

The First Lady and the National Image: Focusing on the Media Report from China and South Korea about the First Lady of China and North Korea

Yong-kyung Kim¹

¹ Department of Mass Communication, Tsinghua University, Beijing, People's Republic of China
Correspondence: Yong-kyung Kim. E-mail: hyungbin25@snu.ac.kr

Received: September 3, 2017

Accepted: October 16, 2017

Online Published: November 28, 2017

doi:10.5539/ass.v13n12p68

URL: <https://doi.org/10.5539/ass.v13n12p68>

Abstract

The formation of the national image is a part of the public diplomacy which presents the nation's overall power and the influence of the nation. This research, with the topic of "The First Lady and the Nation's image", analyzes the press reports of South Korea and China on the new First Ladies of China and North Korea, Li Sol-ju and Peng Liyuan, to review the national images of the two nations. The research findings illustrate the national images of two countries: China has an image of a political power in developing process. Also, North Korea, although it is not a powerful country in international diplomacy, appears to play its important part in the international stage with an image of a conservative nation. Furthermore, with the appearance of the First Lady, China gained more recognition and attracted greater attention in the international community, and North Korea, on the other hand, also receives worldwide interests, but still has a mysterious and curious image. It was clear that both countries are willing to improve their national images at home and abroad by their First Ladies.

Keywords: First lady, National image, Peng Liyuan, Li Sol-ju

1. Introduction

The formation of a national image is considered to be an important part of a country's "soft power", which fully embodies the comprehensive strength and influence of a country. Both China and North Korea are considered as countries with great influences not only in East Asia but also throughout the world. The national images of China and North Korea embodies the comprehensive strength and influence of such countries, moreover reflects the attitude of other nations toward China and North Korea.

Political succession occurred recently in China and North Korea. The new governments have added layers of new colors on the national images for the new era. Press around the world have reported all perspectives of the renewed China and North Korea. Considering the continuous growth of China and North Korea and the changes of their reputations on the international stage, newly formed national images will again frame the attitudes toward these two countries.

The image of a country can be manifested from different aspects. When the country publicizes its image, it also chooses different subjects. Among those, the media coverage of the First Lady is a unique angle to understand the image of a country. The First Lady's influence on the national image has been an important tool and tradition in western public diplomacy which would be a great attempt for China and North Korea as well. 1 (Jin Jiong, 2012)

There are many studies on the national images of China and North Korea. Meanwhile, most of the studies on the influence of presidential spouse on the nation and framing the national image have centered on western countries. Therefore, this report will be an attempt to study the influence of the First Ladies of China and North Korea. Due to the writer's background, the research is based on a host of articles from Chinese and South Korean press. Furthermore, this report will contrast the media's depiction of the First Ladies of China and North Korea along with their influences on framing the national images of their countries.

2. Research Methodology

This report is based on quantitative analysis on the First Ladies of China and North Korea according to the reports from "People's Daily" and "Chosun Ilbo Chinese Web".

2.1 Selection of Newspaper

Considering the influence and comprehensive competitiveness of the newspaper, one of the most influential media in China is the "People's Daily", and that of South Korea would be the "Chosun Ilbo". Thus, the research on Peng Liyuan, the First Lady of China, and Li Sol-ju, the First Lady of North Korea, is based on "People's Daily" and "Chosun Ilbo

1 Jin Jiong, *Public Diplomacy and research of the Chinese National Image*, Yanbian Universtiy, Master's Thesis, 2015-05-25

Chinese Web”. For “People’s Daily”, reports between January 1st and May 31st of 2013 are examined, while for “Chosun Ilbo Chinese Web” reports prior to May 31st of 2013 are examined.

2.2 Period

Plenty of resources about the First Ladies of China and North Korea can be found on the “People’s Daily”, however, due to the time constraint and writer’s ability, the research has been between January 1st and May 31st of 2013. Meanwhile, South Korean press has only limited amount of resources about this topic that reports examination from “Chosun Ilbo Chinese Web” went prior to May 31st of 2013.

2.3 Analysis on Different Sections

Through searching the word “Peng Liyuan” from the “People’s Daily” reports between January 1st and May 2nd of 2013, total of 2052 of reports are found. With the word “Li Sol-ju”, total of 358 reports are found. Similarly, by searching “Peng Liyuan” and “Li Sol-ju” on “Chosun Ilbo Chinese Web” reports, total of 15 reports and 14 reports are found, respectively.

