

## 대한민국(남한)의 문화 외교와 소프트 파워: 한글 축제와 세종학당에 대한 고찰

### South Korea's cultural diplomacy and soft power projection: The case of Hangeul festival and King Sejong Institute

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살펴본다. 이를 바탕으로 결론에서 대한민국의 소프트파워 기획을 이해하기 위한 일환으로서 세종학당 기획의 영향에 대해 논의할 것이다.

\* 핵심단어 : 한글축제, 세종학당, 문화외교, 소프트파워, 대학교

### 국문요약

‘한류’라 불리는 대중문화의 수출은 대한민국 정부가 효과적으로 사용해 온 세계적 규모의 고전적인 소프트파워(연성권력) 도구이다. 한글(위대한 문자) 축제는 ‘한류’와는 별개로 한국문자의 선포를 기념하고 국가 문화를 탐구하는 새로운 방법으로 간주되며, 국제적인 관계 속에서 현대 예술로 발전 중에 있다. 현재 한글과 한국의 국가 유산 전파를 위한 국영 세종학당(KSIs)은 전 세계적으로 60여개의 나라에서 약 180개의 대학들에서 운영되고 있다. 하지만 세종학당의 폭발적 증가는 그 목적, 기능 그리고 공공 비전이라는 이름 뒤에 가려진 의도에 대해서도 열띤 토론을 발생시켰다. “세종학당의 확장이 대한민국의 소프트파워의 부상을 대변하는가?”라는 질문에 대해 많은 관심이 모아지는 이유이다.

이 글은 우선 분석의 기초 작업으로서 소프트파워와 문화 외교이론을 제시한 뒤, 대한민국의 문화 외교를 위한 초석으로 한글 축제와 세종학당 기획에 대한 해석적 사례들을

### Abstract

In South Korea, the exportation of its popular culture, also known as hallyu, is a classic soft power tool, which the government has used to efficiently on a global scale. Apart from Hallyu, Hangeul (Great Script) festival, celebrating the promulgation of the Korean alphabet, is considered a new way of exploring national cultures and become contemporary art with global relevance. For spreading the Hangeul and the heritage of the nation, the state-run King Sejong Institutes (KSIs) have been opened at many universities. Currently, there are about 180 King Sejong Institutes in 60 countries around the world.

However, the explosive growth of KSIs generated heated discussions and debates regarding their purpose, function and the hidden agenda behind the public vision statement. Much attention has been given to the question “Does the expansion of KSIs represent the rise of South Korea’s soft power?”

This article first presents the theories of soft power and cultural diplomacy as an analytic framework. It then delineates an interpretative illustration of the Hangeul festival and KSIs project as a platform for South Korea’s cultural diplomacy.

Finally, the article concludes with a discussion of the KSIs project’s implications for our understanding of South Korea’s soft power projection.

\* Keywords: Hangeul festivals, King Sejong Institute (KSI), King Sejong Institute Foundation (KSIF) Cultural Diplomacy, Soft power, Universities

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In South Korea, the exportation of its popular culture, also known as hallyu, is a classic soft power tool, which the government has used to efficiently on a global scale. Apart from Hallyu, Hangeul festival, celebrating the promulgation of the Korean Great Script, is considered a new way of exploring national cultures and become contemporary art with global relevance. For spreading the Hangeul and the heritage of the nation, the state-run King Sejong Institutes (KSIs) under King Sejong Institutes Foundation (KSIF) have been opened at many universities all over the world.

However, the explosive growth of Hangeul festival and KSIs generated discussions regarding their purpose, function and the agenda behind the public vision statement. Attention has been given to the question “Does the expansion of Hangeul festival and KSIs represent the rise of South Korea’s soft power?”

This article first presents the theories of soft power and cultural diplomacy as an analytic framework. It then delineates an interpretative illustration of the Hangeul festival and KSIs project as a platform for South Korea’s cultural diplomacy. Finally, the article concludes with some of the KSIs project’s implications for our understanding of South Korea’s soft power projection.

