

# A study on the Korean Value System in Korean Dramas: Focusing on “Cheese in the Trap”

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## ABSTRACT

*This research focuses on ‘Cheese in the Trap’ drama which depicts Korean value system (Authoritarianism, Collectivism, Familism), male-oriented society, filial duty, role of women in the society, sacrifice, nunchi (sense), face-saving, education fever, lookism, student life, modern college life, relationship between junior-senior, chaebol (a large family-owned business conglomerate of South Korean)-son, father-daughter, mother-daughter, father-son, mother-son, brother-sister.*

*The material used for presenting value system is drama scenes or dialogues, which shows Korean society is highly patriarchal, and the influence of authoritarianism, emphasize face-saving, nunchi (sense), education fever, patriarchy, lookism. Authoritarianism includes the authority of parents, bosses, elders, and distinguished names and titles. In authoritarianism, the behavioral norm emphasizes, dominating male consciousness and the authority in the hierarchical relationship. On the other hand, social norms emphasize the expression of 'uri (us)' does not appear in the South Korean society, which depicts the individualism. Moreover, it does not respect equal rights and does not improve the status of women. The influence of materialism emphasizes money, power, success, and appearance. The transformation of familism from traditional to modern and amoral attitude is visible in contemporary Korean society while the filial duty is still visible in the present Korean society. This study has introduced a new theoretical framework that value system, culture, and language are related, or interlinked to each other.*

## 1. Introduction

In 1993, Reeves-Ellington said that to overcome the obstacle while doing business in a different environment, we must learn the culture. In 2006, Han Sang-Mi surveyed to find out the causes of barriers during communication on around 165 Korean language learners from America, England, Japan, China, etc. The survey result was very surprising because the reasons for the language barrier were not pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, but it was the culture and value system. Like this, other researchers have also proved that if you do not know the culture or value system, then it becomes a barrier to language learning as well as communication. Therefore, it will not be an exaggeration if we say that the value system, culture and language are interrelated.

### Value System – Culture - Language

To judge what is wrong or what is right, it all depends on one's value system. Attitude or activity, which are natural and obvious for Korean people, can be difficult to understand for those who are coming from a different culture. Like that confused or embarrassed response of foreign learners on the activity, the Korean people do, it is due to the illusion made by value system. If you see Korean drama often, then you will end up thinking or asking the following questions.

- A.) *Why Korean directors always portray female protagonists as vulnerable, miserable, and marginalized women?*
- B.) *Why does a junior takes the responsibility of a mistake committed by a senior?*

- C.) *Why does a father want to send his youngest son to study abroad instead of his elder daughter?*
- D.) *Why does a father think that only a male can run a house or male is the head of the family?*
- E.) *Why are Korean people so obsessed with cosmetic products and plastic surgery?*

People who do not know the Korean culture or value system can end up getting a cultural shock or misunderstand such things. Such conflict and collision can easily rise in our daily life. Because of internationalization and modernization of society, the possibility of being exposed to multiculturalism is high. Development of transportation has made moving to another country very convenient, and people are doing frequent visit to foreign countries for business or traveling. Moreover, due to the smartphone, internet and telecommunication development chances of exposing our self to various cultures is also high.

Such opportunity also brings the possibility of conflict, misunderstanding, and cultural shock during a conversation. It is important to understand the different cultures, especially each other's value system for the smooth conversation. Which clearly shows that there is a need for research and awareness of the Korean value system for the development of communication eligibility between Indo-Korean people.

It will not be an exaggeration if we say drama or movie is the mirror, which enlighten us about society, value system and culture of a particular country. Drama can be a good material

for value system analysis through characters 'activity, attitude, expression, dialogues, etc. Therefore, 'cheese in the trap' can be a good source for educating our self about the Korean value system.

**2. Value System Represented in Cheese in the Trap**

**2.1 A Society that Drives You to Drink**

**Kim Sang Cheol:** Hong Seol. How about the celebration of your returning to college?

**Jang Bo-Ra:** Seonbae (senior), who eats things like that these days?

**Kim Sang Cheol:** Stand up. It is good for people who cannot drink well. Gosh, seriously. It is spilling. Hurry up. Junior Hong, Junior Hong, Junior Hong.

