

## **The Korean Wave and Cultural Soft Power Diplomacy: Evaluating Its Impact on South Korea-Indonesia Bilateral Relations in the Creative Industries**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This study explores the impact of the Korean Wave on the bilateral relations between South Korea and Indonesia, particularly in the creative industry sector. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, data were collected from various primary and secondary sources, including articles, blogs and social media. The results indicate that the Korean Wave has successfully enhanced South Korea's image in the eyes of the Indonesian public, increasing interest in Korean language, fashion, and cuisine. Furthermore, this phenomenon has driven the growth of the creative economy in Indonesia by increasing the demand for Korean products and creating new business opportunities. The cultural diplomacy strategy implemented by South Korea through the Korean Wave has proven effective in strengthening diplomatic relations between the two countries, opening up broader collaboration opportunities, and enhancing understanding and appreciation of Korean culture in Indonesia.

Keywords: Korean Wave, Cultural Diplomacy, Creative Industry, South Korea, Indonesia

### **INTRODUCTION**

In the ongoing era of globalization and the growth of liberalism principles emphasizing freedom and supporting the attainment of world peace, cultural diplomacy becomes increasingly crucial for countries in strengthening and expanding their international relations network. Liberalism views that parties involved in such cooperation have many interests, yielding benefits not only for themselves but also for others (Kurniawan, 2011).

South Korea has played a central role in cultural diplomacy strategies, with the Korean Wave being one of the most effective instruments in spreading Korean culture worldwide. The impact of the Korean Wave is not limited to

global entertainment trends but also significantly affects South Korea's bilateral relations with other countries, including Indonesia. According to Jusmalia and Teguh (2021), the Korean Wave has enhanced South Korea's image as a developed and modern country in the eyes of the global community, including in Indonesia.

This phenomenon extends beyond cultural products like music and drama to various economic and social sectors. For instance, South Korea's entertainment industry has attracted global attention, resulting in a surge of tourism to the country. Korean drama shooting locations have become popular tourist destinations, positively impacting the tourism sector and the local economy. Additionally, the popularity of Korean culture has increased the demand for other Korean products, such as cosmetics, fashion, and cuisine. Korean restaurants and related products are now easily found in many countries, including Indonesia. This economic impact demonstrates how the Korean Wave has helped strengthen bilateral economic relations through increased trade and investment in these sectors.

In the context of cultural diplomacy, the South Korean government utilizes the Korean Wave to promote their soft power. Full support from the government and media has ensured the effective dissemination of Korean culture worldwide. This not only strengthens South Korea's positive image but also facilitates better diplomatic relations with other countries, including Indonesia. In this context, this study aims to investigate the impact of the Korean Wave on bilateral relations between South Korea and Indonesia, particularly in the rapidly developing creative industry sector. The South Korean government has crafted a cultural diplomacy strategy aiming to make South Korea an important part of global cultural dynamics. This strategy, aiming to build a "Korean fever" globally through the creative industry, is one of the key visions promoted by the South Korean government (Septiarani, 2023).

It should be noted that South Korea has achieved impressive economic

success, transforming from a poor country to one of the developed countries in East Asia in a relatively short period. This success cannot be separated from the use of soft diplomacy strategies implemented by South Korea in building partnerships and cooperation with other countries worldwide.

Previously, Kim and Jin (2016) examined South Korea's cultural policy in the Korean Wave (Hallyu) and analyzed the cultural diplomacy embedded in presidential speeches. The study found that Hallyu serves as a major instrument in cultural diplomacy to enhance South Korea's international influence, particularly during conservative administrations. However, this study was limited to analyzing South Korean presidential speeches between 1998 and 2014. Other researchers, such as Leonardo (2019), have also conducted studies on bilateral cooperation between South Korea and Indonesia, revealing that bilateral relations have existed since 1966, based on the complementarity of the two countries' needs. This research highlights the important role of South Korea's Cultural Diplomacy, particularly through the Korean Wave, in strengthening these relations, especially in the socio-cultural field.

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Furthermore, previous studies conducted by Cindy (2017) revealed the cooperation between Indonesia and South Korea in developing the creative industry sector, marked by the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in 2016 by Indonesia's Creative Economy Agency (BEKRAF) and South Korea's Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism. The cooperation focused on 13 creative industry fields, demonstrating a strong commitment to comprehensive industry development. However, these studies did not specifically explore the impact of the Korean Wave on Indonesia's creative industry as an important factor in this bilateral cooperation, which is the focus of our research. Therefore, this study aims to specifically discuss the role of South Korea's cultural diplomacy through the Korean Wave in strengthening bilateral relations with Indonesia in the creative industry aspect.

Although previous studies have explored the role of Hallyu in South Korea's cultural diplomacy, primarily through the analysis of cultural policies embedded in presidential speeches. Those studies revealing the cooperation between Indonesia and South Korea in developing the creative industry, there are several gaps and deficiencies that need to be addressed for a more comprehensive understanding of the impact of South Korea's Cultural Diplomacy through the Korean Wave on bilateral relations with Indonesia in the context of the creative industry. Firstly, the focus of these studies is limited to the political and economic context of South Korea, without specifically emphasizing the concrete impact of the Korean Wave on bilateral relations with other countries. Secondly, these studies have not specifically explored the impact of the Korean Wave as an instrument of South Korea's cultural diplomacy on bilateral cooperation in the creative industry sector between Indonesia and South Korea. Additionally, these studies do not explicitly discuss the impact of the Korean Wave on the perception and acceptance of South Korean culture in Indonesia and its implications for the development of Indonesia's creative industry. Therefore, further research is needed to fill this gap and provide a more holistic and in-depth understanding of the role of the

Korean Wave in enhancing bilateral relations between South Korea and other countries, particularly with Indonesia in the context of the creative industry.

