



## Public Diplomacy Of South Korea In Promoting Culture And Tourism In Indonesia Through The Indonesian Korean Cultural Center (KCCI)

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### Abstract

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*A Country basically cannot act alone in fulfilling its soft power goals abroad, for that the government forms state institutions that can be more flexible in approaching targets of other country's public. It is through this institution that public diplomacy with several dimensions and elements can be implemented as needed by the country of origin. Currently, diplomacy activities are not only carried out by the government, anyone can carry out diplomacy or what is better known as public diplomacy. Public diplomacy is one of the instruments used to increase cooperation in achieving the interests of the state by promoting something we have to foreign publics. One of the countries that has carried out public diplomacy is South Korea which has succeeded in capturing the hearts of the Indonesian people with its unique cultural popularity through the Korean Cultural Center (KCC). This study aims to determine the public diplomacy carried out by South Korea towards Indonesia in promoting its culture through the Korean Cultural Center. The results of the study show that the Korean Cultural Center can be a medium of public diplomacy that is able to help achieve the national interest of South Korea, namely promoting Korean culture to the Indonesian people.*

**Keywords:** *Public Diplomacy, Korean Culture, South Korea, Indonesia, Korean Cultural Center (KCC)*

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## INTRODUCTION

Human a country basically cannot act alone in fulfilling its soft power goals abroad, for that the government forms state institutions that can more freely approach the public targets of other countries. It is through this institution that public diplomacy with several dimensions and elements can be implemented as needed by the country of origin.

The Republic of Korea or better known as South Korea is a country located in East Asia and is included in the middle power country. According to Lee Sook Jong, since the early 1969's, South Korea's continued economic growth has transformed a country that was once poor and dependent on aid from other parties into a middle-class economic powerhouse (Jong, 2012). In 1997, South Korea experienced a global economic and financial crisis where the economy fell by 7%. This was also due to the economic crisis that occurred in Asia at that time.

The South Korean government is trying to overcome this problem by relying on the food industry as an alternative way to improve its economy. But this did not succeed in helping to improve the South Korean economy because of the many competitors for foreign food products that have been circulating in the international market. South Korea must find new ways that other countries do not have so that

the foreign public can be more interested in their country and can improve its economy. So Keith Dinnie gave a suggestion that South Korea needed a new nation branding (Dinnie, 2009).

In the mid-1990s, South Korea seemed to get a big fortune because of the emergence of a new phenomenon that became a new alternative answer for its economic recovery and re-branding of its country. This phenomenon is the popularity of the Korean Wave which is a typical South Korean popular culture such as drama series, idol bands, pop music, Korean fashion and relations between people. The popularity of South Korean culture itself has spread to various countries both within and outside Asia, such as Japan, China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Vietnam, Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, and countries on other continents (Hoe, 2012). The increasingly widespread popularity of the Korean Wave is accompanied by the widespread interest of the foreign public to consume anything originating from South Korea (VisitKorea, 2011). The South Korean government did not want to miss this moment, so the Korean wave phenomenon was used by the South Korean government to rebrand its country.

In 2006, the South Korean government officially established the Korean Wave as one of the instruments of public diplomacy listed in the "Diplomatic White Paper of the Republic of Korea part3, Advance Diplomacy in The International Arena, Chapter 5, Enhancement of Cultural and Public Relations for the Promotion of Dynamic Korea. ". For this reason, the government needs agents who can assist it in launching South Korean public diplomacy. Through the Ministry of Culture, Sport and Tourism (MCST), the South Korean government gives responsibility in developing aspects of culture, sports and tourism whose purpose is as a form of South Korean public diplomacy (MCST, 2007). Furthermore, the government also created an institution that focuses directly on the promotion of the cultural field, namely the Korean Cultural Center which is under the Embassy of the Republic of Korea. Currently, Korean Cultural Centers have spread to various parts of the world, including Indonesia.