**Hong Seol:** I hate atmospheres like this (thinking inside the mind)

**Kim Sang Cheol:** Eat it. Eat it. Congratulation on your return.

Source: <<http://myasiantv.se/drama/cheese-in-the-trap/episode-1/>>

When we look at the above conversation, we can find that a senior is forcing his junior to drink even though she does not want to drink. But junior seol ended up drinking due to pressure or fearing that others might boycott her if they find out that she does not like drinking unlike them. In South Korean society when juniors ask seniors for a treat, then seniors give them treat, but when seniors ask junior to do something, whether they like or not, they will have to do that. For example, you are drinking with your seniors or superiors, and they ask you to drink from dusk to dawn with them, then you cannot avoid whether you like it or not because everyone will be drinking and if you reject to do so then superior will not like that attitude at all. In other words, you will have to drink because of *nunchi* (sense) and face-saving. Employees in Korea often relieve their work stress by drinking *soju* (Korean liquor) or *maekju* (beer). Moreover, the get-together or dining out culture of the company is mainly drinking culture. These crystal-clear examples show that Korean society always drives you to drink.

**“Asia’s Heaviest Drinking Countries”**

Table-1 Total alcohol consumption per capita

South Korea	10.9
Vietnam	8.7
Thailand	8.3
Mongolia	7.8
China	7.6
Japan	7.5
Laos	7.5
Cambodia	6.1
Philippines	5.6
India	4.6

Source: World Bank, 2015

**“Asia’s Least Drinking Countries”**

Table-2 Total alcohol consumption per capita

Sri Lanka	4.5
Singapore	2.9
Nepal	2.1
Malaysia	1.7
Bhutan	1.1
Brunei	0.8
Myanmar	0.7
Indonesia	0.6
Bangladeshi	0.2
Pakistan	0.1

Source: World Bank, 2015

If you see the above table-1, you can find that Korea has got the title of **‘Number One in Alcohol Consumption,’** which proves that it is the society that drives you to drink. According to the market research company ‘Embeurein Trend Monitor’ which surveyed 19-59 years old 1,000 people those who had drinking experience found that 'drinking culture' is still growing in South Korea and 78.9% of the respondents said that 'drinking' emphasizes the part of their culture or daily life. Besides that, many people said they enjoy drinking alcohol. The most emphasized part was the need for drinking is especially to maintain a social life and work life. Moreover, every one out of three college students said, "If someone asks you to drink, then will you drink against your will?"

**2.2 Gender Inequality in South Korean Society**

**Jang Bo-Ra:** look at your face. At least you are alive. On a day like this, you should take a break from your part-time job.

**Hong Seol:** I will have to go back to work soon.

**Jang Bo-Ra:** Do you remember getting drunk and talking about leaving college? I knew you would not remember. Here, take it. I have been saving that money. Use this for your tuition fee.

**Hong Seol:** You are crazy. You saved this for a year to go backpacking.

**Jang Bo-Ra:** No, it was not. It was just ten months.

**Hong Seol:** No. I cannot.

**Jang Bo-Ra:** Take it. Is school a stepping-stone bridge? Are you going to hop across it? If you take time off now, how old will you be when you graduate? Age is also the most important thing for women.

**Hong Seol:** Are you crazy? How can I take this?

**Jang Bo-Ra:** Take it. I want to go to school with you.

**Hong Seol:** So do I

**Jang Bo-Ra:** So take it.

Source :< <http://myasiantv.se/drama/cheese-in-the-trap/episode-1/>>

The above conversation depicts that the female protagonist portrayed as poor girl is doing *alba* (part-time job) for her livelihood. In other words, it shows the gender discrimination in the drama or dominating male consciousness (patriarchy). Korean drama has always portrayed female protagonists as marginalized, vulnerable and miserable Women. Most of the broadcasted TV dramas have portrayed their male protagonists as professional with high ranks such as

doctors, ministers, and legislators, and women protagonists as non-professional with low ranks such as a salesperson, part-time workers, and factory worker. The system of sorting the rank of the characters by gender depicts gender inequality in Korean dramas. Many men come out in high positions such as president, representative, general manager, but women are not even half of them.