This research is significant as it discusses the development of bilateral relations between South Korea and Indonesia, as well as the impact of the Korean Wave in the context of international politics and the creative industry. This research identifies South Korea's unique strategy in utilizing the Korean Wave as a tool of cultural diplomacy, impacting bilateral relations with Indonesia, including fashion trends and interest in K-Pop. The Korean Wave has increased Indonesian society's interest and understanding of Korean culture, as evidenced by the increased consumption of Korean content and interest in South Korean products and services. Considering the impact of the Korean Wave on bilateral relations and the creative industry, this research highlights the importance of understanding international interactions influenced by popular cultural phenomena, as well as the potential of the Korean Wave as a model of soft diplomacy that can be applied by other countries. Additionally, this research can contribute to formulating policies that support the growth of the creative industry in Indonesia, strengthening strategic partnerships between the two countries, and emphasizing the role of cultural diplomacy in contemporary international relations.

Therefore, this research aims to explore several important aspects related to the impact of the Korean Wave on bilateral relations between South Korea and Indonesia, particularly in the rapidly developing creative industry context, such as cultural trends, fashion, and interest in learning Korean language and culture. This research will also identify South Korea's unique strategies in using the Korean Wave as a tool of cultural diplomacy that influences bilateral relations with Indonesia. Through this research, we will understand international interactions influenced by this popular cultural phenomenon, including cooperation between South Korea and Indonesia in the creative industry sector, which affects cultural content exchange and investment in both countries. The urgency of this research lies in the pressing

need to understand the concrete impact of the Korean Wave on bilateral relations between South Korea and Indonesia, particularly in the creative industry. This research is also important for formulating policies that support the growth of the creative industry in Indonesia, strengthening strategic partnerships between the two countries, and emphasizing the role of cultural diplomacy in contemporary international politics.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This study analyzes the impact of the Korean Wave on the relationship between South Korea and Indonesia, particularly in the rapidly growing creative industry. The research approach employs a descriptive qualitative method. Primary data is collected through content analysis and case studies from various sources such as articles, blogs, vlogs, and social media, as well as relevant case studies. Meanwhile, secondary data is obtained through extensive literature reviews and document analysis to build a comprehensive analytical foundation. This data acquisition process allows for a thorough understanding of the historical, political, cultural, and contextual factors involved.

In data analysis, we apply the Miles & Huberman (2007) approach, which includes data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. We organize the data, identify key themes, and present relevant information. We also reduce irrelevant information to make it more comprehensible. Our conclusions are based on the data we collect and are linked to our research objectives. This provides insights into the impact of the Korean Wave on the relationship between South Korea and Indonesia in the creative industry, aligning with the focus of our research.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This study utilizes the primary theory of Liberalism and its derivative theory, Soft Diplomacy. Liberalism in international relations emphasizes the

importance of cooperation and interdependence among nations to achieve peace and stability (Fandy, 2020). The underlying assumption of liberalism is that nations will cooperate based on their interests and needs, which in turn reduces the risk of conflict. The perspective forming the basis of this research is that South Korea uses soft diplomacy to build close relationships with various countries, including Indonesia, which not only supports defense and security but also strengthens mutually beneficial economic and cultural cooperation. From a liberalism viewpoint, these bilateral relations reflect mutual dependence and progress between the countries.

Soft diplomacy is an approach in international relations that uses cultural appeal, values, and diplomacy to influence other nations, instead of using military or economic force (Astutie, 2018). The assumption underlying this theory is that cultural influence, values, and diplomacy can affect other countries without using military or economic power. The perspective forming the basis of this research is that South Korea uses the entertainment industry, such as films, dramas, and K-pop known as the Korean Wave, as a tool of cultural diplomacy to disseminate its culture. The Korean Wave not only enhances South Korea's image but also influences global trends in fashion, food, and the use of the Korean language.

This study also examines the economic impact of the Korean Wave in the context of economic liberalism. The Korean Wave not only impacts the export of cultural products but also boosts tourism and the marketing of commercial products from South Korea. Economic liberalism emphasizes achieving maximum profit and enhancing bilateral relations in globalization. The Korean Wave has become an effective promotional tool for Korean products worldwide, supporting South Korea's economic growth.

In this research context, liberalism plays a crucial role in shaping the theoretical foundation by emphasizing the importance of cooperation and interdependence among nations to achieve global peace and stability (Stocks, 2016). Related to this, soft diplomacy becomes a direct derivative of liberalism

theory, where South Korea uses cultural appeal, values, and diplomacy to strengthen bilateral relations with other countries, including Indonesia. The mechanism underlying liberalism and soft diplomacy theories reflects the principle of inter-country cooperation based on mutually considered interests and needs, thus reducing potential conflicts.

In the context of the Korean Wave, South Korea uses the entertainment industry, such as films, dramas, and K-pop, as effective tools to expand its cultural influence globally. South Korea's soft diplomacy through the Korean Wave becomes a mechanism allowing the country to establish closer relationships with other countries, including Indonesia, by leveraging its cultural appeal. The process of South Korea's soft diplomacy through the Korean Wave involves the dissemination of Korean culture through popular entertainment media, such as streaming platforms, television channels, and social networks. This process allows South Korea to create a positive image of itself in the eyes of the international community by showcasing the uniqueness and beauty of Korean culture through various entertaining content that attracts global attention.