2.4 Category Setting

2.4.1 Content Orientation

Reports cover politics, economy, culture, and social aspects. Political reports focus on policies and related exercises of political life, diplomacy, international relations and national defense; Economic reports focus on the nation’s economic conditions and related exercises with polices; Cultural reports focus on education, sports, health, technology and medicine along with related exercises; Social reports focus on social phenomena, social dynamics, and social events.

2.4.2 Report Tendency

Report tendency was separated into positive, neutral, and negative. The yard stick for determining a metric is on the words and content of the news and the reports. News that has praised the first lady can be categorized by positive coverage; Reports criticizing either the First Ladies or the nations that can damage the national image are considered as negative coverage; other news reporting the objective facts and small judgments are considered as neutral coverage.

3. National Image

3.1 National Image

The image of the country has a concept of international relations and its application. “National image is how people, at home and abroad, understand a country’s politics, economy, society, culture, and geography. Politics includes government credibility, diplomatic capacity, and national security; Economy includes financial and fiscal strength, quality and feature of products, and domestic income; Society includes national morale and character, security, stability, and social cohesion; Culture includes scientific and technological strength, educational standards, cultural heritage, and customs and values; Geography includes geographical environment, natural resources and population.” National image is not only the symbol of a nation’s power and its spirit, but also the centered expression of comprehensive national strength. A nation’s image has determined the country’s position in the international public opinion environment. It has also affected whether a nation can survive and enlarge the its international influence.

Thus, appealing national image is a goal strategically pursued by each government, and also an important mean to pursue national interest. A good national image can create a favorable international environment for a country’s development and bring great benefit. Countries around the world put great attention on forming and shaping the national image. 2 (Zhang yonglong, 2012)

Different national image can affect the country in various ways. Being an important asset of a country, favorable national image is an intangible asset that can improve the status, function and influence of the country in the international community. Moreover, it can strengthen the state’s right to speak in the international community for achieving national goals. However, unfavorable national image can cause instable reputation and reduce the role of a country, prevent the country to achieve the goal and fulfill its interest. 3 (Sun Zhong, 2002)

3.2 Component Influencing National Image

Both China and North Korea are socialist countries. They have more appealing national image for domestic audience than that of international audience. Affecting international audience’s evaluation toward China and North Korea’s national image can be sorted by three components as follows:

First, it is the differences in social structures. Western countries have always held grudge on socialist countries. People who experience socialist countries through the media often misunderstand the system. Even with an objective perspective, how one view a thing can be different under capitalism and socialism. Thus, interpretation can be highly affected under different social structures. 4 (Jin Canrong, 2016)

2 Zhang yonglong, *Research on Accurate New Report in Mainland China* [D], Fudan University, 2012-04-06

3 Sun Zhong: *National Image and Its Connotation*, *International Forum*, 2002, page 119

4 Jin Canrong, *from the Perspective of History and Consensus Analysis of the Characteristics of China’s National Image* [N], China Reform Forum Net, 2016-12-31

Secondly, it is caused by confinement in cultural exchange. From the writer's perspective, China and North Korea, only recently, have enhanced the cultural exchange with foreign countries. In fact, objectively speaking, foreign cultural exchange has been partially resisted by foreign publics at the same time. In spite of China's reformation, cultural exchange with the West still hinder obstacles to get fully engaged. North Korea, in the other hand, under the enclosed policy lacks cultural exchange that will strengthen their national image.

Thirdly, it is the limited extend of international communication capacity. China has not been recognizing the importance on forming appealing national image toward international audience until now. North Korea's enclosed policy gave even less chance to appeal for. At the same time, lack of experience in enhancing national image by the local press for China and North Korea compare to that of western countries is another reason why they have less appealing national image for international audience.

4. Analysis

4.1 Chinese and South Korean Media Coverage of China and North Korea First Ladies

4.1.1 Chinese Media Coverage of China and North Korea First Ladies

4.1.1.1 Chinese Media Coverage of China First Lady

Table 4.1. Topics on Peng Liyuan from "People's Daily" between January 1st to May 31st of 2013

Topic	Number of Reports	Percentage (%)
Politics	1441	70.24
Culture	407	19.84
Others	204	9.92
Total	2052	100

Topics of report from "People's Daily" about Peng Liyuan between January 1st to May 31st of 2013 are categorized as politics and culture and others in Table 4.1. Political issue was the most popular topic for her which is 70.24%, while culture and other topics only take 19.84% and 9.92% respectively.