For example, in the drama 'witch's castle,' the male protagonist was the general manager of the fifth-largest food company in South Korea, but the female protagonist appeared as a part-time worker at the food department of the largest mart. In response to this, an official of the Korea gender equality promotion agency said, "The most fundamental solution for gender inequality in dramas is that people who make drama should have a gender equality viewpoint, but this is difficult to achieve in a short period. It is just the beginning that people have started pointing out gender inequality in dramas." 2004 drama "Lovers in Paris" is a love story of a **chaebol** (conglomerate) second-generation man and an ordinary

woman, 2010 drama "Secret Garden" is a love story of a stuntwoman who falls in love with a millionaire. These popular dramas stories are similar to 'Cinderella,' where a woman who lived a poor and tough life meets a man who is rich and nice like the hero of the fairy tale 'Cinderella' and makes a life reversal.

In South Korea, many students do part-time works in restaurants and shops to maintain their lifestyles. Especially you can see girls doing **alba** for their livelihood and plastic surgery to look beautiful. Because to get the job, you should have a good picture on your resume.

In the following table 3 and 4, you can see that South Korea ranks first position in the gender pay gap and 15<sup>th</sup> in gender inequality in the world. Indeed the above conversation depicts the current scenario or inequality problem of South Korea. Which also proves that drama depicts the society, culture, customs, value system, people, and socioeconomic problems of any country.

Table-3 Gender Pay Gap in Selected OECD Countries

Country	Difference between median full time earning of men and women (%)
South Korea	34.6
Japan	24.5
USA	18.2
United Kingdom	16.5
Germany	15.5
Australia	14.3
Sweden	13.4
Mexico	11.1
France	9.9
Turkey	6.9

Source: OECD Gender data portal

Table-4 Gender Inequality Index

Country	HDI Rank
South Korea	15th
Japan	17th
USA	5th
United Kingdom	14th
Germany	6th
Australia	2nd
Sweden	12th
Mexico	71st
France	20th
Turkey	69th

Source: Human Development Report Office (2013)

Confucianism had a huge impact on Korean society, which has brought authoritarianism, where females are nothing but an object. Inequality in Korean society due to authoritarianism has resulted in coining many words like **hell joseon and dirt spoon** (South Korean term used to criticize inequality in society), **sampo generation** (South Korea referring to a generation that gives up courtship, marriage, and having kids due to social problem, economic pressure, high living cost, etc.).

Jhon H. Koo & Andrew C. Nahm have written in their book "An Introduction to Korean Culture" that it is probably safe to say that confucianism will continue to play an important role in Korea. As society changes, confucianism always makes some adjustments in every new situation because confucianism is like a deep-rooted tree in Korean society.

**2.3 Hyo-nyeo (filial daughter) & Chimapparam (a woman's excessively aggressive activity for children)**

**Seol's Mother:** You cannot get the scholarship? Why?

**Hong Seol:** I did not get very good grades in one of my courses. Can you help me out a little this time?

**Seol's Father:** Nice. How can you ask us for money in this situation?

**Seol's Mother:** Who is responsible for this situation? Moreover, have you ever even helped Seol with her tuition?

**Seol's Father:** What good does it bring paying big money and sending her to college? Only a man should run a house.

**Seol's Mother:** What are the men of this house doing, who paid money and went to college?

**Hong seol:** Mom, leave it.

Source :< <http://myasiantv.se/drama/cheese-in-the-trap/episode-4/>>

In above conversation, you can see that seol's father thinks that the male builds the house, male runs the family and male is the head of the family. He also thinks that there is no benefit in educating his daughter because she will have to leave the house soon after her marriage. Through his character, it is easy to recognize that there is patriarchy or male preference over female in Korean society. Meanwhile, the female protagonist does whatever her parents are telling her to

do. So her character depicts the existence of filial duty in Korean society. She reminds us of *hyonyeo sim cheong* (A filial daughter shim cheong who sacrificed everything for her father).