Thus, this process not only creates an enjoyable cultural experience for viewers worldwide but also influences positive perceptions of South Korea as a dynamic and creative nation. The principle underlying liberalism and soft diplomacy theories is that cultural influence and diplomacy can be more effective than the use of military or economic force in strengthening international relations (Rosyidin, 2014). In this context, South Korea utilizes the Korean Wave as a tool to expand its influence peacefully, aiming to strengthen bilateral relations with other countries and increase cooperation in various fields, including the creative industry. By prioritizing cultural values and diplomacy, South Korea can create sustainable and mutually beneficial partnerships with other countries, ultimately contributing to global peace and stability.



Liberalism theory helps in understanding the phenomenon being studied by emphasizing the importance of cooperation and interdependence among nations to achieve global peace and stability. In this research context, liberalism theory explains that South Korea uses soft diplomacy as a tool to peacefully expand its cultural influence, aligning with the principles of liberalism that emphasize conflict resolution through cooperation. Soft power emphasizes the importance of non-physical attraction and influence in international relations (S. Nye, Jr., 2005). This helps us understand how South Korea leverages the Korean Wave as an instrument to strengthen bilateral relations with Indonesia in the creative industry sector.

Then, soft diplomacy as a derivative of liberalism helps analyze the phenomenon by providing a framework to understand how cultural influence and diplomacy can affect international relations. In this context, South Korea's soft diplomacy through the Korean Wave allows the country to use the entertainment industry, such as films, dramas, and K-pop, as a means to strengthen bilateral relations with other countries. This helps in analyzing how the Korean Wave influences positive perceptions of South Korea in the eyes of the international community and how the use of soft diplomacy plays a significant role in shaping bilateral relations in the creative industry aspect.

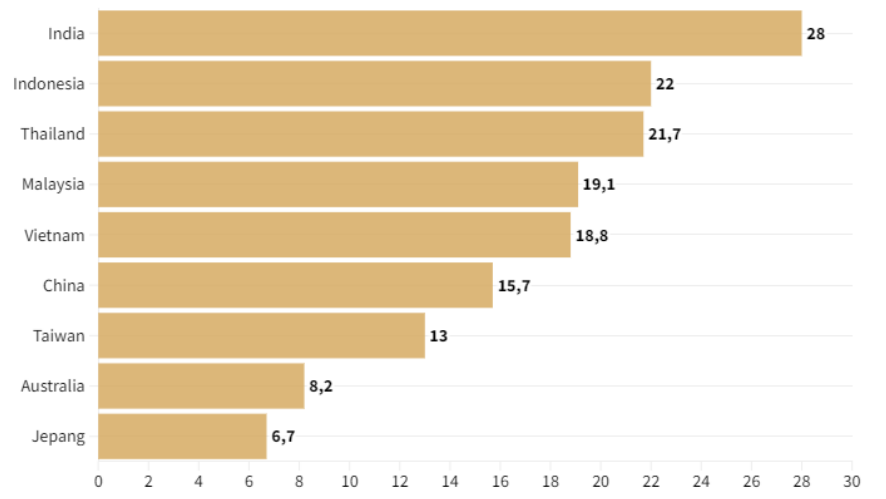
Through the approach of liberalism and soft diplomacy, we can see how South Korea utilizes cultural and diplomatic strengths to reinforce bilateral relations with other countries. This opens a deeper understanding that nations can use their cultural assets to influence international relations more effectively than using military or economic power, and the importance of cooperation and interdependence among nations in achieving common goals such as global peace and stability.

## **The Use of Information Technology Media by the South Korean Government in Cultural Dissemination**

The acceptance and normalization of a society have evolved over time, especially in terms of consuming popular cultural products from different cultures. This evolution is largely due to the convergence of what is commonly referred to as globalization—a term used to characterize the interaction in which the world seems to become one and without borders. Globalization has enabled popular cultural products from one country to cross into other countries, thereby significantly expanding their reach. Users can now be found globally and are not limited by national borders. The era of globalization is strongly supported by the development of technology, transportation tools, and science, allowing individuals in one region to access information of various kinds globally. Globalization is referred to as a one-roof world or a borderless world, where the world can be widely seen through technology. This has a tangible impact on global society, influencing the lives of people as global technology consumers. The phenomenon of globalization does not only occur in the fields of economy, culture, and politics but also extends to the media (Oktaviani & Pramadya, 2021).

Technology serves as a cultural, moral, and political tool that can be used to uphold a way of life. In terms of the fundamental design and operation of machines, technology is neutral. However, when it comes to human activities around machinery, such as practical applications, status symbols, and the skills of its users, technology is not neutral (Zahra et al., 2020). Therefore, South Korea utilizes information-based media technology as a platform to spread its culture globally.

**Figure .** Asia-Pacific Countries with the Highest Consumption of Korean Content



**Source: Korea Foundation for International Culture Exchange (KOFICE) (2023)**

According to DataIndonesia.id, sourced from a survey by the Korea Foundation for International Culture Exchange (KOFICE), the average time spent by Indonesian residents consuming South Korean content is 22 hours per month. This duration is the second highest in the Asia-Pacific region, with Indonesia only below India, whose residents consume Korean content for an average of 28 hours per month. Meanwhile, Thailand ranks just below Indonesia with an average of 21.7 hours per month. The average time spent by Malaysian residents consuming South Korean content is 19.1 hours per month. In contrast, the average residents of Vietnam and China spend 18.8 hours and 15.7 hours, respectively, each month on South Korean content. In Taiwan, the average consumption is 13 hours per month, while in Australia and Japan, it is 8.2 hours and 6.7 hours per month, respectively.