Table 4.2. Peng Liyuan's identity described from "People's Daily" between January 1st to May 31st of 2013

Identity	Number of Reports	Percentage (%)
First Lady	1645	80.16
Individual	407	19.84
Total	2052	100

Table 4.2 shows how the "People's Daily" has described Peng Liyuan on the reports between January 1st to May 31st of 2013. Peng Li-yuan was mentioned as the First Lady of China for 80.16% of the times. However, she was described not as the First Lady but as herself for only 19.84% of the time.

Table 4.3. Report tendency for the First Lady of China, Peng Li-yuan, based on "People's Daily" reports between January 1st to May 31st of 2013

Reporting Tendency	Number of Reports	Percentage (%)
Positive	1543	75.2
Neutral	509	24.8
Negative	0	0

Table 4.3 shows the Report tendency for the First Lady of China, Peng Liyuan, based on the "People's Daily" reports between January 1st to May 31st of 2013. There are 75.2% of positive coverage of Peng Li-Yuan, and 24.8% of neutral and none for negative coverage

4.1.1.2 Chinese Media Coverage of Li Sol-ju, the North Korea First Lady

Table 4.4. Topics on Li Sol-ju, the First Lady of North Korea from "People's Daily", between January 1st to May 31st of 2013

Topics	Number of Reports	Percentage (%)
Politics	325	90.76
Others	33	9.24
Total	358	100

Table 4.4 indicates the different topics from the number of reports on North Korea's First Lady, Li Sol-ju, from "People's Daily", between January 1st to May 31st of 2013. Out of all the reports 90.76% of them were political reports, while only 9.24% of other topics.

Table 4.5. "People's Daily" reports on Li Sol-ju's identity between January 1st to May 31st of 2013

Identity	Number of Reports	Percentage (%)
First Lady	358	100
Individual	0	0
Total	358	100

Table 4.5 shows number of reports describing Li Sol-ju. She was always reported as the First Lady of the North Korea and not as an individual from "People's Daily" reports.

Table 4.6. Report tendency for the First Lady of North Korea, Li Sol-Ju based on "People's Daily" reports between January 1st to May 31st of 2013

Reporting Tendency	Number of Reports	Percentage (%)
Positive	188	52.52
Neutral	167	46.64
Negative	3	0.84

Table 4.6 shows the report tendency of "People's Daily" reports about Li Sol-ju between January 1st to May 31st of 2013. During this time period, positive coverage was published 188 times which takes 52.52% of all reports. Neutral coverage takes 46.64% and negative coverage takes 0.84% of all reports.

4.1.2 South Korean Media Coverage of China and North Korea First Ladies

4.1.2.1 South Korean Media Coverage of China First Lady

Table 4.7. Topics on Peng Liyuan, the First Lady of China from "Chosun Ilbo Chinese Web", before May 31st 2013

Topics	Number of Reports	Percentage (%)
Politics	5	35.71
Others	10	64.29
Total	15	100

Topics of report from "Chosun Ilbo Chinese Web" about Peng Li-Yuan before May 31st 2013 are categorized as politics and others in Table 4.7. Surprisingly, reports from "Chosun Ilbo Chinese Web" about Peng Li-Yuan were mostly other than politics. Politics only share 35.71% of the reports, while 64.29% of the reports were others.

Table 4.8. "Chosun Il Bo Chinese Web" reports on Peng Li-Yuan's identity before May 31st 2013

Identity	Number of Reports	Percentage (%)
First Lady	9	57.14
Individual	6	42.86
Total	15	100

Table 4.8 shows the reports on Peng Li-Yuan's identity from "Chosun Ilbo Chinese Web" before May 31st 2013. Peng Li-Yuan was depicted more as the First Lady of China rather than as herself. Reports about the First Lady take 57.14% while as an individual 42.86% of the reports were published.

Table 4.9. Report tendency for the First Lady of China, Peng Li-Yuan based on "Chosun Ilbo Chinese Web" reports before May 31st of 2013

Reporting Tendency	Number of Reports	Percentage (%)
Positive	6	42.86
Neutral	9	57.14
Negative	0	0.84
Total	15	100

Table 4.9 shows the report tendency for the First Lady of China, Peng Liyuan, based on "Chosun Ilbo Chinese Web" reports before May 31st of 2013. Neutral reports accounted for the most, up to 57.14%. Positive reports were slightly lower which is 42.86%, and no negative reports were published from it.