According to Lauren J. Little John, patriarchy is the product of Confucian culture and had settled in Korea in the Joseon dynasty. Then what is the most important feature of patriarchy? The biggest feature and problem of patriarchy is that it imposes roles on men and women according to gender. Patriarchy has given men responsibility for being the head of the family and being the economic pillar of the family, on the other hand, it has given women the role of 'housewife' who warmly protects the house and manages it well. The social coercion of this fixed role has made women more exhausted than men over time. We have not completely escaped patriarchy. Koreans live in a patriarchal culture, whether they are conscious about it or not. In the present time, female scholars have defined patriarchy as the suppression of woman by male. This definition by female scholars has highlighted one aspect of patriarchy, which is the dominance of men over women. Patriarchy has become a deeply rooted tree in all social systems and family forms from prehistoric times until now. Moreover, it has also been the most important system for determining women's status and life.

**Seol's Mother:** Seol, what if you move out of your place? Let's pay the Jun and your tuition from the deposit money. I know it will be difficult to commute to college, but you cannot take time off from college again.

**Hong Seol:** Ok.

Source :< <http://myasiantv.se/drama/cheese-in-the-trap/episode-4/>>

In above conversation, one can easily recognize that Seol's mother is more worried or conscious of her son compared to her daughter. This scene does not only depict the *chimmapparam*, but at the same time, it also shows the male preference over female. South Korean society has become an aging society and fertility rate is also going down gradually. Male preference over females can be one of the main reasons, which makes South Korea number one in 'the lowest fertility rate in the world.' Nearly half of the population of South Korea will be old by 2065, whereas the North Korean population will rise by 10% to 26.96 million by 2050.

If you watch a very famous drama, '**strong girl Bong-soon**,' you will find that the female protagonist's mother goes to a temple to pray for their children. She prays for her son to get admission in best medical college, but for her daughter, she says any college will be fine. Which clearly depicts '*chimmapparam*' but at the same time, it also clearly depicts the **male-oriented society**.

#### 2.4 Male Preference over Female (Patriarchy)

**Hong Seol:** Why? Why should I have to take a break from college because of Jun's tuition fee? I even left my apartment last semester because of his tuition fee. I commute for four hours. I worked and got a scholarship. I did everything on my own. Now for Jun, I will have to take a semester off.

**Seol's Father:** I know you may feel upset right now. Let's think about it later. Once you get married, you will leave us. However, Jun has to take care of our family.

**Hong Seol:** Am I not your child? Do I become a stranger to you if I get married?

**Seol's Father:** How can you talk to your father like that?

**Hong Seol:** I work alone and earn my tuition. Moreover, every day I worry that I will not get the grades and scholarship. Every day I worry about money, and I think my head will burst. I put so much effort, but no matter how much I try dad, you have never been happy for me. You have never appreciated me. You know I also want you to praise me and comfort me.

**Seol's Mother:** Seol, we know how much you suffer.

**Hong Seol:** You are also the same, Mom. In the end, you expect me to be your shoulder. Every time you come to me with all your troubles. How am I supposed to manage everything?

**Seol's Mother:** That's because I rely on you more than I do on Jun.

**Hong Seol:** What about me? Whom should I rely on?

Source: <<http://myasiantv.se/drama/cheese-in-the-trap/episode-11/>>

The above conversation shows that Seol's father despite having an elder daughter has sent his youngest son Jun to study abroad and worried about his tuition fee. Moreover, he also thinks that when his daughter is married, she will become unknown person or a completely different person who will be taking care of her own family and children. Besides that, he also thinks that only a male can run a house or only a male can be head of the family. Through his character, it is easy to recognize that there is patriarchy or **male preference over female** in Korean society.

