# Introducing Blink Effect

Yaeji Lim, Hyobin Kim, Chanung Na, and Yeong-Hyeon Choi*
Department of Clothing and Textiles, Hanyang University, Seoul, Korea

*Keywords*: Blink effect, Black Pink, K-Pop, brand ambassador, human brand

With more K-Pop idols targeting the global audience due to the increasing global popularity of K-Pop, media attention has been brought to the clothes of influencers entering and leaving the country, resulting in the birth of a new genre of style called "airport fashion". As the public's interest in the fashion style of an idol group increases, individual idol members also play a role as cultural leaders by selecting a fashion style or brand that suits them to establish their own image. In response to this new trend, various overseas high-end brands (e.g., Chanel, Dior, Gucci, Yves Saint Laurent) have included idol groups that have global influence in their promotion strategies, providing them with a "brand ambassador" status that establishes relationships between countries and promotes products at the same time.

A "human brand" refers to a person that has value equal to that of an independent brand while performing the role of an ambassador representing the brand (Thomson, 2006). Unlike brand persona, which personifies an inanimate brand image to give individuality and identity to the brand, a human brand recognizes the brand as a person without the process of personification (McCracken, 1989). Therefore, if the role of an ambassador is increased beyond a simple public relations ambassador, it can act as a human brand. In this study, we intend to explore changes that appear in influencers' image perception according to the ambassador effect, a promotional strategy for foreign brands.

In this study, based on social big data, the image of each member perceived by the public before and after being selected as an ambassador was analyzed. For image analysis of individual members, group names and member names were combined and set as collection keywords ("Black Pink Jennie", "Black Pink Jisoo", "Black Pink Rose" and "Black Pink Lisa"). Data collection channels include Korean portal sites such as Naver, Daum blog, Internet cafe, and the news. The collection period is one year before and after each member's ambassador activities. As a result of web crawling, more than 1,000 articles were obtained. The collected data went through text mining in stages after being reviewed by five experts. After keyword extraction, common attribute analysis and network analysis were performed through NodeXL.

As a result of examining common keywords among the members of Blank Pink, items such as "style", "dress", "bag", "one-piece dress", and "earrings" were found as common keywords related to fashion. The keyword "airport fashion", which incorporates the concept of fashion media, also was related to the image for all members. The public interpreted the fashion media called "airport fashion" from a professional perspective in order to form their own self-image through influencers. In addition, a specific high-end fashion brand was identified in the image perception of all members, confirming that the Black Pink members served as human brands.

The image changes for each member before and after ambassador selection are as follows. Only Jennie had "Chanel" in common before and after she was selected as an ambassador, the image of Jisoo changed from "Burberry" to "Dior", Lisa's image changed from "Serpenti (Bulgari)" to "Celine", and the image of Rose changed from "Valentino" to "Yves Saint Laurent". Accordingly, in the case of Jisoo, Rose, and Lisa, it can be seen that the individual human brand image has changed by being selected as ambassadors. On the other hand, in the case of Jennie, it can be interpreted that she had her own strong human brand image regardless of the ambassador selection, or that Jennie's personal image had influenced Channel's selection of their brand ambassador.

The term frequency before and after ambassador selection for Jennie was also analyzed. As a result, "Chanel" had the highest frequency as a single fashion brand, but relationship between "Human Chanel" and "Style" was the strongest within the network. In the process of recognizing the influencer "Jennie", the public perceives her not as a simple promotional model for a specific brand, but as a style icon representing Chanel and a human brand that affects brand reputation.

In this study, by comparing images before and after ambassador activities by K-pop idol Black Pink members, the effect of ambassador activities on individual image perception was analyzed. Furthermore, the members' potential as a human brand was investigated. In the case of "Jennie", where the same brand appeared as the main keyword before and after the ambassador selection, it could be inferred that the individual image formed influenced the brand's ambassador selection. In addition, it was found that the public perceives the image of "Jennie" as an influencer "Human Chanel" who wears clothes in "Chanel style" rather than associating her with a specific brand called "Chanel". Jennie's image exposed in the media plays a role as a mediator that narrows the relationship between the public and the brand as a human brand.

On the other hand, except for Jenny, the perceived image of other Black Pink members before and after ambassador activity changed, so it was found that the influence of the image established as a specific brand ambassador role was greater than the personal image perceived by the public before the ambassador selection. This suggests that as overseas brand promotion activities are continuously exposed to the public through media, they change the personal images of certain influencers.

This study intends to name this phenomenon as the "Blink effect". 'Blink' was inspired by the name of Black Pink's fandom to which "Jenny" belongs, and it refers to a link between Black Pink and its fans. It refers to a phenomenon in which image perception and public interest in influencers are linked to the image of a fashion brand. This study is meaningful in that it confirms the value of human brands and enhances the understanding of brand promotion through K-pop idols.

**References**

McCracken, G. (1989). Who is the celebrity endorser? Cultural foundations of the endorsement process. *Journal of consumer research, 16*(3), 310-321. doi:10.1086/209217

Thomson, M. (2006). Human brands: Investigating antecedents to consumers' strong attachments to celebrities. *Journal of Marketing, 70*(3), 104-11. doi:10.1509/jmkg.70.3.104