4.1.2.2. South Korean Media Coverage of North Korea First Lady

Table 4.10. Topics on North Korea First Lady, Li Sol-ju, from "Chosun Ilbo Chinese Web" before May 31st 2013

Topics	Number of Reports	Percentage (%)
Politics	3	23.08
Others	11	76.92
Total	14	100

Reports on different topics of Li Sol-ju from “Chosun Ilbo Chinese Web” before May 31st 2013 is shown in Table 4.10. Political reports only took little portion of the total reports that 76.92% were other topics reports, while political reports only 23.08%.

Table 4.11. Li Sol-Ju’s identity from “Chosun Ilbo Chinese Web” before May 31st 2013

Identity	Number of Reports	Percentage (%)
First Lady	12	84.62
Individual	2	15.38
Total	14	100

Table 4.11 shows how reports from “Chosun Ilbo Chinese Web” has described Li Sol-ju’s identity, either as the First Lady or as an individual lady. According to the reports before May 31st 2013, 84.62% of total reports have viewed her as the First Lady, and 15.38% of the reports were on the individual lady.

Table 4.12. Report tendency for the First Lady of North Korea, Li Sol-ju, based on “Chosun Ilbo Chinese Web” reports before May 31st of 2013

Reporting Tendency	Number of Reports	Percentage (%)
Positive	2	15.38
Neutral	9	61.54
Negative	3	23.08
Total	14	100

Table 4.12 shows the report tendency on “Chosun Ilbo Chinese Web” reports about Li Sol-ju before May 31st 2013. Neutral coverage shared 61.54% of the total reports and negative and positive coverage followed.

4.1.3 Compare between Chinese and South Korean Media Coverage on China and North Korea First Ladies

Table 4.13

	Chinese Media		South Korea Media	
	Peng Liyuan	Li Sol-ju	Peng Liyuan	Li Sol-ju
Number of Reports	2052	358	15	14

Table 4.3 shows the number of reports from Chinese media and South Korean media about the first ladies of China and North Korea. It is clear from the table that the amount of reports about the first ladies from Chinese media overwhelms the South Korean’s.

Table 4.14

	Chinese Media				South Korea Media			
	Peng Liyuan		Li Sol-ju		Peng Liyuan		Li Sol-ju	
	Politics	Others	Politics	Others	Politics	Others	Politics	Others
Percentage (%)	70.24	29.76	90.76	9.24	35.71	64.29	23.08	76.92

The topics of Chinese media and South Korean media coverage on the first ladies of China and North Korea are sorted in Table 4.14. As shown in the table, Chinese media coverage of the China first lady, Peng Liyuan, is mostly political reports, however, other topics share 29.76% which is also a high percentage.

While for the North Korea First Lady, Li Sol-ju, political reports share 90.76%, and only small portion is on other topics, 9.24%.

Only 35.71% of the reports about Peng Liyuan from the South Korean media deal with politics, and 64.29% of the reports are on other topics. Likewise, the South Korean media covers 76.92% of the reports with non-political topics on Li Sol-ju, and 23.08% of political topics.

Thus, report topics on Peng Liyuan from the Chinese media are significantly different from those of Li Sol-ju, while the South Korean media coverage has no big difference on the topics of the two ladies. Moreover, the Chinese media mainly deal with political issues and the South Korean media mainly reported non-political issues.

Table 4.15

	Chinese Media				South Korea Media			
	Peng Liyuan		Li Sol-ju		Peng Liyuan		Li Sol-ju	
	First Lady	Individual	First Lady	Individual	First Lady	Individual	First Lady	Individual
Percentage	80.16	19.84	100	0	57.14	42.86	84.62	15.38

The identities of Chinese media and South Korean media depicted on the first ladies of China and North Korea are sorted in Table 4.15. As the table shows, most of the reports represented Peng Liyuan as the First Lady, but there is still one fifth of reports portrayed her as an independent individual.

Furthermore, the Chinese media covers Li Sol-ju only as the first ladies of North Korea. The South Korean media coverage on Peng Liyuan’s identity was almost half of the First Lady of China and half of an independent individual, it was 57.14 to 42.86%.

For Li Sol-ju, the South Korean media has few reports as her an independent individual and 84.62% of the reports as the presidential spouse.