## Introduction

Without art, the crudeness of reality would make the world unbearable.—George Bernard Shaw

Cultural diplomacy is primarily associated with the enhancement soft power of a country. These terms are often used in government announcement, in the media, and in academic writing. It is understood as the application of a state's cultural policy abroad through the exchange of ideas, information, culture and the arts. Its major purpose is to appeal to the widest range of foreign audiences and convince them to change their mind or improve their view of a certain country.

In Asia, while much has been talked about soft power of a rising China and Japan as one of the first countries to use cultural diplomacy, viewed as a complicated way to influence other countries, there is little empirical work on South Korea's soft power with a particular case study. China is rapidly expanding its network of Confucius Institutes, higher educational centers housed within host universities to promote the global spread of Chinese language and culture. For Japan, the concept of "Cool Japan," was Japan's cultural diplomacy strategy, and it targeted pop culture as the case of popular culture (K-pop) also known as Hallyu in South Korea and recently, the projection of Hangeul festival (한글날) and King Sejong Institute (Korean: 세종학당; RR: Sejong Hakdang or KSIs) is also an aspect of huge academic interests.

Since the end of the Korean War, South Korea, known as the Republic of Korea (ROK) has strived to build up its hard power, a strong military to contain an aggressive North Korea and economic growth to pull the country out of poverty. Having achieved rapid economic development, consolidated democracy, and reconciliation with the North, South Korea looks out at the world from a small peninsula. For policy entrepreneurs seeking the best way to enhance their country's international standing, the celebrated notion of soft power defined by Joseph Nye as "the ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion or payment"<sup>1)</sup> is certainly appealing.

In enhancing soft power, cultural diplomacy has entered Korean policy circles and has become for them an attractive foreign policy tool. Koreans should be proud of the fact that their culture has diplomatic applications. The exportation of its popular culture,

also known as Hallyu or Korean Wave, is a classic soft power tool, which the South Korean government has used to efficiently on a global scale. Apart from this, Hangeul (the Korean language means “Great Script”) language and festival is considered as a new way of exploring South Korea and a traditional language can become contemporary art with global relevance. Both a living art and the Korean alphabet, Hangeul seems to be a delicate dance between lines and spaces transformed to build designs that convey the profound range of human expression. Much more than just a written alphabet, Hangeul connects the horizons of poetry and visual art. Today, this language continues to gain popularity worldwide. Besides, King Sejong Institutes have been opened around the world due to the huge demand for learning the Korean language, which has been selected as a second language in many countries; many students want to learn it as well and King Sejong Institutes have already been opened in many countries in Asia and Europe. In order to analyze the role and effectiveness of these initiatives, the theories of ‘soft power’ and ‘cultural diplomacy’ have been utilized. The theory of ‘soft power’ has been included with the objective of obtaining a better comprehension of the motivation behind Korean’s immense investment in its global soft power initiatives. The theory of ‘cultural diplomacy’ has been selected in order to analyze the different elements that can act as a hindrance to the desired production of soft power and thus influence the effectiveness of the initiatives e.g. when the target audience will view the instruments of cultural diplomacy as being means of propaganda.

The explosive growth of Hangeul festival and KSIs generated discussions regarding their purpose, function and the hidden agenda behind the public vision statement. Attention has been given to the question “Does the expansion of Hangeul festival and KSIs represent the rise of South Korea’s soft power?” This article first presents the theories of soft power and cultural diplomacy as an analytic framework. It then delineates an interpretative illustration of the Hangeul festival and KSIs project as a platform for South Korea’s cultural diplomacy. Finally, the article concludes with some of the KSIs project’s implications for our understanding of South Korea’s soft power projection.

## South Korean Soft Power and Cultural diplomacy

The terms “soft power” and “cultural diplomacy” are often used in government announcement, in the press, and in academic writing. However, soft power theory has been in a great number of discussions and debates. According to Joseph Nye (1990), who coined the term, “soft power” refers primarily to ways in which a nation’s cultural resources constitute a form of power that enhances, or even substitutes for military and economic strength. The term can be seen as an extension and development of Carr’s (1954) idea of “power over opinion” and Lukes’ (1974) “third dimension of power,” both of which shed light on how the attractiveness of a nation’s culture, ideals, policies, education and diplomacy give it the capacity to persuade other nations to willingly adopt its goals. The essential part of soft power, as Nye (2004) explains, is the ability to obtain what one wants through co-option and attraction rather than through coercion or payment. Examples of soft power include the attraction of normative values, media, business practices, education, and language.

