-Yeon, the first Korean astronaut who shared kimchi for dinner for his colleagues (Flux, 2020).

The South Korean government seriously addressed kimchi as a Gastrodiplomacy tool and ultimately increased kimchi exports. The government established the Kimchi Institute to select different variants of kimchi produced in Korea. The government made a special tagline that read "developing the domestic kimchi-making industry into the country's strategic export market (Scraft, 2016)." Based on the concept of Gastrodiplomacy and the attitude of the South Korean government that officially made kimchi the flagship product of foreign politics. The promotion of kimchi was massive along with the entertainment industry such as Korean drama, K-Pop and food. Promotion accelerated information about kimchi as Gastrodiplomacy and brought Korean culture to foreign countries.

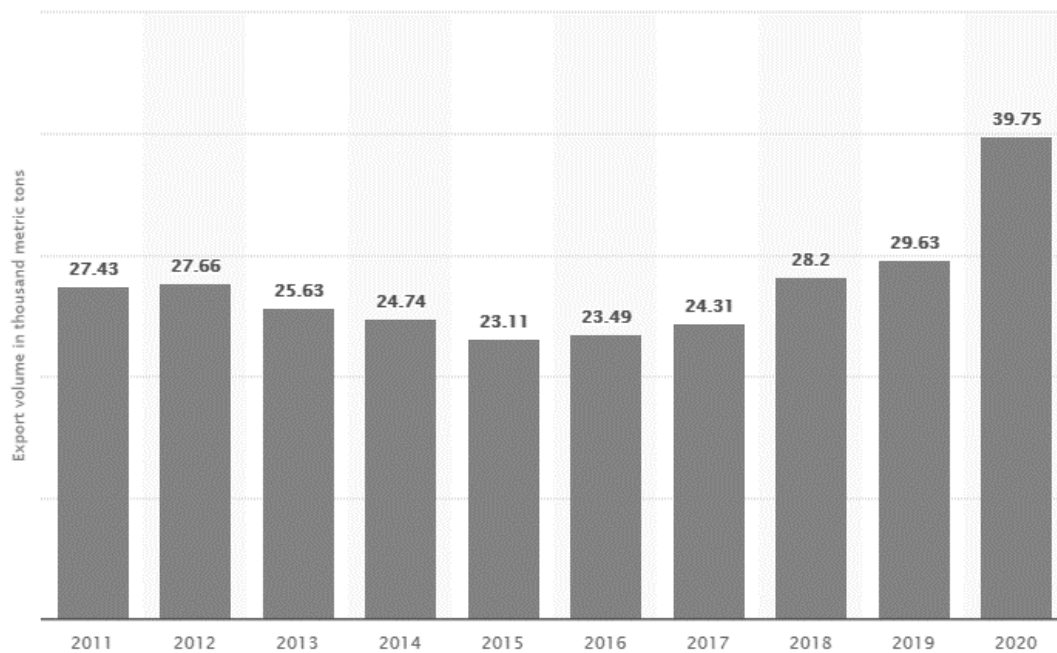
The impact of kimchi exports was generated from the South Korean Gastrodiplomacy strategy. In 2011, the Korean Food Foundation collaborated with a NYC Korean restaurant to operate a food truck and share it for free. The characteristics of Korean Gastrodiplomacy began increasing rapidly since the development of Korean Pop Culture, Movies/TV, and Music to the World. At the same time, the government was supporting K-Pop as a campaign for Gastrodiplomacy. The Korean Gastrodiplomacy and Hansik campaign was reflected on Korean TV and cinema culture. For example, on the Korean Drama, 'Jewel in the Palace' which is exported to more than 91 countries, shows Korean cuisine and culture. Even recent Korean Dramas, such as 'The Hometown of Cha-Cha-Cha' promoted dishes such as Kimchi, Bulgogi and other traditional Korean foods. Based on the essay 'Culinary Relations: Gastrodiplomacy South Korea', the dissemination of soft-power Gastrodiplomacy through social media and Korean Drama is more effective compared to sponsorships by Korean businesses (Lipscomb, 2019). Exporting kimchi as Gastrodiplomacy was followed by an increase in adjustments in taste. Park Wan-Soo, as the director of a government established institute named the Kimchi Institute run to test various kinds of pickled vegetables for foreign markets, he modified and used production techniques specifically for traditional Korean food, including kimchi. For instance, South Korea decreased the level of spiciness and acidity when exporting kimchi to the United States, while increasing the level of sweetness when exporting Kimchi to Japan.