The South Korean media has more diverse identities for Peng Liyuan when compared to the Chinese media. On the other hand, the identities for Li sol-ju demonstrated in the Chinese media or the South tend to be simplistic.

Table 4.16

	Chinese Media						South Korea Media					
	Peng Liyuan			Li Sol-ju			Peng Liyuan			Li Sol-ju		
	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Positive	Neutral	Negative
Percentage	75.2	24.8	0	52.52	46.64	0.84	42.86	57.14	0	15.38	61.54	23.08

Report tendency of the Chinese media and the South Korean media on the First Ladies is sorted in Table 4.16. The table tells that most reports from the Chinese media positively reported Peng Liyuan, they share 75.2% of reports, and 24.8% of neutral reports and no negative reports are found. Positive and neutral reports for Li Sol-ju have similar percentile, each with 52.52% and 46.64% of reports along with 0.84% of negative reports.

The South Korean media coverage of Peng Liyuan has little difference between positive and neutral reports with none of negative reports. Positive reports are 42.86% and 57.14% of neutral reports. Reports about Li Sol-ju are generally neutral, following with negative and positive reports.

To sum up, there are no negative reports on Peng Liyuan from both the Chinese media and the South Korean media. The Chinese media tend to have more positive reports than that of the South Korean media.

The Chinese media has far more positive reports of Peng Liyuan than that of neutral reports, while the South Korean media has around the same amount of positive and neutral publishes of Peng Liyuan. Also, the Chinese media mostly reported positive and neutral news, and a very little negative news that positive reports greatly exceed negative ones.

The South Korean media has neutral reports at most. Accumulating positive and neutral ones would surpass the amount of negative reports, but just by positive and negative reports, more negative ones are found.

4.2 *Perspective of Chinese media and South Korean media of National Images of China and North Korean and their first lady*

4.2.1 *Perspective of the Chinese media of National Images of China and North Korean and their the first lady*

4.2.1.1 *Perspective of the Chinese media of National Images and the first lady of China*

However, on the other hand, it also reflects that China is still catching up in terms of the social and cultural development. When the First Lady’s attention only lay in politics and rarely get involved in other aspects of social life, it indicates that this country can focus on the other social and cultural development in an extremely limited way. Apparently, this is not conducive to China's overall development of the image of a great power. 5 (<http://en.people.cn/>)

Secondly, the Chinese media coverage of Peng Liyuan as the presidential spouse is over 80%. It shows how well she has kept her reputation as the presidential spouse among wide participation in all aspects of the country, which also proves the woman’s right has been entrusted by the nation.

Lastly, viewing reporting tendency of Peng Liyuan from the Chinese media, positive reports overwhelm the amount of neutral reports, while none of negative reports are found.

Too many positive reports might cause the Chinese media to be considered biased, while no negative reports can be viewed heavily censored media in China. All public opinion to be highly convergent is hardly possible in a country with unfettered rights to press. Therefore, it implies high degree of centralization by the central government. This is unfavorable to the construction of the true socialist democracy. 6 (<http://cnnews.chosun.com/>)

4.2.1.2 *Perspective of the Chinese media of National Images and the First Lady of North Korea*

First of all, from the Chinese media reports on the topics of North Korea First Lady, Li Sol-ju, it is possible to notice that the political theme has reached 90%. This is not only in line with the fact that the international community has only been concerned about the North Korea politically in recent years, but also reflects the importance and sensitivity of the North Korea on the international political stage. Furthermore, this cast the economic and social development is

5 People.cn [N], 2013-01-01 ~ 2013-05-02, 2013

6 Cn.chosun.com [N], ~ 2013-05-02

underdeveloped in North Korea, and the lack of exchanges and cooperation with outside world. Reports about Li Sol-ju also projected the national image of North Korea with such conditions. 7 (Liu Yanfang, Zhang Ji, 2008)

Secondly, the Chinese media has always reported Li Sol-ju as the presidential spouse. This represents the conservative national image of the North Korea, and the restriction of woman's social status as a spouse, reflecting the North Korean society is not open-minded. However, being conservative due to political sensitivity shows political alliance between China and North Korea.

Lastly, report tendency on Li Sol-ju's reports show positive reports are a little more than neutral reports, and barely negative reports are published. This tendency does not, in any case, lead to the issue of North Korea's national image. On the contrary, it shows the Chinese media taking into account the importance of diplomatic factors in the report and commitment to the will of the government.