KOFICE conducted a survey of 25,000 respondents aged 15-59 in 26 countries from November 11 to December 7, 2022. The number of respondents per country ranged from 800-1,200, with a margin of error between 2.83% and 3.46%. The survey found that 33.4 percent of Korean dramas are watched by Indonesian audiences, followed by variety shows at 30.4 percent, and music at 26.5 percent. BTS has consistently ranked first and

second as the most popular group globally, including in Indonesia, for five consecutive years from 2017 to 2022. Similarly, Blackpink is the most popular girl group.

South Korea is one of the four countries with the greatest potential for cultural diffusion globally. First, through K-Pop, packaged in the form of boybands and girlbands with highly appealing dance, music, and visual elements. Second, through Korean dramas or films that showcase everyday South Korean culture. Third, through traditional Korean foods like ramen and kimchi, which have gained worldwide popularity. The last method is through Korean fashion, which involves dressing and styling like Koreans and using Korean skincare and beauty products.

Due to the ease with which South Korea can enter and consume its entertainment industry in other countries, including Indonesia, the Korean Wave, also known as Hallyu, benefits from globalization. The ease with which Indonesian youth can access information about everything related to Korea, from fashion styles to other cultural products such as music and drama, highlights the important role of media, both mass media and electronic, in this phenomenon. The involvement of artists in competitions also drives trend changes.

In the early stages of globalization, most cultural products were shaped by American culture. However, the past twenty years have witnessed the emergence of a new type of globalization, with Asia being its birthplace and center. This has had a significant positive impact on the marketing of South Korean electronics and apparel (M.T, 2020). The closeness of idol figures with their admirers helps them sell their products by making it easier for fans to emulate their lifestyle and cultural style. Due to their similarity to Asian culture in terms of format and ideals, creative products originating from South Korean popular culture have become popular choices. Therefore, the majority of viewers do not find the stories in the dramas they watch surprising or foreign (Al Istiqomah, 2021).

However, this phenomenon must also be carefully considered, as South Korean popular culture has its own interests and functions, regardless of what they are. Therefore, the role of media and government support must be seriously considered. Popular culture is not just distributed; South Korea's public diplomacy is also conducted in a very flexible and sophisticated manner. Because wide distribution is a crucial component of the success of popular cultural products, it makes sense that these products rise to the top of their respective markets in the countries where their target market is located, as long as we continue to allow the intentional acceptance of South Korean cultural products.

### **The Impact of the Korean Wave in South Korea's Cultural Diplomacy on the Country's International Image**

South Korea has successfully built and enhanced its image in the global arena through the Korean Wave, encompassing K-Pop, dramas, boybands or girlbands, films, makeup, and fashion. Suryani (2015) states that the Korean Wave includes aspects of attraction and agenda setting, which are part of persuasive power. The objective is to influence and shape the views or desires of others. In this context, "Receivers" refer to the targets intended to be influenced, while "Referees" provide credibility and legitimacy to South Korea's soft power. The impact of cultural diplomacy strategies and support for the Korean Wave has been overwhelmingly positive, aiding South Korea in strengthening economic, defense, and political relationships with other countries. The increasing global interest in South Korean culture also generates economic opportunities and fosters stronger partnerships.

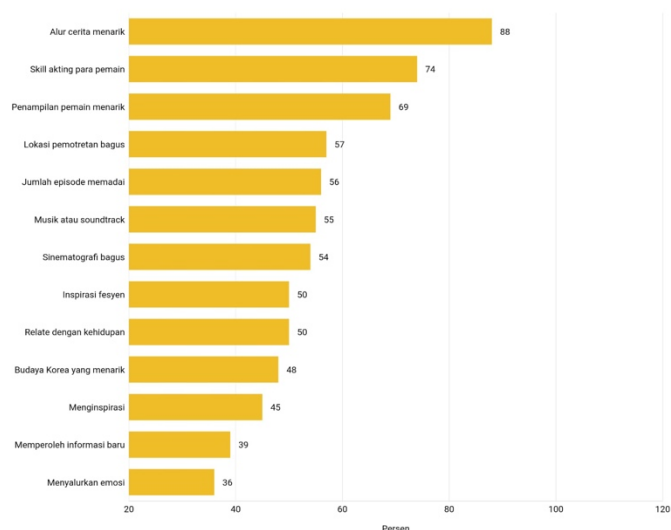
The worldwide popularity of K-pop groups such as BTS has transformed international perceptions of South Korea. BTS serves as South Korea's ambassadors on the global stage, inspiring millions of fans worldwide with positive messages about self-love and dreams. Safaat (2022) notes that BTS's role as South Korea's global ambassadors signifies a shift in the current

diplomatic model, where diplomacy increasingly emphasizes soft power facilitated by globalization. South Korea employs its non-state artists to enhance international competitiveness, integrating them into diplomatic endeavors. Former President Moon Jae-in historically included BTS as part of South Korea's official delegation to the UN, bestowing upon them the title of "Special Presidential Envoy for Future Generations and Culture." BTS is the first artist to be appointed as a special envoy, aiming to raise youth awareness of global issues and strengthen the nation's post-Covid-19 diplomacy. The inauguration ceremony at the Blue House affirmed BTS's role in elevating South Korea's global profile, with each member receiving an appointment certificate and a diplomatic passport. President Moon emphasized how BTS has elevated South Korea's global status, garnering worldwide attention, including among world leaders. During the 2021 SDG Moment, BTS and President Moon participated together to bolster efforts to achieve the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. BTS performed at the 76th UN General Assembly, delivering a message in Korean and presenting a pre-recorded video of 'Permission to Dance' from UN Headquarters, becoming the first K-pop artists to perform at the event. BTS's efforts in supporting the SDGs received positive responses, drawing millions' attention worldwide and introducing the SDGs to their fans. Through BTS, South Korea strengthens its image and presents Korean culture directly to the global community, fostering interest in Korean culture and supporting South Korea's position as a significant player in the entertainment and international diplomacy arenas.