Recent studies on cultural diplomacy could be an appropriate analytic framework for analyzing and understanding these phenomena. Cultural diplomacy has a long history as a means of promoting a country’s soft power.<sup>2)</sup> Milton C. Cummings offers a starting definition of the concept, cultural diplomacy can be generally defined as “the exchange of ideas, information, values systems, traditions, beliefs, and other aspects of culture, with the intention of fostering mutual understanding.”<sup>3)</sup> The purpose of cultural diplomacy is related to “an actor’s attempt to manage the international environment by making its cultural resources and achievements known overseas and/or facilitating cultural transmission abroad”<sup>4)</sup>. Recent research has identified a number of forms of cultural diplomacy used by different groups for different purposes. Examples include:<sup>5)</sup>

- (1) State-sponsored cultural diplomacy, which is often used by governments for distinct political purposes;
- (2) Independent or semi-independent cultural diplomacy institutions, such as the British Council and the Goethe Institute, which take an informative and exchange-based approach to the promotion of national culture; and
- (3) Potential cultural diplomacy channeled by academic institutions or individual art-

ists, academics or professionals involved in academic exchanges and cooperation..

Therefore, in enhancing soft power, cultural diplomacy is understood as the application of a state's cultural policy abroad through the exchange of ideas, information, culture and the arts. Its major purpose is to appeal to the widest range of foreign audiences and convince them to change their mind or improve their view of a certain country. Most countries excises some form of cultural diplomacy directed toward diplomatic or economic benefits for the country. The success of America's cultural diplomacy has encouraged some countries to learn. In Northeast Asia, while much has been talked about soft power of a rising China and Japan as one of the first countries to use cultural diplomacy, viewed as a sophisticated way to influence other countries, there is little empirical work on South Korea's soft power with a particular case study.

The rags-to-riches tale of South Korea as one of Asia's poorest countries in 1950s was attributed to the twin after-effects of Japanese occupation and Korean War. This country once had a bleak economy with shattered infrastructures, drained resources, and exploited experience during its past horrific historical war periods. Despite of initial economic handicaps and political woes, South Korea eventually achieved rapid economic growth, and began to emerge as one of formidable tiger economies in Asia joining the ranks of Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore.<sup>6)</sup> Having achieved rapid economic development, a consolidated democracy, and reconciliation with the North, South Korea now looks out at the world from a small peninsula.

In recent decades, South Korea's government has begun to use the concept of "soft power" and found it to be an attractive foreign policy tool. Since the end of the Korean War, South Korea has strived to build up its "hard power" - a strong military to contain an aggressive North Korea and economic growth to pull the South out of poverty. Scholarly debates now have turned to the more difficult and practical question of how to infuse South Korean diplomacy with this notion of soft power following the inauguration of the Lee Myung-bak government. Adding the marketing concept of "branding" to soft power, the government established the Presidential Committee on Nation Branding in January of 2009.<sup>7)</sup>

In fact, soft power has entered Korean policy circles in recent years and has become an attractive foreign policy tool by its government. Having achieved rapid economic de-

velopment, consolidated democracy, and slow reconciliation with North, South Korea now looks out at the world from a small peninsula using its new strength on soft power diplomacy.<sup>8)</sup> In view of this, scholarly debates have turned to a more serious attempt of trying to infuse this notion of ‘soft power’ to South Korean diplomacy of President Lee Myung-bak.

Back to Nye’s concept of soft power, he deems that the soft power of a country rests primarily on three resources, namely: its culture, its political values at home and abroad, and its foreign policies seen as legitimate and having moral authority (Nye, 2004). Soft power diplomacy when applied as foreign and strategic policy is one of the most striking features of contemporary international relations that has been recently used by strategists in South Korea to further see the merits of this new diplomatic tool. One of the premises of this policy is that Korea, perceived to be as a middle power, poses the threat and opportunity as a country that can never hope to compete as of now with the surrounding major powers of China and Japan in terms of hard power, i.e., military and economic power. In the case of Korea, her role today, redefined as a ‘hub nation’ or ‘regional balancer’ and perhaps a ‘bridge’ or ‘cooperation’ nation among Northeast Asia countries.<sup>9)</sup> Furthermore, RoK’s intermediary role is possible since both Japanese and Chinese tend to view Korean soft power more positively than they do each other.