According to (Joo & K, 2012), the Korean Wave can affect political conditions and diplomacy in the form of a positive impact which can be used as a way for business cooperation between countries and also has the potential to promote South Korean cultural diplomacy as part of the country's Soft Power. In 2022, diplomatic relations between Indonesia and South Korea have lasted for 49 years. Diplomatic relations between the two began in September 1973, but relations at the consulate level began in August 1966. Indonesia and South Korea continue to strive to enhance bilateral, regional and multilateral relations and cooperation (KBRI, 2018). With Indonesia-South Korea relations that have existed for almost five decades, South Korea has made Indonesia one of its cultural diplomacy targets. This is because South Korea considers Indonesia also has a diverse culture and is almost the same as South Korea so that the existence of cultural or mental similarities is believed to strengthen relations with one another.

State relations between Indonesia and South Korea, which began with economic cooperation, have now entered the era of cultural exchange at a higher level. In every video clip of Korean idol stars on streaming services, many Indonesians often express their preferences through the comments column. You can also find many videos made by Indonesians introducing Korea and how they enjoy

Korean lifestyle and culture. Apart from Korean culture, Indonesian food such as fried rice and satay as well as traditional Indonesian clothing, namely batik, are now widely known in Korea. Currently, there are more and more Korean television programs that introduce the uniqueness of Indonesian traditional culture. Therefore, the Indonesian Korean Cultural Center (KCCI) has an active duty to promote cultural exchange between Indonesia and South Korea. The purpose of the existence of KCCI is to become an open cultural center where everyone can easily access and enjoy Korean culture offline and online. In addition, for the long term, KCCI is expected to play a role as a bridge between Korea and Indonesia through Korean culture (KCCI, 2022). Based on this background, the author will explore, identify and explain how the Indonesian Korean Cultural Center carries out South Korean public diplomacy in Indonesia.

## **THEORETICAL**

### **The Concept of Public Diplomacy**

Diplomacy Public diplomacy was first used in 1965 in the process of "international information and cultural relations" carried out by a former United States diplomat, namely Edmund Gullion. After that, the use of the term public diplomacy began to expand to European countries such as Italy, France, England, and Germany which began to follow the United States to carry out public diplomacy (Cull, 2009).

At first, public diplomacy was used as an effort by the government of a country to attract foreign publics to support the foreign policy of the country implementing the public diplomacy. In other words, this traditional public diplomacy is government driven, where the government has an important role in the implementation of a country's public diplomacy. As stated by American Political Scientist, (Nye, 2008) that public diplomacy is an instrument used by the government to organize the attractive resources of a country as a means of communication and attract the public outside the country.

Over time, the definition of public diplomacy has expanded by adding the role of the public in its implementation. Now the actor who can carry out public diplomacy is developing not only the state (government), but the people of the country can also be involved in the implementation of public diplomacy. (Snow, 2009) argues that public diplomacy is an activity carried out by governments, individuals, or groups to influence either directly or indirectly on foreign public attitudes and opinions related to their foreign policy.

### **The Concept of Soft Power**

Soft power was first coined in 1990 by Joseph S. Nye, where he stated that soft power is the ability to get what we want from other parties by generating interest rather than coercing or spending a fee (Nye, *Soft Power: The mean to success in the world politics*, 2004). In its implementation, soft power prioritizes cultural elements in its diplomatic activities to achieve an interest such as tourism rather than using military, economic, or political elements.

Usually soft power is used by a country that has a variety of cultures to create new powers to attract foreign publics to their country. The state can take advantage of this cultural diversity by promoting it in the international world as a tool to inherit culture to the global community so that it is not displaced by the

progress of the times. The cultural diversity of a country can provide a profitable selling point for the country, especially in the tourism sector.

## **METHODOLOGY**

In conducting research, a framework of thought is needed that contains a research formulation to be studied. The research method adopted in this study is a quantitative research method because it is in accordance with research related to the role of an organization as well as to be carried out by researchers in the field of social science. In addition, in the preparation of research, this method pays attention to problems related to the behavior and roles of individuals, groups, and organizations.

The source of data in this research is to use secondary data by looking for sources of information that are documentation so that there is no need to go directly into the field but by taking reference sources that support this research. Then processing the data is done by using the literature study method, namely in the form of collecting, studying, and analyzing data taken from books, papers, journals, articles, newspapers, official documents published and unpublished, websites, and various other media sources related to South Korean public diplomacy in promoting its culture in Indonesia through the Korean Cultural Center.