South Korea has undergone remarkable development over the past few decades, emerging as a cultural force to be reckoned with globally. Over the years, South Korea's image has shifted from merely a producer of electronics and vehicles to a center of dynamic and innovative culture. One of the most striking aspects of this transformation is the explosion of the popularity of Korean dramas (K-dramas) worldwide. Korean dramas have now become a global phenomenon, reaching various layers of society in different parts of the

world, including Indonesia. This phenomenon not only reflects the intrinsic appeal of K-dramas but also how South Korea has succeeded in changing the world's perception of its popular culture. With deep storytelling, strong characters, and high-quality production, K-dramas have crossed cultural and linguistic boundaries, uniting millions of viewers from diverse backgrounds globally. Korean films like "Parasite" have won prestigious awards at international film festivals, reinforcing South Korea's image as a hub of cultural excellence and creativity. This success has elevated the profile of the Korean film industry in international markets, opening doors to more cooperation and foreign investment opportunities in Korea's creative industry. These achievements attest to South Korea's creative and innovative prowess in producing content relevant and appealing to global audiences. It also demonstrates how South Korea has managed to present universal popular culture, capable of touching hearts and inspiring people from various countries and cultures. More than just entertainment, the popularity of K-dramas reflects South Korea's success in leveraging its soft power and cultural diplomacy.

**Figure 2.** Various Reasons Respondents Enjoy Watching Korean Dramas



Source: Databooks (2022)

A survey by JakPat revealed several main reasons why Indonesians enjoy watching South Korean dramas. An engaging storyline was acknowledged by 88% of respondents, indicating that the plots in Korean dramas effectively capture the audience's attention. Additionally, 74% of respondents were impressed by the actors' performances, and 69% appreciated the attractive visual appeal of the actors. Beautiful shooting locations attracted 57% of respondents, while the appropriate number of episodes, considered ideal for developing the story, was liked by 56%. Furthermore, 55% of respondents enjoyed Korean dramas for their good music or soundtracks, and 54% valued the excellent cinematography. About 50% of respondents liked the fashion inspiration depicted, as well as the connection of the dramas to everyday life. The interesting Korean culture also motivated 48% of respondents to watch Korean dramas. This survey involved 1,025 respondents from across Indonesia who had watched Korean dramas in the past six months, reflecting widespread interest in Korean culture. This shows how the Korean Wave, including Korean dramas, has played a role in transforming South Korea's image into a country known for its cultural innovation and dynamism.

South Korea is recognized as a hub of innovation in the entertainment industry, creating unique and captivating content such as Korean dramas, K-Pop, films, and fashion. This innovation demonstrates South Korea's ability to adapt to global trends and produce entertaining content that captivates international markets. Furthermore, the dynamism of Korean pop culture is evident from the rising popularity of these contents worldwide. For example, Korean dramas have become a global phenomenon and a primary source of entertainment for many people around the world. This highlights the flexibility and appeal of Korean cultural content that can transcend cultural and language barriers, creating a phenomenon known as the "Korean Wave" or Hallyu.

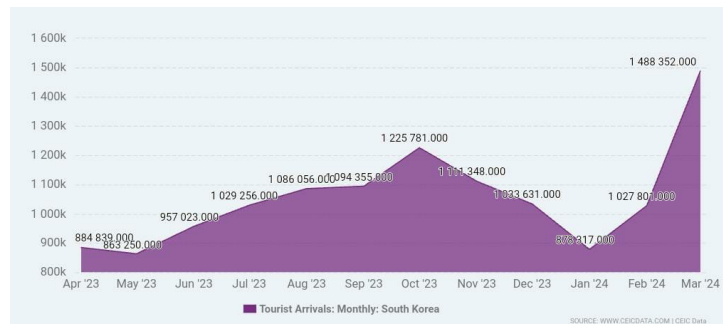
Additionally, South Korea is known for integrating its pop culture with technology and other creative industries, such as digital technology



applications in music and film production, and smart marketing through social media. This reflects a strong adaptability and the ability to leverage technology to support the global expansion of their culture. The popularity of Korean dramas helps reinforce a positive image of South Korea internationally, shifting global perceptions from a focus on electronic products and vehicles to an appreciation of significant cultural contributions. South Korea is also increasingly recognized as a leader in technological innovation, such as smartphones and other electronic devices, contributing positively to the country's image. Therefore, the phenomenon of Korean dramas is a clear example of how South Korea has evolved from merely a technology producer to a country that plays a vital role in spreading dynamic, creative, and innovative popular culture on the global stage.

Furthermore, the K-pop wave has also increased interest in attending concerts and music events in South Korea, becoming an additional attraction for international tourists. This has driven an increase in the number of tourists visiting South Korea to see filming locations and experience everyday life in the country. This is reflected in a CEIC Data survey showing an increase in Indonesians' desire to visit South Korea to experience its beauty and cultural richness firsthand. Reports indicate that 1,488,352 people visited South Korea in March 2024, up from 1,027,801 in February 2024. South Korea's monthly tourist visit data is updated, with an average of 301,891 from January 1975 to March 2024, peaking at 1,681,516 in July 2016 and hitting a record low of 28,714 in April 2020. Since the emergence of the Korean Wave in the late 1990s until 2024, South Korea's tourism industry has seen a rise in tourists, as shown in the following graph.