Moreover, it can also be considered that the *kyo yuk yeol* phenomenon or ‘education fever’ has helped South Korea to successfully achieve a knowledge-based economy from an agricultural to a leading industrial society in the world today because of its large pool of educated citizens and human capital. This has indeed developed South Korean educational system to produce a soaring of almost one hundred percent literacy rate in education. But by and large, the spark of South Korea’s emergence as a major and significant economic power in the current deterritorialized community of the 21st century has given birth to a new type of culture in Asia, called the “Hallyu” that has morphed into a beautiful cultural phenomenon as chief springboard of popular culture.

In order for South Korea to have soft power, it is a prerequisite to have at least some soft resources that are internationally applicable. Two notable soft resources that South Korea possesses namely: South Korea’s experiences of successful modernization and democratization within a very short period of time; and Korean traditional culture and

language (Hallyu and Hangeul) in many parts of the world. South Korea's well known human resources can also have the potential to be South Korea's usable soft resource. The success of the South Korean cultural wave transmitted through TV dramas and other forms of popular culture have encouraged this new thinking.

The notion of cultural diplomacy has progressively evolved, and policy makers and politicians in many countries have increasingly engaged in the realm of culture over several decades. The classical notion of cultural diplomacy entails culture as a component of traditional diplomacy, and it had been mostly confined to the promotion of one nation's culture abroad to strengthen relations with other nations, to enhance cooperation or to promote national interest.<sup>10)</sup> In the early 21st century, this notion of cultural diplomacy has been considered as one of the most significant public diplomacies because culture is a field of international relations in its own rights as much as a tool of foreign policy. As the objective of this paper is to investigate South Korea's desired expansion of the country's soft power in global, the theoretical framework will be exploring the theory of 'cultural diplomacy' from the perspective of various scholars, as the utilization of cultural diplomacy initiatives is indeed among the most effective tools for the production of soft power.

As Korean popular culture goes global in the early 21st century, it signifies the Korean Wave's potentiality as a set of soft-power resources that may have a significant and complex impact on cultural diplomacy as well as on trade, tourism, the academy, and other national interests across various contexts.<sup>11)</sup> Therefore, it is argued that "Korea needs to pay more attention to soft power" as one of the most significant cultural diplomacy strategies, as other countries, in particular, the Korean government, has used the "Hallyu" and "Hangeul" as great resources. From this perspective, the Hangeul Festival's cultural exchanges and King Sejong Institutes projection could be understood as a form of cultural diplomacy intended to facilitate economic connection, cultural dialogue, and political trust between South Korea and the rest of the world.

## Hangeul Festival's cultural exchanges and King Sejong Institutes

Researchers have employed the theory of soft power to guide their inquiries into this question; however, they neither explore nor explain the rationale and dynamics underpinning the RoK state's diplomatic concern over the Hangeul festival's cultural exchanges and KSI Foundation's name, administrative structure, operations and functions. The above study applies the theory of cultural diplomacy to approach these issues. It provides a supplement to existent literature by filling in the details about how soft power policies are carried out in practice, arguing that the KSI project can be understood as a form of cultural diplomacy that is state-sponsored and university-piloted. As such, the KSI Foundation involves soft power techniques, but not full soft power capability, because the problems embedded in the KSI and in the wider society run counter to the Korean government's efforts to increase the KSI's attractiveness and popularity. In recent years, the Hangeul Festival and the spread of the Korean language through the establishment of KSI have been exploited as a "cultural diplomacy" tool of South Korea. Hangeul Festival's cultural exchanges and the opening KSI have been held overseas. This undeniable fact has contributed to South Korea's soft power and its influence in the region and in the international arena. However, the explosive growth of the Hangeul festivals and KSIs generated discussions and debates regarding their purpose, function and the hidden agenda behind the public vision statement. Much attention has been given to the question "Does the expansion of Hangeul Festival and KSIs represent a cultural diplomacy tool in enhancing Korea's soft power?"