4.2.2 The national image of China and North Korea from the media of South Korea

4.2.2.1 China's first lady and its national image from the media of South Korea

First of all, from the theme of South Korea's media reporting the first lady of China, Peng Liyuan, it is shown that the political theme was slightly less reported than the other themes. A report on the first lady of another nation can reflect how the international community sees the nation she belongs to and how people in the nation which reported see the reported nation. Therefore, in the political theme of the report was slightly less than the other themes of the report, it was shown that, from the perspective of South Korea, China can cause concern not only in the political aspect, but also has many other areas to be noticed. Therefore, it reflects how South Korea recognizes China from the perspective of international position and influence. At the same time, it also shows a trend that China has developed in many aspects comprehensively; so many parts of Chinese society can become a kind of report.

Second, from the media of South Korea reporting China's first lady, Peng Liyuan, it can be seen that the report related with her as the wife of president was only slightly more than an individual. This presents that, from the perspective of South Korea, Chinese women are much free, indicating that it recognized China's openness. This is a highly favorable reflection about the fact China has made efforts to build up an image of great nation on the international community.

Lastly, from the media of South Korea reporting China's first lady, Peng Liyuan, it can be shown that there are more neutral reports than positive ones, and there are no negative ones about her. First of all, the fact neutral reports are slightly more than positive ones indicated the neutrality of South Korean media. However, there is no negative report, which means there are far more positive ones. It indicates the international community recognized China's positive international position and influences. On the other hand, it also reflects the international community has not understood China yet. With fully understating it with objective standards, there must be some negative reports. This also reflects that China's image in the international community is still in the stage of development rather than being matured, and its image is a great nation which still has a part to be more developed.

4.2.2.2 North Korea's first lady and its national image from the media of South Korea

First of all, from the media reports of South Korea on North Korea's first lady Lee sol-ju, it is found that the reports which are related with politics are far less than other reports. North Korea has the great influence on international community. South Korea only reported only 23% of political issues on North Korea, and it reflects South Korea's high interest in North Korea. For South Korea, it is necessary not only to understand the politics of North Korea, but also to let its people know North Korea in a comprehensive way. This also reflects the political needs of South Korea to some extent. On the other hand, Korea and North Korea should have the theme of communication besides politics. This is why you can find the report themes in various fields.

Second, from the reports of South Korea on South Korea's first lady, Lee sol-ju, it is shown that she was far more reported as the identity of the wife of president than herself. This combined the small proportion of the political theme, and, through this, it could be seen that North Korea is not open-minded. Because the diversity of a woman's role in a nation directly determines whether the image of the nation is open-minded or not.

Finally, from the reports, it is shown that neutral reports account for more than half out of the whole reports, and negative reports are slightly more than positive ones. Neutral reports accounted for more than half, which also reflects that South Korea maintains not to stand by one particular side. In addition, through the trend that the negative reports are slightly more than the positive ones, it can be seen that North Korea considers South Korea as a threat rather than a friendly neighbor. However, this reflects the importance of North Korea as well.

4.3 Problems and Implications

From the comparison of media report about the first lady in China and North Korea and the national image which can be reflected from it, the problem that each image China and North Korea face was separately brought up, and some implications were provided to solve for the nations.

First, China has an image of an emerging power. However, it should not perform only in the range of politics but be recognized as one great nation. As far as politics is concerned, if a nation does not have the sufficient strength in the

7 Liu Yanfang; Zhang Ji, *A Review of the Research on National Image and China's National Image Strategy* [J], *Exploration*, 2008-04-15

light of economy and defense, it cannot be enough to get an image of nation whose political power is also strong. However, according to the media report, China has been insufficient at these three perspectives so that it ought to establish the image of a big nation, build up its own soft power, make an effort under the society and culture that guarantees the right of people.

For instance, from the the diverse report materials, the objective attitude of news publisher, freedom on speech of the media, all-round developments of women and so on. I could see that Korea could have caught the development of China in many ways, so China cannot solely consider politics, but should see whether other countries are willing to recognize a lot of parts in China. Therefore, China should also actively self-discover and promote an international image that a great nation has for diversification.