Seol's parents run a noodle shop, and they have sent their son against his will to study abroad. Because they think that he will get a good job after his graduation. Which also depicts the severe **education fever** because no one is asking what the younger son wants to study. Seol is doing part-time jobs at various places to earn money for her tuition and living expenses. Even she has to take a break from her college life due to economic problems. Moreover, for supporting her younger brother's school expenses, she has to vacate her apartment and start living at her home even though the college is far away from her home. Seol's father instead of supporting his family, keeps investing here and there and always keeps failing in business and end up losing all the savings. Family care means you have to help each other or worry about each other. However, in this case everyone is only worried about the younger son. Seol's mother is also always worried about the son and always takes her son's side. Nobody is showing concern for the daughter or worried about Seol. Nobody is even asking what her dream is or what she wants to be. Nobody is supporting her even half of the younger son. Which proves that there is no familism in present Korean society. Here the daughter is struggling alone, and there is no one on whom she can depend or rely on. The elder daughter is doing whatever her parents ask her to do, which depicts her **filial duty**.

There have been 50,000 abortions in 2017, and 58% of the South Korean people have asked to legalize abortion saying that the ban on abortion endangers the woman and limits their rights. The constitutional court of South Korea has asked the politician to revise the abortion law by Dec 2020. The irrational and absurd abortion law in South Korea also paves a path, which leads them to male preference over female. In other words, it plays a crucial role in making Korea a patriarchal society.

## 2.5 Lookism

**Hong Seol:** Stop copying me.

**Sun Min-Soo:** Did you file for patents for the report and the clothes also? Why are you bullying me?

**Hong Seol:** Can't you even remember what you have done? Why did you steal my doll? Why did you copy my things? Why did you involve my brother? Why? The one who needs to go away from my life is you! It's you!

**Sun Min-soo:** Everything I wanted, you have it all. Good grades, friends, and boyfriend. You have them all. What's so unfair to you?

**Hong Seol:** I do not know why you would say those things. However, my grades, my friends, and everything else none of it came to me easily. Min-soo, you were not like this before. What made you change this way?

**Sun Min-soo:** In the past, I was nobody. No one knew who I was or what my name was. I was just a loser whom nobody knew. I will never go back to who I was back then.

Source :< <http://myasiantv.se/drama/cheese-in-the-trap/episode-10/>>

In the above conversation, you can see how the appearance is so important in South Korean society. People who do not know the culture or the value system of Korea will think there is no reason behind it. They will directly jump to the conclusion and consider it absurd. To know the reason, we need to go deep into the past of Korea. Korea is a homogeneous country. For generations, until about the 20th century, it was a highly stratified society with a small ruling (**yangban**) class. It was only in the past 30 years or so that an affluent middle class emerged, and the quality of life improved for everyone. With newly acquired wealth, westernization and a need to express one's individuality, people started finding ways to improve their appearance. It was not enough to feel wealthy without good appearance so the affluent people felt they had to show their fitness. People started giving special care or value to health and beauty in Korean society. Now people could go out and look charming, different, and rich. As well, after the Korean War, the United States not only played a crucial role in economic redevelopment, but also brought culture, ideals, and sensitivity to the beauty that captivated the nation.

In South Korea you can have a good photo in your resume and pass the interview otherwise it is easy to fail in the interview. Because some people will judge you by your look even though someone has excellent skills. Korea is widely known as a hub for "plastic surgery and cosmetic product" in the world. People who are undergoing plastic surgery are