Moreover, an attempt has been made to explore dimensions of South Korea's soft power and to examine whether cultural diplomacy is an efficient tool to enhance South Korea's soft power. A study of the Hangeul Festival and KSIs will be used to examine if it can help South Korea project its soft power in many countries. By studying this, various cultural activities and games such as quiz show, Korean culture-related performance contest and kiosks introducing Korean arts, cuisine, and costumes will be explored. Moreover, these positive views should be correspondent with the foreign policy goals of Korea in its relations with the partner countries.

Hangeul Festival's cultural exchanges and KSI project are the state-sponsored and uni-

iversity-piloted cultural diplomacy. Therefore, it can be seen as a form of cultural diplomacy that is state-sponsored and university-piloted, based on the project's overall rationale, its close ties to the state, diplomatic concerns over the name given the institutes, the use of festival and KSI to showcase the South Korea's diplomacy and foreign policy and the use of South Korean universities to link this network around the world. Since 1979, Korean Cultural Centers (KCCs) have promoted South Korea and its culture worldwide through hosting arts and cultural events. With the first two centers set up in Tokyo and New York in 1979, the Korean government now runs 32 of them in 27 countries to meet the ever-rising global demand for Korean culture. KCCs support Korean heritage and art exhibitions, traditional music and dance performances, as well as cultural activities such as Hangeul festival, gugak (traditional Korean music), calligraphy etc... Hangeul Day, which commemorates the proclamation of the Korean alphabet in 1446, falls on the 9th October every year. Korea hosts many commemorative events around this time to honor the spirit of King Sejong the Great, who invented the writing system for his people. To mark the cultural day, Korean KCCs worldwide will host this month an array of Hangeul-themed festivals such as essay and Korean speech contests. Besides, King Sejong Institute Foundation is public institution under the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, established to manage Korean language education abroad and the distribution of Korean culture. The Institute is the brand name of Korean-language institutes established by the South Korean government around the world since 2007.

## **Hangeul Festival's cultural exchanges**

In 1926 (the 480th anniversary of the creation of Hangeul), celebrations started popping up around the country, organized by the Hunminjeongeum Society (the Korean Language Society). However, these celebrations came to an end shortly after, because Hangeul and the Korean language were outlawed during Japanese occupation. Yet this seemed only to further strengthen the popularity of this writing system among the Korean people, leading to its continued use after the nation's independence in 1945. In fact, in 1945 (almost 20 years after the first celebrations), the government declared Han-

geul Day a national holiday. Although it lost its status as a national holiday in the 1990's due to new workplace regulations, it was reinstated in 2012.

Hangeul festival is a day of pride in the history of the Korean nation. The festival considers the historic, traditional and cultural value of Hangeul. It brings a message of connectivity spirit. The Hangeul script is not only a means to communicate, spread and preserve the traditional cultural values of the Koreans but also a bridge for those who love Korean language and literature. The festival is a Korean cultural space with exciting activities such as uniform design competition; exhibition of traditional Korean handmade products; stall decoration; Flash-mob Dance; Ring the Golden Bell Competition-an intellectual playground that not only provides students with a lot of useful knowledge on Korean culture and history, Vietnam-Korea Relationship Essay Competition etc. with the participation of Korean Foundation, KOICA and national researchers from universities. The event also contributes to promoting the cooperation between the organizer and the educational agencies, Korean partners as well as between the Korean language training organizations participating in the Festival; contributes to more widely promoting Korean scripts to the community; help students studying Korean language and Oriental studies (Korean major) to develop language skills, cultural understanding and integration skills to confidently work in a multi-national, multi-cultural environment in the future. The festival also contributes to strengthening exchanges and cooperation between Korea and its counterparts in many fields.