**Figure 3.** Monthly Tourist Visits to South Korea from April 2023 to March 2024



**Source: CEIC Data (2024)**

In April 2023, the number of tourist visits was 884,839, which slightly decreased to 863,250 in May. Visits increased in June to 957,023 and continued to rise in July with 1,029,256 visits. A significant increase was seen in August, with visits reaching 1,086,056, and the highest peak occurred in October with 1,225,781 visits, likely due to festivals or special events attracting many tourists. After peaking in October, visits began to decrease in November to 1,111,348 and further in December to 1,033,631. The beginning of 2024 saw a drastic decline, with the lowest number of visits recorded in January at 678,317, possibly due to winter causing tourists to reduce visits.

From February, the number of visits increased again to 1,027,801, with a sharp increase in March to 1,488,352, the highest figure during the displayed period, possibly due to spring's famous cherry blossom season, attracting many tourists. Lukita Perwita Sari (2020) explains that the increased demand for tourist visits to South Korea is due to the country's promotional efforts through Korean dramas. In each scene, Korean dramas often showcase stunning landscapes and Korea's local cultural richness, effectively introducing international audiences to Korea's natural beauty and cultural heritage. Thus, Korean dramas not only serve as popular entertainment but also as effective tourism promotion tools for South Korea. Through compelling storytelling and stunning visuals, Korean dramas have successfully expanded South Korea's tourist appeal in the eyes of the world, attracting more tourists to visit the country and experience the natural beauty and culture it offers.

With increasing popularity, South Korea has successfully leveraged this wave of global appreciation to strengthen its positive image internationally, establishing itself as a dynamic and inspirational cultural center.

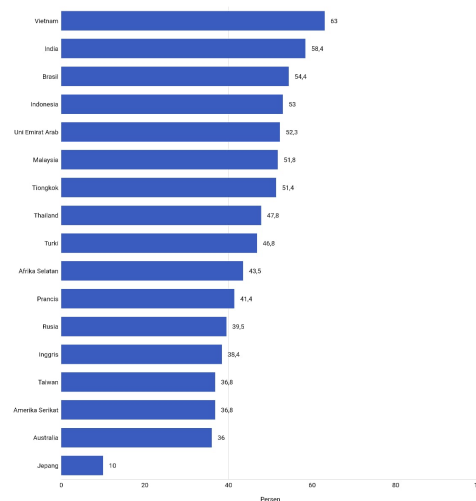
Additionally, positive perceptions of values embedded in Korean culture, such as hard work, success, and innovation, further enhance South Korea's image worldwide. The success of Korean celebrities and the creative industry, often featuring themes of perseverance and innovation, has inspired many people in various countries to adopt the same work ethic. This demonstrates how Korean culture has become an important bridge in cultural diplomacy.

According to Suryani (2015), the Korean Wave not only benefits in terms of exporting Korean cultural products but also positively impacts promoting and increasing the sales of other commercial products in international markets. This means that the popularity of Korean culture, such as K-Pop, Korean dramas, and other products related to the Korean Wave, not only creates interest in cultural products themselves but also opens opportunities for other commercial brands to enhance their visibility and sales in global markets.

This phenomenon not only transforms the face of Korea's entertainment industry but also significantly impacts the national economy. One tangible example of the Korean Wave's success is the Korean cosmetics industry. Sales of Korean cosmetic products have experienced significant surges in international markets, reflecting the worldwide popularity of Korean brands. Moreover, the Korean Wave has become a major driver in promoting Korean brands in global markets. For instance, fashion brands like "K-Fashion" and cosmetic products like "K-Beauty" have successfully attracted consumers' attention worldwide. This success is not only due to the popularity of Korean celebrities promoting these brands but also smart promotional strategies through social media. Thus, the Korean Wave is not just a cultural phenomenon but also an economic force contributing positively to Korea's

entertainment industry and reinforcing Korea's image as a center of cultural and creative excellence on a global scale.

**Figure 4.** Percentage of Respondents Interested in Using Korean Products and Services



**Source: Korean Foundation for International Cultural Exchange (2021)**

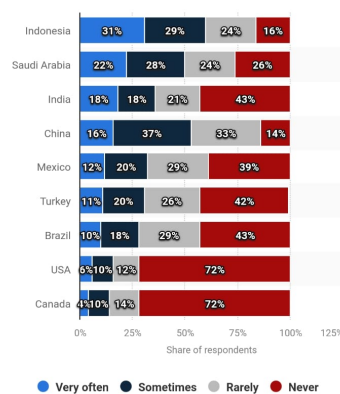
The above statistical data indicates that Indonesians' interest in South Korean products and services has also significantly increased. The data shows that 53% of Indonesian respondents expressed interest in using South Korean products and services in 2019. These products include cosmetics, clothing, electronics, and an interest in learning the language and traveling to the country. Indonesia's interest percentage ranks fourth highest in the world, following Vietnam (63%), India (58.4%), and Brazil (54.4%). It's important to note that interest in South Korean products and services is measured as one impact of the Korean Wave's growth in these countries through films, dramas, music, and other entertainment shows. This indicates that the Korean Wave has successfully influenced Indonesians' perception and interest in South Korea, which in turn can contribute to increased bilateral relations between the two countries, especially in the creative industry aspect. The author believes this phenomenon reflects not just the popularity of the Korean Wave among Indonesians but also signifies that Korean culture has reached a significant level of global cultural awareness. Through the influence of the

Korean Wave, Indonesia is not only a consumer but also a part of a cultural phenomenon that transcends national borders. Thus, this research becomes increasingly relevant in exploring the impact of the Korean Wave on bilateral relations between South Korea and Indonesia, particularly in the rapidly growing creative industry. Beyond being an entertainment trend, the Korean Wave serves as an important instrument in building close cultural relationships between the two countries, opening doors for broader collaboration and exchange in various sectors.

