

The one way flow of cultural goods and its social impact of consumption: A case study of Japan and Korea

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Media, information and cultural products show a one-way flow pattern when exchanged between foreign countries. This can be explained with the one-way flow model of media products. Several studies attempt to explain the dominance of US audiovisual products internationally with this economic model. However, there has been few studies on the regional flow of media products among countries sharing similar cultural values and preferences. Neither have there been empirical studies on the impact of the asymmetric flow of cultural goods. Japan and Korea have been very cautious in the exchange of culture since the post-colonial era. Only recently, there have been official agreements between the two governments to exchange media and culture. However, there has been an 'unofficial' flow of cultural products from Japan to Korea far long before the official exchange.

In this study, we examine the historical aspect of the asymmetrical exchange in the culture between the two countries and analyze the changes of the flow after the official exchange agreement in 1998. Then we look at how this asymmetrical flow influences the users' perception and attitude towards the other's culture as well as self-identity.

A survey of 997 respondents were conducted in the year 2002 in Korea and Japan regarding the media use and cultural exposure, attitude and perception of foreign culture and the preference for the other country's culture. The findings suggest a consistent result with previous arguments of one-way flow of cultural goods. The impact of the other's culture also had asymmetrical pattern in Korea and Japan. Koreans were more influenced by the use of Japanese media and the Japanese were influenced by direct contact and exposure. The consumption of the other's culture seems to change the self-identity of both country members but more so for Koreans.

We attempted to incorporate the economic model of one-way flow and what impact the pattern has on the users. Further investigation is necessary to generalize this findings in order to apply these results into the global market.