The Hangeul Festivals have been held at many Universities with the aims to create a playground and cultural exchange for students learning Korean and Korean language schools and centers. In 2019, California legislature passed resolution 109 to dedicate October 9 as a Hangul Day. The Resolution 109 was introduced by Assemblywoman Sharon Quirk-Silva. To celebrate on the occasion of upcoming Hangeul Day on October 9, the Korean Cultural Center New York presents the 2020 Hangeul Calligraphy Contest 2020. This is an opportunity for any resident in the United States with or without prior knowledge of Hangeul to participate and to appreciate the beauty of the Korean language. People can participate by writing and/or decorating your favorite Korean words or phrases in any way they like.

Basically, the festival was held by Korea Foundation, Korean Cultural Center (KCC), and

Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA). The meaning of this day is about commemorating the invention and the proclamation of Hangeul (한글), the alphabet of the Korean language. However, this day provides more than that. It is not only an opportunity for Korean students to share their culture with the local people here but also for students to learn more about Korea. The festival includes various cultural activities and games such as quiz show, Korean culture-related performance contest and kiosks introducing Korean arts, cuisine, and costumes.

Taking the case for Vietnam for instance, the Hangeul Festival's cultural exchanges always excite Vietnamese youth. Recently, the Hangeul Festival 2020 has been held at the University of Social Sciences and Humanities. The festival, held by the University of Social Sciences and Humanities - National University Ho Chi Minh City in association with the Korean Consulate General in Ho Chi Minh City and the Korea Foundation, brings together nearly 20 participating entities, including universities, colleges, government agencies and sponsoring businesses from Korea. The entire festival space is adorned with images bearing Korean cultural elements prepared by the students themselves. Besides, there are many very attractive experiential activities with valuable rewards from sponsors. Lim Jae-Hoon shared that there were about 14 universities in the South and Ho Chi Minh City establishing the Faculty of Korean Studies; Korean Language Center in Ho Chi Minh City and 8 KSIs with more than 13,000 students and learners studying Korean. Since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1992 up to now, the two countries' relationship has greatly developed not only in the fields of politics and economics but also in education, culture and human exchange.<sup>12)</sup> In addition, the festival also offers the opportunity to explore cuisine, try on traditional Hanbok costumes and participate in interesting folk games, ... Thereby, the students can learn and improve their knowledge about Korean language, culture, country and people and meeting friends with the same passion to help develop social and bilingual language skills.

## **King Sejong Institute and King Sejong Institute Foundation**

The KSI were named after the Korean King Sejong the Great, the fourth king of the Jo-

seon dynasty of Korea. Sejong reinforced Confucian policies and enacted major legal amendments. He personally created and promulgated the Korean alphabet Hangeul, encouraged advancements of science and technology, as well as introduced measures to stimulate economic growth. Naming the institutes after King Sejong is therefore a diplomatic effort to portray Korea as a peace and harmonious society, in order to gain international recognition and acceptance.

In 2012, KSIF was established with its major aims to dedicate to reaching out to the world using the Korean language as a tool. Over the last eight years since its establishment in 2012, the KSIF has made great strides in disseminating the Korean language and culture around the world. As a leading brand supplying Korean and Korean culture overseas, it will contribute to improving Korea's national image through the overseas base expansion of Korean and Korean culture. The KSIF designates and operates KSI around the world so that foreigners who want to study Korean as a foreign language or as a second language can get closer and easier access to Korean language and culture. It also expands the international base of Korean language and culture. It administers Korean language education specific to the local condition in consultation with the Korean missions in the country. Therefore, the objective of KSIs are:

- Dissemination of Korean culture through Korean language education targeted towards those who learn Korean as a foreign language.
- Expansion of cooperation among nations through exchange from the perspective of cultural reciprocity.
- Contribution to realizing cultural and language diversity through greater international exchange of languages and cultures.

Beside, types of King Sejong Institutes based on operation can be as follows: <sup>13)</sup>

General	Independent -type	KSI operated by local operation institutions independently
	Connective -type	KSI operated jointly by local and domestic operation institutions through the signing of a business agreement between them.
Collaborative-type		KSI operated by local governments, public institutions under the Act on the Management of Public Institutions, businesses, non-profit corporations (public interest corporations, social welfare corporations, etc.) that are aimed at public service projects, such as social contribution by businesses, without receiving grants.