### The Influence of the Korean Wave on Indonesian Youth

The influence of the Korean Wave has reached Indonesia, marked by young Indonesians imitating the style, behavior, and culture portrayed by South Korean actors and actresses in films, dramas, and K-Pop music, which are widely found among Indonesian society. This impact is also evident in the popular trend of Korean fashion and the widespread phenomenon of K-Pop fanbases among the millennial generation in Indonesia. Moreover, the interest of Indonesians in learning South Korean culture and language has also significantly increased.

Figure 5. Viewership Of Korean Television Series or Movies



Source: Statista Data Platform (2021)

In 2020, data regarding the percentage of viewers of Korean television series or films in various countries was sourced from Statista, a German database company specializing in market and consumer data. This data

included several countries, including Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, India, China, Mexico, Turkey, Brazil, the USA, and Canada, each with different viewing habits related to Korean content. In the USA and Canada, the majority of viewers (about 72%) rarely watch Korean content, indicating the relatively low popularity of Korean content compared to other countries. In Indonesia, viewer distribution is more evenly spread across categories, likely due to the strong influence of the Korean Wave. The Korean Wave, or Hallyu, refers to the popularity of South Korean culture, including K-drama, K-pop, fashion, food, and lifestyle. In the first quarter of 2020, the Korean Wave garnered significant attention in Indonesia, supported by high-quality content, the popularity of K-pop groups such as BTS and BLACKPINK, and easy access to Korean content through streaming platforms and local television channels with Indonesian subtitles. As a result, viewers in Indonesia are evenly distributed across various categories, from those who watch very frequently to those who rarely or never watch, thanks to the growing appeal of the Korean Wave.

The Korean Wave, also known as Hallyu, is a global phenomenon referring to the popularity of South Korean pop culture, including music (K-pop), TV dramas (K-dramas), films, and various other aspects (Sella, 2019). This phenomenon has influenced many countries, including Indonesia, particularly among the younger generation or millennials. In Indonesia, the Korean Wave has a significant impact, especially among the youth, who show great interest in various elements of Korean culture, from music and dramas to fashion and cosmetics. This influence is evident in lifestyle changes, cultural preferences, and even aspirations. Many teenagers and young adults are starting to learn the Korean language, follow Korean fashion and beauty trends, and actively participate in K-pop and K-drama fan communities.

Generasi muda Indonesia telah mengadopsi gaya berpakaian yang terinspirasi oleh selebriti Korea, yang dikenal dengan gaya kasual namun chic dan streetwear yang stylish. Fenomena ini didorong oleh popularitas idol K-pop dan aktor K-drama, yang sering dijadikan panutan dalam mode oleh

remaja Indonesia. Brand-brand fashion Korea seperti Stylenanda dan Chuu telah menjadi sangat populer di kalangan mereka. Selain itu, produk kosmetik dan perawatan kulit Korea, seperti BB cream, sheet masks, dan skincare routines yang kompleks, telah mendapatkan penerimaan yang luas karena kualitas dan hasil yang memuaskan, serta tren makeup yang menekankan pada penampilan kulit cerah dan natural (Zarawaki, 2023)

Indonesian youth have adopted clothing styles inspired by Korean celebrities, characterized by casual yet chic and stylish streetwear. This phenomenon is driven by the popularity of K-pop idols and K-drama actors, who are often fashion icons for Indonesian teenagers. Korean fashion brands like Stylenanda and Chuu have become very popular among them. Additionally, Korean cosmetic and skincare products, such as BB creams, sheet masks, and complex skincare routines, have gained wide acceptance due to their quality and satisfying results, as well as makeup trends emphasizing bright and natural-looking skin (Zarawaki, 2023).

In terms of media consumption, there has been a significant increase in watching Korean dramas through streaming platforms like Viu, Netflix, or YouTube. Popular dramas like "Crash Landing on You" and "Itaewon Class" have shown substantial appeal among Indonesian teenagers. Simultaneously, K-pop music consumption has also increased significantly, with teenagers following idol groups like BTS, BLACKPINK, and EXO, not only by listening to their music but also by watching music videos, attending online concerts, and buying official merchandise.

A study published in the Jurnal Komunikasi shows that the Korean Wave has influenced the consumption behavior and cultural preferences of Indonesian youth. The study found that the popularity of K-pop and K-dramas has heightened interest in the Korean language and culture among Indonesian teenagers and changed their lifestyles by following Korean fashion and beauty trends (Kang, 2020).

The cultural preferences of Indonesian youth have significantly

changed with the increasing influence of the Korean Wave. This is especially evident in two main aspects: the interest in learning the Korean language and the popularity of Korean cuisine. Firstly, there has been a significant increase in interest in learning the Korean language. Korean language courses, whether offered by universities or independent language institutions, have seen a surge in enrollment. This reflects a strong desire among the youth to understand and engage more deeply with Korean culture (Usman, 2016). Additionally, online platforms like Duolingo have shown an increase in users wanting to learn Korean, indicating a deep interest in the language and culture. Secondly, Korean cuisine has become very popular among Indonesian youth. Restaurants serving Korean dishes such as ramyeon, kimchi, tteokbokki, and Korean BBQ are increasing in number and frequently visited. This phenomenon is reinforced by influencers and content creators on social media who actively promote Korean food, creating appealing and enticing content, which encourages more people to try and integrate Korean cuisine into their daily lives.