Second, North Korea has been highly concerned by the international community for its political system, national strategy, sovereignty over the Korean Peninsula, the nuclear weapon issue and so on. Such concerns, however, are not beneficial for the further development of North Korea. From South Korea's report about the first lady, Lee sol-ju, of North Korea, it can be found that the mysterious atmosphere has been rampant over North Korea. If one nation becomes more developed, it would be more enlightened and get much far from being mysterious. Therefore, North Korea ought to seek for a better way that could stimulate the development of society and the establishment of people living. Only through this way, it could be paid a normal attention from international communities, achieve the active developments, and, eventually, establish a national image that is healthy and positive.

5. Conclusion

The theme of the study is 'the first lady and the image of nation'. The national image is regarded as an important component to constitute one nation's "soft power", which fully embodies the comprehensive strength and influence of a nation. Both China and North Korea are highly influential in range from East Asia to worldwide.

The national image of China and North Korea reflects the overall strength of the two nations, as well as the attitudes of other nations around the world towards them. Moreover, the recent transfer of power within the two nations has brought more attention not only to the new generations on leaders and new policies, but also to the first ladies of each nation unavoidably.

The author brought up the national image of China and North Korea based on how the media of China and South Korea has reported about the first ladies of each nation. The author believes China and its image on the international community are same through the images of the first ladies on each nation reflected in the media reports. China has been uprising, but still needs to improve the soft power.

Dealing with the challenges for developing means to assume more responsibilities. North Korea has an important role because of its special status in the world, and also has a mysterious color from the aspects for economy, society and the state system. The author believes that North Korea should make more efforts if it wants to establish a more healthy and influential national image in the world.

At the same time, it was found that Peng Liyuan and Lee sol-ju have things in common in the light of their jobs; both of them are engaged in performing arts. The cultures of China and North Korea have come down in one continuous line, and the professionals who have performed performances have been despised by society since ancient times. However, it can be found that the culture of two nations has been deeply influenced by the west in the wave of globalization. Because western culture regards the artists high and respectful, these two women, whose jobs are included in art industry, could have become enough to be treated as the first lady.

As a result, although China and North Korea still have a long way to be a great nation, the world may see both of them developing under a positive direction. However, the image of a great nation cannot be only one, so that different regions must maintain their unique cultural characteristics.

Reference

- Cheng, M. (2007). *Mass Communication and National Image*. International Press.
- Cn.chosun.com [N]. 2013-05-02
- Dong, Z. (2006). Opinions on National Image and International Communication. *Research on International Politics*.
- Jin, C. R. (2016). *From the Perspective of History and Consensus Analysis of the Characteristics of China's National Image*. China Reform Forum Net.
- Jin, J. (2012). *Public Diplomacy and the Construction of China's National Image*. Yanbian University,
- Jin, Z. K., & Xu, Q. C. (2010). The Shaping of National Image: New Subjects of Chinese Diplomacy. *Journal of Renmin University of China*.
- Li, D. W. (2009). *National Character and National Image*. East China Normal University.
- Li, Z. G. (2006). The Current Research Status of the Domestic Academic Circles on the national image. *Journal of Ningxia Party School*.
- Liu, M. (2012). Research on News Balanced Reporting from the Perspective of Media Ecology. Fudan University.
- Liu, Y. F., & Zhang, J. (2008). A Review of the Research on National Image and China's National Image Strategy.

Exploration.

People.cn [N]. (2013). 2013-01-01 ~ 2013-05-02.

Sun, Z. (2002). National Image and Its Connotation. *International Forum* (p. 119).

Xuan, X. (2013). The Diplomatic Role of "The First Lady". *China Newsweek*.

Yan, Y. (2012). *Research on the output of national image in cross cultural context*. Shanxi Normal University.

Yu, Z. H. (2008). Integrating Public Diplomacy – A New Perspective of Strategic Communication in the Construction of National Image. *International Observation*.

Zhang, K., & Xu, Q. (2007). *National Image*.

Zhang, Y. L. (2012). *Research on Accurate New Report in Mainland China*. Fudan University.

Zhao, K. J., & Mo, Y. C. (2013). The Role and The Conduct of "The first lady" diplomacy. *The Study Times*.

Zheng, B. W., & Li, X. Y. (2012). Interpretation of Chinese National Image in the Cover Story of Mainstream Magazines in Western Countries. *Modern Communication (Journal of Communication University of China)*.

Zheng, Y. S. (2009). From the Chosun Ilbo to See the Chinese Image in Korean Media. *Journal of Huaqin Institute of Technology*.

Copyrights

Copyright for this article is retained by the author(s), with first publication rights granted to the journal.

This is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).