

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1. Research Background

In the present, we can see cultural floating which is crossing the border in globalization. Especially, the markets of East and Southeast Asia asked high simultaneously after the middle of 1990 and then they accepted culture of Japan, Taiwan, and Korea and so on more than ever before. After 1990, the preference of loving Korean popular culture which is Korean wave started in Asian area especially in China. Korean wave started with drama mainly, and Korean wave could found its own place in many sides through the export of cultural products such as drama series, films, songs, games and so on. (Damrong Thandee, 2010: online)

In Thailand, The trend of the Korean pop culture as a major cultural input can be traced from 2001; presently this phenomenon is quite visible on TV drama. The new millennium saw again a rise of Thai interest in South Korea when television stations broadcast series of Korean TV movies. Especially starting from early 2001, Thai viewers have been exposed to Korean modern life-styles from such movies, along with the TV documentary films shown during the World Cup and the Asian Games. Young generations wholeheartedly embrace Korean culture.

TV Korean drama is one of exclusively featured as Korean Wave and also the wide-ranging activities and products of Korea and Koreans, i.e., music, games, Taekwondo, commercial products, cultural studies and language. To elaborate, 'My Sassy Girl,' aired in May 2002, was considered the first successful movies on the Thai TV screen while 'Autumn in My heart' the most successful one, Song Hae-Gyo and her image made a long lasting impression on the Thai people. The same was true for the actor, Song Seung-Hyun, as his poster became very popular among Thai youth. Later, Winter Sonata' also gained high popularity.

For the Korean music entertainment, the first Korean singer group invited to the Kingdom was Baby V.O.X. and made a success by selling more than 200,000 CDs. The Seven and Rain, top singers, also gained popular in 2003 and then

became Seven's fan club. In the same time, online game has been winning recognition. The first Korean game to enter Thai online market was "Ragnarok". Later, "Mu" and "Laghaim" entered the market. The games became over popular to the teenagers.

Moreover, on the language and cultural side, there are many Korean language institutions teaching for Thai students and workers. Three state universities of Thailand provide BA degree in Korean Language while over six higher institutions offer the language as Electives. The courses, for example, Korean Society and Culture, Korean History, and Korea Politics are regularly taught in most universities. In term of Korean products are flooded in Thai market as well included; cell phones and equipments, cars, electric household appliance and durable goods. The export of Korean movies is worth over one million dollars per year (Ibid) whereas a number of Thai tourists annually visited South Korea in 1998 is 27,505. It has increasingly gone up to 54,027 and 105,742 in 2002 and 2007 respectively or a 96 and 284 percent higher than the year of 1998. (Natha Kietbaramee, 2008: 1-2)

With the rapid spread of Korean wave or South Korea pop in Thailand, including not only South Korea drama, film, music, cosmetics, dance, the online games, clothing, electronic products but also food. Many Korean foods and restaurants have also sprung up in Thailand. Korean food has become increasingly known in Thai society especially in recent years due to its exposure through media, specifically "Jewel in the Palace" or the story of "Dae-jang-geum". It was periodic series, and created Daejanggeum Theme Park became a lot of tourist attraction. In addition to the main scenes in the series as tourists spot, Korean food was extremely promoted. The main story was about Korean food cooking. When this series was shown in any country, Korean food became more interesting. Drama fans were also interested in Korean food. (Montira Tada-amnuaychai, 2006:1-2)

In Thailand, the impaction of Korean food culture has continually increased observing from Korean restaurant were increased in Thailand. Thai people were stimulated to be known in Korean food by many media. For example, Thai Channel 3 created activity during "Dae-jang-geum" was airing by cooperating with Kong Ju restaurant in Pathumwan Princess Hotel and inviting stars and audiences to cook Korean food together. Channel 3 also made Korean food teaching program by

Han Sang Kung (Dae Jung Geum's cooking teacher) and aired at noon on Monday to Friday in 2005 to create the stream of Dae Jung Geum fever stronger. (Ibid)

Currently, it can be seen that Korean wave is still highly succeed in Thailand. The result is that the Thai consumers are satisfied in culture and need more Korean Cultural products as mentioned all. These products invade the everyday lives of consumers and consumers have to accept the Korean product consumption unavoidably. This phenomenon caused the numerous coming of Korean foods and restaurants in Thailand, there are group of Thai consumers who like and always consume Korean food and related products. It can be found amount of Thai teenagers along with working ages who have interested in eating Korean food.