The influence of the Korean Wave or Hallyu on the aspirations and identity of Indonesian youth is very significant. This is especially seen in their active participation in fan communities and its impact on their career aspirations. K-pop and K-drama fan communities in Indonesia, often organized into fan clubs, have become platforms for youth to express themselves and participate in various activities related to their love for Korean culture. Activities such as fan meetings, concerts, and cosplay events are not just entertainment venues but also strengthen the sense of community and identity among fans. This reflects the dedication of fans and shows how Hallyu has become an integral part of their social lives.

Furthermore, Hallyu has inspired many Indonesian teenagers to pursue careers in the entertainment industry, whether as singers, actors, or behind-the-scenes professionals, inspired by the success and popularity of K-pop and K-drama stars. This phenomenon has also increased interest in studying or



working in South Korea, with more applications for scholarships and student exchange programs to Korea. The desire to delve into the Korean language and culture and experience life in the country has become a new aspiration for many young people, reflecting a deep cultural influence and a desire to engage more deeply with Hallyu.

### **The Influence of Diplomatic Relations Between South Korea and Indonesia in the Creative Industry Sector**

The diplomatic relationship between Indonesia and South Korea in the creative industry sector has developed significantly in recent years. Indonesia and South Korea have engaged in extensive cooperation across various fields. Economically, South Korea is one of Indonesia's main trading partners, with the two countries maintaining a "strategic partnership" level of bilateral relations (Afriantari & Putri, 2017). The two nations have strengthened their cooperation through various initiatives and programs. Through close diplomatic relations in the creative industry sector, Indonesia and South Korea can mutually enhance and expand each other's creative potential, creating new opportunities for economic growth and cultural development in both countries.

Diplomatic relations between South Korea and Indonesia can positively impact the creative industry sector. This can include the exchange of knowledge, technology, and experience between the two countries, as well as collaboration on joint creative projects. References for this analysis can include official reports from both governments, academic studies on bilateral relations, and international media articles reporting on creative industry cooperation between South Korea and Indonesia.

The discussion and evaluation of the influence of diplomatic relations between South Korea and Indonesia in the creative industry sector can involve several aspects. Firstly, diplomacy between the two countries can facilitate cultural exchanges that enrich the creative industry by inspiring new works through the exchange of artists, writers, and designers who combine cultural

elements from both nations. Secondly, diplomacy can open doors for collaborative creative projects between companies or individuals from South Korea and Indonesia, including the production of films, music, video games, and more. Additionally, diplomatic cooperation can facilitate investment and infrastructure development in the creative industry sector, leading to the establishment of film studios, art centers, or creative incubators supported by both countries. Moreover, through diplomatic cooperation, creative industry players from both countries can access training, workshops, and exchange programs that enhance their skills and knowledge in the industry. Lastly, diplomacy can aid in the promotion and marketing of creative works from both countries in international markets through joint art and cultural festivals, exhibitions, or other promotional platforms.

Evaluating the influence of diplomatic relations between South Korea and Indonesia in the creative industry sector should consider the extent to which this cooperation has yielded concrete results such as successful collaborations, industry growth, and economic benefits for both countries (Joisangadji & Rasyidah, 2021). Additionally, it is essential to assess the long-term impact on creativity growth, industry sustainability, and cross-cultural relations between South Korea and Indonesia.

One example of successful cooperation between Indonesia and South Korea in the creative industry is collaboration in film production. A notable case study is the animated film "Red Shoes and the Seven Dwarfs," a collaboration between South Korean animation company Locus Corporation and Indonesian film production company MNC Animation. This modern adaptation of the "Snow White" story received positive responses from international audiences. Additionally, cooperation in the music industry has also yielded success. For instance, collaborations between South Korean K-pop singers and Indonesian musicians on songs and joint music projects have been warmly received by fans in both countries.

For economic data related to cooperation in the creative industry

between Indonesia and South Korea, sources that can be utilized include official reports from the statistical agencies of both countries, bilateral trade data, and creative industry reports (Jannah, n.d.). This data can provide insights into the export and import values of creative products between the two countries, direct investment in the creative industry, and the contribution of the creative industry to economic growth and job creation in each country.

## CONCLUSION

The Korean Wave has profoundly impacted various spheres, including culture, economy, and diplomacy. The widespread popularity of K-Pop, dramas, and South Korean films has heightened global interest in Korean culture, stimulated tourism, and fostered the learning of the Korean language. Economically, the Korean Wave has not only created new industries but also significantly boosted the export of cultural products such as music, fashion, and cosmetics. This cultural phenomenon has also enhanced South Korea's bilateral relations with numerous countries, including Indonesia, contributing to stronger economic and cultural ties.

The South Korean government has strategically utilized the Korean Wave to promote their soft power, build a positive international image, and facilitate more robust diplomatic relations. The perception of South Korea as a modern and advanced nation has improved, attracting tourists and increasing demand for Korean products. This underscores the pivotal role of the Korean Wave in reinforcing bilateral economic relations and fostering cultural exchanges. By harnessing the appeal of their popular culture, South Korea has effectively enhanced its global influence and established itself as a key player in the international arena.

In the context of Indonesia, the Korean Wave has not only captivated the youth with its music, dramas, and fashion but also led to increased cultural exchanges and collaborations in the creative industry. Joint projects in film production, music, and other creative endeavors have opened new avenues for both countries, enriching their cultural landscapes and economic prospects.

The South Korean government's efforts to integrate the Korean Wave into their diplomatic strategies have proven successful in strengthening bilateral ties, promoting mutual understanding, and driving economic growth. This multifaceted impact highlights the significant role of cultural diplomacy in shaping international relations and economic partnerships in the modern world.

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