increasing in number despite the death cases or side effect after plastic surgeries. Therefore, this will not be an exaggeration if we say that plastic surgery sometimes can be boon, and sometimes it can be a bane. Rapid growing of shops selling cosmetic products, and plastic surgery clinics proves that Koreans think their appearance is too important. If you have been to Korea or you have Korean friends, then you might know that Korean people are obsessed with the cosmetic product and plastic surgery. According a website 'koreaboo' many prominent K-pop idols such as **JooE(Momoland), Chaeyeon (DIA), Nam JooHyuk, Krystal[f(x)], Jessi, Koo Hara, Yewon, Heechul, Ji Chang Wook, Song Jaeho, Park Bo Young, Uee, Kyuhyun, Yunho, YooSeung Ho, Hong Soo Ah, Soyou, Yonghwa, Irene, CL** have undergone plastic surgery for attractive look. One in a five South Korean women has had some form of cosmetic surgery compared to around one in twenty in the America. It just buying Korean idol face to get attention of people. Therefore, lookism is important to live in a competitive Korean society. There are various dramas about beauty and cosmetic surgery. Dramas like '**she was pretty or the birth of beauty**' depicts that how the female protagonists are not accepted in society just because they are not pretty, but suddenly their life changes once they get plastic surgery or starts doing makeup. Which proves that Korean people are so obsessed with their look and dressing style.

According to scholar choi, Korean have a huge influence on Confucianism which teaches us to foster inner self. The emphasis that both confucian notions of female beauty place on the relationship between inner and outer beauty have influenced the creation of female beauty idol.

## 2.6 Education Fever & Face Saving

**Seol's Father:** Instead of taking a semester off, you quit? Are you out of your mind? Go back to the US tomorrow. Go back and do not even think about coming back until you graduate.

**Joon:** I am not going back. Do you think I don't want to? I can't do it. I know we have no money at home. It is so hard for me to be there too.

**Seol's Mother:** Stop it. Hitting him won't solve anything. You are the one who sent him there even though he never wanted to go.

**Seol's Father:** But he should at least finish his schooling. You must find out a way to get back in. If that does not work, find out if you can get admission somewhere else. We will get your tuition fee even if your sister has to take a semester off, so do not worry.

**Seol's Mother:** What are you saying? He does not want to, and what wrong has seol done?

**Seol's Father:** I am the head of the household. Don't bring up other things. Jun, prepare to go back to the US.

Source: <<http://myasiantv.se/drama/cheese-in-the-trap/episode-11/>>

In the above conversation, you can see that seol's father wants to send his son to study abroad, even if he does not want to go. He thinks it is okay even if his elder daughter has to take leave for a while from college so that his son can study abroad. He is much worried about his younger son compared to his elder daughter. Which depicts the patriarchy and male

preference over female in South Korean society. He also thinks that, "What will people think about me? and neighbours' son also went to study abroad, so my son should also go to study abroad". Therefore, at the same time, it also depicts the **face-saving**.

South Korean education fever is getting so severe that it has resulted in coining words like "**geese dad**", "**penguin dad**", and "**eagle dad**", which are being used widely in daily life. "Geese Daddy" is a name attached to visiting family once or twice as if geese moved once or twice a year. "Penguin Dad" who can send all living expenses but cannot afford to visit his family. Moreover, the better among these "Eagle Dad" can fly whenever they feel like.

On the day of the **suneung siheom** (college scholastic ability test), mothers go to the university or go to the temple and pray for their children. When the college entrance test approaches, there is no time to sit down and relax. CSAT aspirant's mothers put up a 'prayer' with a picture of their son or daughter and revolve around budhha statue 108 times, while they have soaked in sweat. You can also see such parents those who come for prayer with paper where they have written about their children's school, class, and college. Because of the belief that Buddha will listen to wishes, the number of people starts increasing as the college entrance exam approaches. In other words, it might be their belief that the prayer efficacy to pass the test might be favourable. To make the traffic management smoother on the day of the test, it is also possible for the government to change the time of commute and you can see that police taking examiners to the test site easily.

Words like **ipsijjok** (Examination Hell) has become daily life word due to the education fever in South Korea. However, those who do not get admission to the university where they want to study commit suicide. One of the main reasons for suicide is not passing the exam or excessive pressure or burden of education. According to OECD South Korea has the highest levels of stress among young people aged 11 to 15 compared with any other industrialised country in the world. Moreover, according to a survey done by the national youth policy institute, 34% of South Korean adolescents thought about suicide over academic pressure.