The rationale for the opening of KSI project reflects the South Korea’s recognition of language teaching as a means of building relationships, enhancing socio-cultural understanding and promoting trade and foreign investment. Besides, a rapid increase in demand of Korean language Korean Culture both at home and abroad owes to the expansion of Hallyu through K-contents, the extension of Korean businesses into foreign countries and the implementation of employment permit and so on. A professional brand representing Korean Language Institute is needed that is able to manage and support “King Sejong Institute”, overseas Korean and Korean culture supply agency. King Sejong Institute Foundation is a public institution under the influence of Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism in order to manage overseas Korean Language education and to extend Korean culture. It introduces Korean and Korean culture to foreigners and is working to make their interests in Korea develop into their better understandings and love for Korea. It was founded based on subsection 2 of section 19 of Framework Act on the National Language.

An institution that is operating a Korean language teaching institution or has plans to do so at a local government institution or university/graduate school or an institution linked to a university. An institution that is operating a Korean language teaching institution or has plans to do so at a non-profit corporation registered with the local government or a private organization for the public good

The project has a high implementation rate because the designation of the new KSI and

the dispatch of Korean teachers abroad were faithfully executed as per the original plan. As a result, a survey on the project indicates satisfaction among participating students, with the satisfaction rates converging on a score greater than 80%, exposing a ceiling effect. It was evaluated in terms of its effects and feedback. The King Sejong Institute has expanded its operation and spread the value of Hangeul by operating the Sejong Cultural Academy program. It substantiated the education programs and improved the operation of the Institute in response to the results of the evaluation (written evaluation and interviews on site) and the survey on satisfaction level. <sup>14)</sup>

As of June 2020, there were 114 designated KSI in Asia. King Sejong Institute was the brand name designated by the South Korean government for institutes that teach Korean language and culture. As of June 2020, KSI could be found worldwide with 213 individual institutes spread across 76 different nations. During the COVID-19 pandemic, online remote learning was initially launched in 139 institutes to continue providing lessons around the globe.

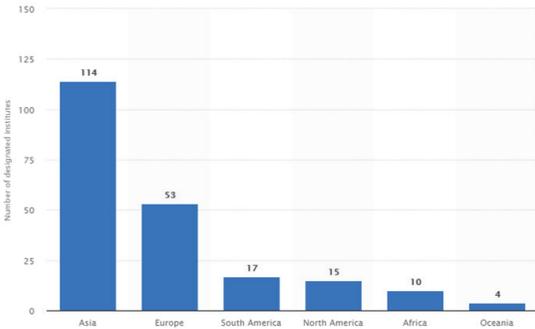


Fig. 1. Number of designated King Sejong Institutes June 2020, by continent<sup>15)</sup>

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The KSI are an extension of state administration tasked with conducting cultural diplomacy, as can be seen from their administrative structure and financial resources. The project’s headquarters are in the KSIF offices in Seoul. KSIF is a public institution under the influence of Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism in order to manage overseas Korean Language education and to extend Korean culture.

The KSIFs that have been established in various corners of the five continents of Afri-

ca, North and South America, Europe, and Asia are filled with students who are eager to learn Korean and Korean culture. They all have different reasons for coming to us to deepen understanding about Korea, including enhancing their enjoyment of K-pop, traveling to Korea, and studying and working in South Korea. To these Hallyu fans, the KSIF serves as a channel for communicating with Koreans using the Korean language as a medium. At present, the KSIF is ready to step forward and establish itself as “a small Korea in every country of the world.” As a leading brand supplying Korean and Korean culture overseas, KSIF and its institutes will contribute to improving South Korea’s national image through the overseas base expansion of Korean and Korean culture.

## Conclusion

From above discussion, it can be said that the Hangeul festival and KSI projection can be understood as a form of government-sponsored, university-piloted cultural diplomacy. The government is the project’s designer. Korean language and culture can function as agents of the government by relaying knowledge and information regarding language, cultural traditions, way of life and foreign policies, in order to fostering international recognition of South Korean as a democratic and harmonious society and to improve its economic and cultural connections in the entire world. As a form of cultural diplomacy, the Hangeul festival and KSI project can be seen as a complex of soft-power techniques, using language, education, cultural events, conferences and tourism as non-military and non-economic means to exert South Korea’s influence in the globe.

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