Based on the 'Current Status and Future Prospect of the Kimchi Industry', there are multiple channels to promote kimchi, that are offline and online. Offline methods such as large discounts at stores and the B2C market where about 45% of all kimchi products are distributed. However, kimchi sales began to decline due to online distribution. The B2B kimchi distribution is channeled through catering companies, cafes and the military, especially through intermediary distributors between the sellers and the buyers (Zhang, 2015). Kimchi sales through an online method provided an opportunity for small businesses and used two-way communication between the buyer and the seller. Sales of kimchi using the online method were also not limited to time and space.

The Increase of Kimchi Exports and the Messages of Gastrodiplomacy

Based on the sources by the Korean Customs Service and Industry, the South Korean kimchi export reached USD 144.51 million by 2020, which increased by 37.6 percent from the previous year. In 2020, South Korea exported kimchi to nearly 80 countries. Japan became the largest country to receive kimchi products. Japanese imported a total of USD 71.1 million worth of kimchi from South Korea. The United States became the second largest importer of kimchi after Japan, amounting to USD 23.06 million, followed by Hongkong, Taiwan and Australia respectively importing under USD 10 million.

Based on the value of exports from 2011 to 2020, South Korean kimchi has increased in the last 6 years. In 2011, South Korea exported USD 104,58 million, but experienced a decline in 2015 to USD 73,54 million. Since then, the export of kimchi start to increase until 2020. Exports started to increase in 2016 reaching USD 78,9 million, and increased again in 2017 to USD 81,39 million. The Korean entertainment industry was being increasingly favored around the world and helped increase the kimchi Gastrodiplomacy. Thus, in 2018 it increased to USD 97,46 million. Entering the year 2019 and 2020 when the Covid-19 pandemic hit, kimchi was increasingly favored as an organic food. This growth was above the average, where in 2019 kimchi exports reached USD 104,99 million and then spiked a year later. In 2020, kimchi exports reached USD 144,51 million. Industry watchers stated that past year's surge in kimchi exports was linked with the popularity of fermented food considered able to boost the body's immune system amidst the COVID-19 outbreak (Byun, 2022).



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Figure 1. South Korea: Kimchi Export Value 2011-2020

Source: Jobst, N. (2020, May 5). South Korea: Kimchi export value 2020. Statista.

The results of Korean Gastrodiplomacy was derived from massive promotions by celebrities and other Gastrodiplomacy strategies. The Financial Times revealed, that according to Oliver (2013), the critics of the Korean Gastrodiplomacy campaign Korea was not adequate. Due to the ineffectiveness of the method for measuring Gastrodiplomacy and track the progress of the achievements. However, a survey by the South Korean Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs revealed that there was an increase in new workers. Workers in the South Korean food industry rose from 24,2% in 2011 to 64.3% in 2016. In addition, they also found that South Korean restaurants that opened branches outside the country increased. In 2012 there were 234 restaurant of 41 chains, that rose to 743 restaurant of 73 chains in 2016 (Lipscomb, The Yale Review of International Studies, 2019).

Based on the trend of the kimchi industry in 2015 published by the Institute of Research Kimchi the World in Korea, there are about 900 Kimchi manufacturers in South Korea. The lack of entry barriers to international markets, kimchi manufacturing companies were leading in the market. As a result of industry competition, Kimchi was very expensive. Competition in export trade and kimchi were divided into 2 categories i.e. the B2C market (The Business-to-Consumer) which is 20% and uses the method of direct marketing and online. Kimchi can also be purchased in supermarkets (62,8%) and online shopping (20%). Average monthly purchases for kimchi was at a price less than 50,000 won (77%). Second, 80% of B2B (The Business-to-Business) were distributing kimchi to restaurants and catering companies. However, the companies faced competition with China since 2004 (Kwon, Park, & Lee, 2021).

In 2016, the advantage of the kimchi industry impacted the production of kimchi cabbages which was estimated to reach USD 3.960 million won. In 2012, the retail sales of South Korean kimchi cabbages reached 157,3 million won, and the number has fallen by 121,1 million or 29.9% compared to the previous year. A surge in its production was also affected by consumer awareness in minimalist lifestyle, favoring kimchi in small packages under 200 grams. Lifestyle changes affected the method of traditional kimchi production. Kimchi companies

cooperated with distributors and made kimchi hotels, Halal restaurants and Kosher certificates for export. In 2021, during the pandemic, exports of South Korean kimchi rose on the first quarter, and reached the peak of its popularity. Kimchi exports abroad reached USD 46,57 dollars in the January-March period, which increased 54,3% than the year 2020 based on data from the Customs of the Korean and the Source of the Industry. The Kimchi export earned the largest revenue and surpassed kimchi exports in the second quarter of 2020. Details of the increase in kimchi exports that is USD 38,51 million in the first quarter of 2021, which has risen 7.4% than the previous year. The total profits reached USD 9,35 million since the second quarter of 2009 (Kwon, Park, & Lee, 2021).