Among Korean diet, the best known dishes and the most widely served on the table of Korean is "Kim-Chi". It has been the basic elements in a Korean meal. Kim-Chi has been served daily with every meal throughout Korean generations for more thousands years. Nowadays it is one of Korea's most well-known food and because of the result of designation as an official food in the significant events such as 1998 World cup (Lee Chung Ja, 1998:12), thousands of foreigners were introduced to perceive Kim-Chi as Korean national food and was throughout famous from then on. Kim-Chi can be regarded as a symbol of Korean culture and a mark of cultural transmission. (Chu Young Ha, 1995: 18)

Kim-Chi is the most well-known of Korean food through Thai people. In the present, Kim-Chi is product sold and distributed in over supermarket and department store in Bangkok. Either Japanese restaurants or Korean restaurants bring up a lot of menu in Kim-Chi. Furthermore, a few products such as snack and instant-noodle have used Kim-Chi to be ingredient. It is picture or explicit example to show Kim-Chi as fashionable food, in the same time, when considering in Kim-Chi in Thai society, it is one of Korean cultural products; that is to say, it was changed in form of product and also the meaning or value itself that affect Thai consumers by several factors.

2. Research problem

The reason why writing this research, that is because of the trend of Korean wave effecting Thai people in many aspects while Korean food is the question for studying the consumption behavior by bringing up Kim-chi which is the most Korean well-known food and symbol of Koreans. This research strongly intends to study consumption behavior toward Kim-Chi in Thai society. The questions are included behaviors, causes, factors, relationships and consumer perception among behaviors in consuming Kim-Chi of the sample group. In the same time, this study is conducted by the phenomena of Korean wave; it is the question to examine Thai consumer behaviors influenced by Korean wave. Besides, to exemplify Kim-Chi in term of cultural product or fashionable food that effect to the sample group.

3. Research objective

3.1 To study consumption behavior of Korean cultural product “Kim-Chi in Bangkok Metropolis.

3.2 To study the related factors and consumer perception affecting Kim-Chi’s consumer behavior.

4. Hypothesis

4.1 Influence of Korean Wave has a significant impact on the consumption of Kim Chi of Thai people in nowadays.

4.2 The consumption of Kim Chi of Thai people has an effect on the consumption of sign of the cultural products.

5. Scope and limitation

5.1 Scope of content: this research focuses on studying Kim-Chi consumption behavior includes causes, behaviors, and factors affecting consumption decision and so on. Kim-Chi in this study means foreign food or a Korean cultural product affecting consumers’ perception in context of Thai society. It will be

representation as the symbol of Korean food or Korean culture affecting Thai behavior among influence or phenomena of Korean wave.

5.2 Scope of population: the research is to study a group of Thai samples who have ever consumed Kim-Chi in various place and restaurants. (It is not limited to only one restaurant).

5.3 Scope of region: this study is conducted to those who live in Bangkok only. This aims to show the causes and factors that reflect how people and culture in urban society receive and adapt to such culture which arouse many questions in the research.

6. Research significance

6.1 To shows consumption behavior of Korean Cultural product of Thais in Bangkok Metropolis.

6.2 To identify the factors influence behavior toward Kim-Chi.

6.3 To understand the influence of factors on behavior of Thai consumers and change in Kim-chi in term of cultural product in Thai society.

6.4 To provide the research result which Korean food industry or Korean restaurant can opt for guideline in making business decision to be in line with consumer behavior.

6.5 To be used in further study.

7. Definition of Terms

7.1 Kim-Chi: In this research, Kim-Chi refers to fresh pickling vegetable, which can be in form of any food or products using Kim-Chi as ingredients, including food and sweets, found in Thailand.

7.2 Korean Cultural Product: In this research, cultural product refers to any products or services that imply Korean cultural messages and express its hidden messages to the customers or buyers in which Thai customers can use the products or services as a way to learn Korean culture. These include many kinds of products and

services such as movies, music, TV series, books, comics, magazines, websites, online games, and et cetera. Thus, this research has classified Kim-Chi, the well known Korean food among Thai people, as one of the Korean cultural products.

7.3 Consumer Behavior: In this research, consumer behavior refers to consumer behavior toward Kim-Chi, which includes behaviors, causes, factors, and relationships among behaviors in consuming Kim-Chi of the sample group.

7.4 Consumer Perception: In this research, consumer perception refers to perceiving, thinking and feeling process, including attitudes toward Kim-Chi that affect decision making, purchasing and consumption behavior of the sample group.

8. Composition of Thesis

In order to present this research, the author expects to convey the context by dividing into five sections.

Chapter 1: Introduction is the lesson that indicates the source of background of the problem, research problem, objective, hypothesis, scope, definition, the benefits to be expected and methodology of research for understand the basic history before pursuing to the next lessons.

Chapter 2: Recites on the concepts, theories, literatures that are related to this research.

Chapter 3: Research methodology.

Chapter 4: Summary of data from questionnaires, data analysis from quantitative research, hypothesis testing and discussion.

Chapter 5: Conclusion and suggestion of research result.