In testing the validity of the research data, the authors increase their persistence in reading various reference books and document sources used as reference materials so that they can check that the data found can be trusted.

## **RESULTS & DISCUSSION**

### **Organizing Cultural-Related Event In**

According to the concept of public diplomacy, public diplomacy can be implemented by organizing events as a strategic communication tool to the wider public. Since KCCI was founded in 2011 until now, KCCI has indeed planned to hold a number of festivals in its efforts to improve South Korea's cultural industry. The Korean Cultural Center in Jakarta, Indonesia as the KCC representative office abroad held several events related to South Korean culture, including introducing kimchi as traditional South Korean food and hanbok as traditional South Korean clothing. In organizing these events, KCC also cooperates with several companies and institutions from Indonesia and South Korea.

#### **1.) Kimchi as Traditional South Korean Food**

One of South Korean culture that is unique and not owned by other countries is kimchi, which is a traditional South Korean food. Therefore, KCCI promotes kimchi to the Indonesian people, apart from the uniqueness of kimchi, also because the food can be trusted to have a close relationship with the culture, history, and geographical conditions of the culinary origin, so it is appropriate to introduce kimchi to the Indonesian people. Kimchi itself is a traditional South Korean food in the form of pickled vegetables such as chicory and radishes that are fermented and given a spicy seasoning (Fitria, 2017).

Korean Cultural Center Indonesia (KCCI) collaborated with a chef and Korean influencer in Indonesia, namely Chef Na Dae-hoon to organize a kimchi demonstration event to promote Korean kimchi in Indonesia. During this event, Chef Na Dae-hoon showed the participants how to make authentic and meaningful

kimchi. In addition, several participants who attended were given the opportunity to directly participate in the process of making kimchi. The participants also showed high enthusiasm for making kimchi using ingredients available in Indonesia so that they could try it at home. This event can be useful for the participants because they can learn carefully how to make kimchi which is rarely known by foreigners (KCCI, *Ajak Insan Media Indonesia di Acara 'Mari ber-Kimchi'*, 2022).

In addition to promoting the making of kimchi, the Korean Cultural Center Indonesia held a creative video competition with the theme "Iftar with Kimchi". This competition was held to welcome the month of Ramadan this year. Through this competition, KCCI wants to invite Indonesian people to be able to enjoy South Korean-style iftar through breaking the fast during the month of Ramadan with kimchi. The participants showed their creativity by choosing or making Indonesian food that they felt was suitable to be enjoyed with kimchi which was then made into a creative video that lasted more than 5 minutes. The community showed their enthusiasm for the competition where the participants consisted of young people aged up to their 30s with various types, ranging from showing the manufacturing process to how to enjoy the food together with kimchi (KCCI, *Antusiasme Membuat Menu Kreasi Berbuka Puasa dengan Kimchi*, 2022).

At these events, KCCI hopes that kimchi as a traditional Korean food can be accepted by the Indonesian people. In addition to providing information about kimchi, the event is also an effort to create a strategic effect in promoting kimchi. KCCI also hopes to convey a message to the Indonesian people that kimchi is also a food that can be paired with Indonesian dishes and can be enjoyed by anyone. KCCI will continue to strive to hold related events to support the promotion of kimchi as Korea's representative food and attract the interest and love of the world community.

## 2.) Hanbok as Traditional South Korea Clothing

In addition to traditional food. South Korea also has a unique traditional dress, namely the hanbok. Hanbok usually has graceful lines and shapes with a calm aura. Traditional Korean clothing hanbok has maintained its basic traditional features throughout Korea's 5,000-year history while its styles and forms have evolved in various ways based on the lifestyle, social conditions and aesthetic tastes of the times. Today hanbok has become a global spotlight because of its traditional designs and patterns that can be brought into the modern direction. Music videos of K-pop singers such as BTS and BlackPink also contributed by using the hanbok as an attractive costume for its itching and beauty that can be used for the present. In addition, several South Korean dramas and films often use hanbok (KCCI, *Tentang Korea: Pakaian dan Tren*).