## 2.7 Hyo-ja (Filial Son)

**Hong Seol:** What are you doing?

**Joon:** Ah.. I do not know. What am I supposed to do? You are smart, Seol. You tell me.

**Hong Seol:** Study Hard. Do you want to study business management?

**Joon:** No (shaking his head)

**Hong Seol:** See! What do you plan to do after graduation? Think about that first. You should find out what you want to do in your life. You have lots of skills and talent. You had so much you wanted to do. You are different from me, Jun. How long are you going to follow dad's plan? Think carefully about what you want to do.

Source: <<http://myasiantv.se/drama/cheese-in-the-trap/episode-15/>>

In the above conversation, younger brother Jun is asking his elder sister Seol that what should he do. Moreover, one can easily find that Jun had chosen his major, what his father told him to choose. Therefore, Jun does whatever his father asks him to do without any second thought or questioning anything, which depicts the **filial duty** of a son. Education in Korea does not provide enough opportunity for students to choose a course or major by themselves. In other words, parents choose or decide the university or major for their children. Korean parents always seem so passionate about their children's education and teach them the importance of studying hard and getting good grades in tests. Going to university is not a choice, but it is a mandatory thing. There are so many universities but only a few of them are worth attending if you want to grab a good job. In Korean society, a good job means working at a big multinational company.

Most of the parents want their children to study in **SKY** (Seoul University, Korea University, Yonsei University) which has taken the top three-university position in South Korea. In other words, SKY is not only just a dream of the children, but it is also the expectation of the parents from their children. Recently in 2019, tvn broadcasted a drama with the same name, "SKY Castle" can be the best example of education fever, filial son, and filial daughter. Sky castle is the story of Korean parents who have passed out of SKY universities and want to send their children to SKY University only. Which also shows the **face-saving** in Korean society. Just because the neighbor or relative's children are going to one of the SKY University, parents want to send their children also to SKY without the consent of their children.

It is just a process of highlighting or promoting the **SKY** so much that other universities become less valuable, which is not true but an illusion made by society. It is a mere stunt for emphasizing a university name rather than the field of study or courses. It is easy to see that student give up their dream to go to a top rank college or university. For the many who could not make it into a top-rank university cannot be a normal thing, because the only reason they go to top rank university is nothing but a face-saving.

## 2.8 Power Distance in South Korea & Nunchi (Sense)

**Manager:** Our product is similar to our competitor's company. However, our sales are falling, which is a marketing failure. Based on this meeting, come up with ten promo or event ideas. That is all for today.

**Superior:** Thank you. How about pork for lunch at a nearby restaurant?

**Manager:** Yes, sounds good. Everyone should come.

**Superior:** Yoo Jung, you should organize the meeting log.

**Manager:** Are not you making the intern overwork?

**Superior:** Oh, not at all, sir. (To manager while leaving for lunch)

You know that the report is due by next week, right. (Murmuring into intern's ear)

**Yoo Jung:** Yes.

**Superior:** Work hard. Manager, let's go together.

Source: <<http://myasiantv.se/drama/cheese-in-the-trap/episode-11/>>

In the above conversation, the superior's authoritarianism and junior's **nunchi** is visible clearly. The junior must do everything his superiors ask to do, even if junior like it or not, and junior must take the responsibility for mistakes of seniors whether junior has committed that mistake or not. Even if it's log out time but the boss is at work or work is undone, and superior asks you not to leave, you cannot leave the office until the work is complete. If you do so, it is easy to become a person who has no **nunchi**. According to one survey, a junior employee gets more stress at the workplace from superior. Moreover, according to a study by Korean labour economic association female workers suffer more stress when working under female bosses.

**Nunchi** is very prevalent in Korean society. When there are lots of work in the company, you cannot apply for the leave or annual vacation. When the job is incomplete, you have to work until late at night, and even you will have to fulfil the unreasonable demands. **Nunchi** is visible in the drinking culture. It is hard to get out of the company dining out and rejecting the drink that the boss offers is difficult. Therefore, if you drink well, they will like it and if you cannot drink well, they might feel uncomfortable. Excessive **nunchi** is visible while comparison, congratulating somebody for something, and praising someone's appearance etc. However, having excessive **nunchi** can be a burden for the others as well as for the society also. Ms. Euny Hong who writes about Korean culture in 'The New York Times,' has defined **nunchi** as the Korean secrets to happiness and success. She also said that for **nunchi** all you need is your eyes, your ear and a quiet mind.