Gastrodiplomacy's impact to the influence of export Kimchi can be seen in the balance of kimchi consumption. The intake of homemade kimchi per person per day within a period of 5 years has decreased by 3.1%. Based on examination, the biggest reasons why consumers prefer to purchase kimchi is because they do not need to make it and it is easier to eat little by little. The frequency of purchases is due to the consumers wanting to eat kimchi in a more practical way without the hassle of cooking which is relatively high at about 28.5%. Buyers prefer to buy Kimchi and consuming it gradually especially in families with little capacity. The kimchi industry rose during the COVID-19 pandemic, and its popularity was related to it being a fermented food considered to be able to increase the immunity of the body. An increase in exports were seen in three big countries such as Hongkong, Japan and the United States. Shipping to Hongkong surged by 50.3% to USD 2.34 million. The United States rose 80,6% to USD 8,46 million. While exports of kimchi to Japan increased up to 68% to 24,72 million (Yonhap, 2021).

Not without constraints, the exports of Korean kimchi also experienced problems because the kimchi varies depending on the agriculture, basic materials and supporting materials as important factors in the kimchi business. For example in the case of buyers, the profits of the company relies on the raw material and the amount of material suppliers. The raw material for the kimchi is very dependent on the agricultural products that are affected by the weather. Exporting kimchi as Gastrodiplomacy is not always a good run because it depends on the supply, but the message of the kimchi Gastrodiplomacy is quite clear. The narrative of the kimchi diplomacy affects the economy of South Korea although there are fluctuations in market prices. For example, if the harvest is not good, the price of cabbage can rise two times higher. It is difficult for kimchi to have the same price. Meanwhile, the decrease of raw materials can affect kimchi companies to gain small profits. The Japanese are especially drawn by kimchi's distinct spicy taste and health benefits. Kimchi is a low-fat source of vitamins and minerals. The Americans are drawn by the strong Hallyu wave and the increasing Korean restaurants as well as other leading destination countries for South Korea's kimchi.

Conclusion

South Korea's kimchi Gastrodiplomacy has existed since the introduction of kimchi diplomacy at the 1988 Seoul Olympics. Kimchi as a food has become a cultural symbol for Korean society. Kimjang, a joint method of making Kimchi, has received an official mark from UNESCO as a national heritage. Along with the development of soft power, namely public diplomacy, South Korea used kimchi Gastrodiplomacy as an export commodity. This research answers how the concept of Gastrodiplomacy according to Paul S. Rockower, that is through public diplomacy, presents kimchi Gastrodiplomacy influenced by the Korean Wave of music, drama, film and entertainment.

This research correlates with previous literatures in analyzing kimchi diplomacy. The result of this research found that there has been an increase in Kimchi exports in the last 10 years. This research presents the data for Kimchi exports from 2011-2021, and found that even during the pandemic there was still an increase in kimchi exports. This study found that the South Korean government made several strategies to execute kimchi Gastrodiplomacy, from the Kimchi Bus Project in 2011, the promotion of kimchi by Korea's first astronaut, the

collaboration of the Korean Food Foundation with NYC Korean Restaurants, to the influence of the entertainment industry or the Korean Wave.

This method of diplomacy resulted in the increases of kimchi exports which benefited the South Korean economy. Based on the sources from the Korean Customs Service and Industry, South Korean kimchi exports reached a tipping point in 2020, reaching USD 144.51 million or an increase of 37.6% from the previous year. In 2020, South Korea has exported kimchi to nearly 80 countries. Based on the value, South Korean kimchi exports from 2011 to 2020, exports have increased in the last 6 years. In 2011, South Korea exported USD 104,58 million, but experienced a decline in 2015 to USD 73,54 million. Since then, kimchi exports started to increase until the year 2020, starting from USD 78,9 million in 2016. In addition, kimchi exports as a result of South Korean Gastrodiplomacy had their own special messages such as natural, culture, health, and art.

Based on the sources by the Korean Customs Service and Industry, the South Korean kimchi export reached USD 144.51 million by 2020, which increased 37.6% from the previous year. In 2020, South Korea exported kimchi to nearly 80 countries. United States, Japan, and Hongkong were the top three leading destinations for kimchi exports from South Korea. Japan became the largest country to receive kimchi products, with imports totaling USD 71.1 million. Japan is followed other countries such as the United States, which became the second largest kimchi importer at USD 23.06 million, followed by Hongkong, Taiwan and Australia respectively amounting under USD 10 million. Both South Korean state and nonstate actors are involved in South Korea's Gastrodiplomacy. Thus, efforts made by each actor in promoting kimchi as a Gastrodiplomacy tool has succeeded in encouraging the increase of South Korean's kimchi exports to various countries around the world.

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