In order to promote Korean original culture (hanbok), the Indonesian Korean Cultural Center held an online video and photo show with the theme "Hanbok, Traditional Korean Clothing" via the KCCI website. The goal is to promote hanbok as a genuine Korean culture. The video explains in detail the origins of hanbok and how to wear hanbok for men and women (KCCI, *Hanbok, Indahnya Busana Tradisional Korea*, 2022). There are three video fashion shows featuring K-pop stars that aired simultaneously with the "Hanbok-Batik Fashion Show" held by KCCI in 2021. The fashion show titled "Meeting Hanbok and Batik" was successfully held for the first time in Indonesia. The purpose of this method is

to introduce the process of making hanbok and batik. The event has succeeded in showing diversity that shows the beauty of each outfit with lively stage performances and professional models.

In addition, the fact that this fashion show has been recorded simultaneously in Korea and Jakarta. In Korea, the collaborative work of batik hanbok designed by hanbok designer Lee Hyo-jae has been prepared for the runway stage at the palace heritage of the Joseon dynasty, located in Cheongju. At the same time, the batik and hanbok kebaya collaboration by Indonesian batik designer Novita Yunus was staged in Jakarta using the virtual backdrop of the Chojeong palace. With this event, It is hoped that the two communities will become special friends through increasing understanding of Korean and Indonesian cultures, as well as more intensive cultural exchange activities (KCCI, Perpaduan Hanbok dan Batik di Atas Runway, 2021).

### **Promoting Culture Throught Digital Media**

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Referring to the concept of public diplomacy according to Joseph Nye, KCCI's effort to release its website is the implementation of public diplomacy through the dimensions of building sustainable relationships between individuals through building virtual networks and providing public access to media channels. In addition, the use of this website is also a form of implementing public diplomacy using soft power, especially with the use of attractiveness, namely attracting and inviting Indonesian people who have an interest in Korean culture and those who have not, to be able to introduce Korean culture in Indonesia. Referring to the function of public diplomacy, the efforts made by KCCI are aimed at promoting the image of South Korea as a tourist destination country with a variety of cultures and unique attractions so that it can help South Korea form sustainable relations with the Indonesian people.

Korean Cultural Center Indonesia implements public diplomacy through digital media through its website. The website is also connected to other social media, including Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, and Instagram. This website provides various information related to KCCI as well as South Korean culture. Not only that, the appearance of the website which is attractive and easy to understand also makes it easy for visitors to access the KCCI website, even the KCCI website also provides information facilities for the KCCI Building, which is located at the Equity Tower Building, 17th floor, Jl. Jendral Sudirman, lot 9, Central Jakarta. Through this website, we can make reservations for educational visits, rent space and hold exhibitions, as well as borrow goods. Through this website, KCCI also holds virtual activities involving the Indonesian people, such as a K-pop song-

making contest, a counter for making slogans and logos to celebrate the 10th anniversary of KCCI, watching Korean dramas together, learning Korean, and many more.

In addition to promoting South Korean culture to the Indonesian people, in this way, KCCI also seeks to interact and build good relations with the Indonesian people. By using the official website in promoting Korean culture to the Indonesian people, this is the right way because with current technological advances, Indonesian people can easily access the website. Then through the website, KCCI can more easily launch persuasion because KCCI can show its advantages South Korean culture is like its cultural appeal by uploading photos, videos to articles on the website.

### **Collaborating with Hallyu Strats in Spreading Cultural Campaigns**

Introducing a country's special or traditional food has become a part of public diplomacy. To attract the attention of the wider public, usually a country will cooperate with famous artists/stars from their country. Like South Korea, they have many K-pop stars and well-known artists/actors who can attract attention and invite the foreign public to be interested in the things being promoted, one of which is cultural diplomacy through South Korean food.