Table 5 Power Distance Index

Country	PDI
Malaysia	104
Philippines	94
China	80
Indonesia	78
India	77
Singapore	74
Hongkong	68
Thailand	64
SouthKorea	60

Source: Cultural - Power Distance Index

In the above table five, we can see that South Korea falls in a high power index country. Authoritarianism or high power distance in South Korea has helped in coining **gapjil** (an expression referring to an arrogant and authoritarian attitude or actions of people in South Korea).

**2.9Familism**

**Jung's Father:** I cannot recall how long it has been since we have all been together.

**Baek In-ha:** Yes, these days, Jung does not even contact me because he is so busy. I am just happy to see him like this.

**Jung's Father:** In-ho, tell me about yourself. What have you been doing all these days?

**Baek In-ho:** Just this and that.

Source:<<http://myasiantv.se/drama/cheese-in-the-trap/episode-3/>>

The above conversation depicts that even though they belongs from same family, but they do not have time to eat together. However, everyone seems to be happy meeting after a long time. There have been big changes between 1990-2000 due to industrialization and democratization. **SNS** has not only played crucial role in personal identity or information leakage but it has also brought various problems like communication gap, reduce real human contact, time wastage, poor health, loss of motivation in students, etc. which has resulted in weakening familism or family value. In other words, the characteristic of familism has changed into individualism or materialistic society, which is a sign of a modern value system. It does not show egalitarianism culture and emphasizes freedom of the expression appearing in the familism. Moreover, while the expression of 'us' does not appear in the familism. In present characteristics of materialism, which emphasize money, power, success and appearance are visible clearly in present Korean society. On the other hand, individualism also emphasizes autonomy, independence and self-development for the future.

The low fertility rate of South Korea also proves that the concept of familism is changing in Korea from familism to individualism. Usually, a family has few children, but now even they do not get married, if married, they prefer pets over children, which is helping South Korean to become a low birth ratio country. In South Korea, **honbap** (eating alone) has become a new norm. There is a rise in the eating alone restaurant as the number of single-person households grows in South Korea who lives, eat and spend free time alone. The sale of packed food is also growing due to the continuous rise of people those who eat alone especially during festivals.

**3. Conclusion**

The analysis of drama "Cheese in the Trap" depicts that drama can be a tool for practical learning material for Korean language learners through Korean people's behaviour, attitude, and conversation. This research has not only helped in giving crystal clear ideas about the Korean value system, authoritarianism, collectivism, familism, but also university life along with better understanding about the relationship between parents-children, senior-junior, chaebol-son, couples.

The material used for presenting value system is drama scenes, which show it is highly patriarchal, and the influence of authoritarianism, emphasize face-saving, nunchi (sense), education fever, lookism. Authoritarianism includes the authority of parents, bosses, elders, behavioral norms, and distinguished names and titles. In authoritarianism, the behavioral norm emphasizes, dominating male consciousness and the authority in the hierarchical relationship. Moreover, it does not respect equal rights and does not improve the status of women. Authoritarianism has helped in coining various terminology such as honbap, gapjil, geese dad, penguin dad, eagle dad, ipsichiook, hell chose on, dirt spoon, sampo generation etc. which people use widely in their daily life. People can take it as an achievement but in reality, it is just maligning the image of Korea. Korean society has become

highly materialistic which emphasize money, power, success, and appearance, autonomy and independence and for the self-development emphasize the future. Moreover, while the expression of 'us' does not appear in familism, which emphasizes the modern value system has no place for the family value. It does not show egalitarianism culture and emphasizes freedom of expression is not appearing in the Korean society.

This study has introduced a new theoretical framework that value system, culture, and language are related, or

interlinked to each other. Hence, this research proves that if you know the culture or value system, then it eases the conversation.

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