Through the Indonesian Korean Cultural Center (KCCI), the South Korean government is also trying to promote Korean food or Hansik which is shown in the program "K-Food Restaurant Tour: Finding the Best Taste" which is uploaded on the YouTube channel of the Embassy of the Republic of Korea. This event also celebrates the commemoration of Nation Foundation Day 2021 with the "theme neul -do Han-sik)" which means 'today is Hansik'. Nation Foundation Day itself is a celebration of Korean people who believe that the history of their nation began in 2333 BCE with the founding of the kingdom of Gojoseon by its first king named Dangun. the day is commemorated as the founding of the Gojoseon kingdom (KoreaFirst, 2021). Through this event, KCCI wants to teach Korean fans in Indonesia to watch and provide information about the K-Food tour with the best taste. This K-Food tour consists of 10 episodes, each each guided by well-known hallyu influencers, including Luvita Ho, Cici, Nadafid, Kadita, Salirum, Windy Faj, Dae-hoon, Julia Prastini, and many more. At the event, the influencers visited Korean restaurants in Indonesia and reviewed Korean food featured in this event, including Bibimbap, Dak-galbi, Bulgogi, Sundubu-jjigae, Naengmyeon, Haemul Jjim, Japcha e, Agwi-jjim, and many more. In addition, there are also foods that are commonly found on the streets in Korea or known as K-Street Food, such as Kimbab, Tteokbokki, Twigim, and others (KCCI, Tur Hansik Bersama Influencer Hallyu, 2021).

In addition to promoting Korean food through influencers, to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Indonesian Korean Cultural Center (KCCI) on 17-18 July, KCCI held an online concert event with the theme 'Concert and Online Meeting with Indonesian Kpop Fans'. This event aims to pamper Indonesian K-pop fans as well as promote K-pop music to the Indonesian people. This event was hosted by a famous Korean influencer, Sunny Dahye. He is a vlogger from South Korea who is very famous in Indonesia. In addition, this event was enlivened by a newcomer K-pop group member, A Hyung. He is a member of a K-pop group called POP, at the event he showed his ability to sing songs by the winners of the 'Create K-pop Song'

competition live. The show got a very good response from the viewers who watched the concert.

A Korean entertainer, was also present in person to express his support for KCCI. Not only that, a professional choreographer who has participated in choreographing songs by top K-pop groups such as BTS was also present to enliven the event. On that occasion, the choreographer showed some basic moves in K-pop dancing that anyone can easily follow. There were more than 1,400 viewers who joined to watch this online concert event live-streaming. The number continued to increase until it reached 4,000 viewers after the event ended in a matter of three days.

Not only Korean influencers and entertainers enlivened this event, but a member of the 2nd generation K-pop group, Super Junior also enlivened it through a congratulatory message for KCCI's 10th anniversary. The video was posted by KCCI through the YouTube application and congratulations from many people such as influencers, entertainers, famous Korean chefs, and many more. The videos have been watched by around 67,000 viewers in just six days. By recruiting a series of Korean influencers, it is hoped that the Indonesian people can get to know Korean culture, especially Korean food and music or K-pop. KCCI has held many exciting events such as slogan and mascot contests, K-pop songwriting contests, and many more whose purpose is to improve communication with hallyu lovers, especially those in Indonesia (KCCI, Artis dan Influencer Korea Meriahkan Perayaan HUT KCCI ke-10, 2021).

## CONCLUSION

Korea Korean Culture Center Indonesia (KCCI) has an active duty to promote cultural exchange between Indonesia and South Korea. The purpose of the existence of KCCI is to become an open cultural enter where everyone can easily access and enjoy Korean culture offline and online. In addition, for the long term, KCCI is expected to play a role as a bridge between Korea and Indonesia through Korean culture.

In accordance with the concept of public diplomacy, public diplomacy can be implemented by holding events as a strategic communication tool to the wider public. Since KCCI was founded in 2011 until now, KCCI has indeed planned to hold a number of festivals in its efforts to improve South Korea's cultural industry. The Korean Culture Center in Jakarta, Indonesia as the KCC representative office abroad held several events related to South Korean culture, including introducing kimchi as traditional South Korean food and hanbok as traditional South Korean clothing. In organizing these events, KCC also cooperates with several companies and institutions from Indonesia and South Korea. In addition, the Korean Cultural Center, especially in Indonesia, utilizes digital media to communicate with the wider public based on spreading campaigns and promoting South Korean culture in Indonesia.

In addition, KCCI also collaborates with hallyu stars to attract the attractiveness of the Indonesian people. they have many K-pop stars as well as well-known artists/actors who can attract attention and invite the foreign public to be interested in the things being promoted, one of which is cultural diplomacy through South Korean food.

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